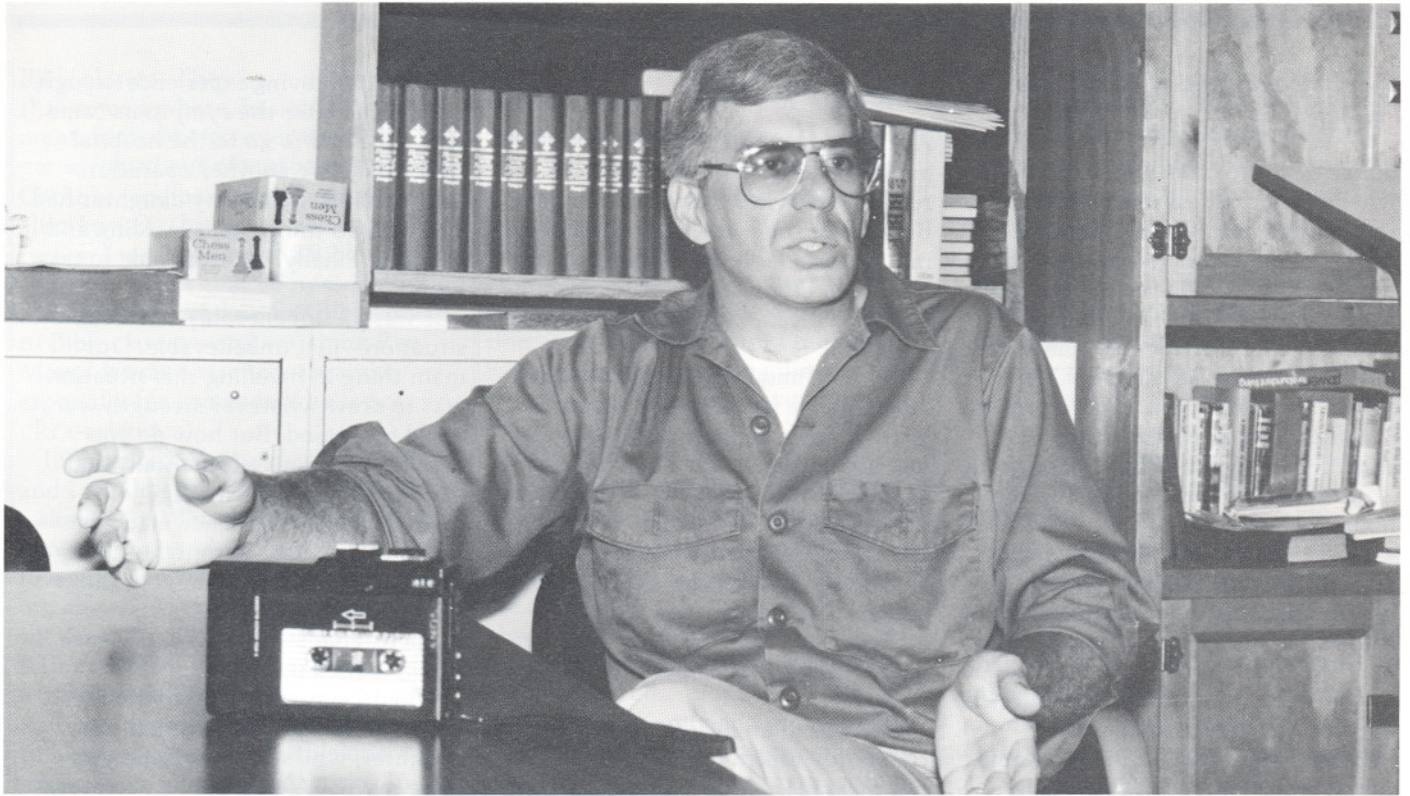

HOW I GOT TO KNOW FATHER



*by Bill Sheppard
as told to Laura Reinig
July 1986*

To go along with the theme of Danbury in this issue, we are including excerpts from part one of an interview that Laura Reinig, our associate editor, had with Mr. Bill Sheppard in Danbury prison in July 1986. As many readers of *Today's World* know, Bill became a close friend of Father in Danbury.

The interview took place in the small, office-sized chapel where Father, Mr. Kamiyama, Bill, and Larry Evola, another friend of Father, used to pray early Sunday mornings. Bill explained that Father would sit in one chair, and Mr. Kamiyama, Larry, and Bill would sit facing him, and then they would pray. Bill still says pledge

every Sunday morning on his own.

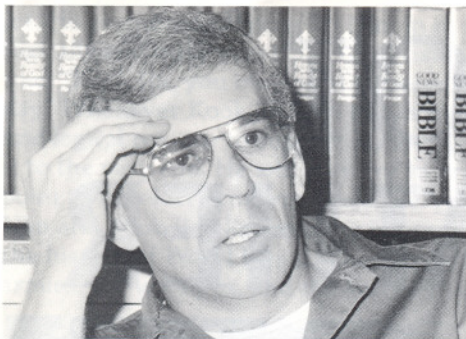
Laura considered it a privilege to go to Danbury camp and interview Bill. She saw the hill where Father stood to wave goodbye to Mother. "I could almost see Father standing there," she said. They went, of course, through the visiting room where Father had received his family and his many visitors. The prison authorities also allowed her and photographer Ken Owens to visit the dining room that Father had worked in.

"But prison life is not any kind of picnic for Bill," Laura noted. "He works very hard up there—taking on extra work to pass the many lonely hours, separated from his family and

friends and of course from Father, with whom he formed such a deep bond of heart. He needs our prayers.

"I loved talking with Bill. He seemed like a delightful combination of a very fatherly man and an impish little boy. 'You can't lose your humor in a place like this,' he told me. 'If you do, you go crazy.'"

The interview lasted four hours, and Bill talked freely on a wide range of topics—what he had gone through prior to his term in Danbury, how he got acquainted with Mr. Kamiyama and then with Father, how his view of life changed upon knowing Father, and how he maintains hope for the future.



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WHEN I FIRST CAME TO DANBURY in April 1984 they asked me what I wanted to do. They try to classify you, find out where they can best use your skill. So as it turned out I was taken immediately outside. One fellow and I did the landscaping. This camp was nothing but mud at the time—everything was mud; the interior was completed but the exterior had no trees, no shrubs. It turned into a major project. I worked a lot to pass my time. It wasn't fashionable to do a lot of work—not weekends and nights and the hours we were putting in.

It was about the beginning of July 1984 at the time we were finishing. Just in time for somebody to come! Rather strange! After I completed the main landscaping work they asked me to keep working outside on the grounds, which I was very glad about.

When Father and Kami [Mr. Kamiyama] first came it was such a big thing. I mean it was, "Who is this fellow?" Many people surrounded him in hopes of getting close to him. He was a curiosity. They both were. I remember people saying, "Which one is Moon? Is he the tall fellow?" That's literally how it was.

They put Father in the end cube, the smallest cube there was, where there were no windows and no access to him. I believe it was for security reasons. His cube happened to be very small and it was right next to a closet where they kept the mops and junk, so it wasn't the nicest place in the world, that's for sure.

I was living in A dorm, the same dorm where Father and Kami were living. I lived right near a doorway, which gave me a panoramic view that looked on all the top bunks. I couldn't help but observe Father and Kami.

Close to God

At that point, I believed very deeply in God. I definitely had respect for religion—but not organized religion. Because of the medical situation with my daughter and the tragedies that happened in my family in the past, I felt I had a very close relationship with God.

My wife and I had been married in 1968 and we had tried for seven years to have children, and we were just about to give up. Then all of a sudden we had a daughter. Of course we were very, very happy. It was an emotional experience and it made us very close. There were a few complications. Externally my daughter looked beautiful, but my wife had an inner feeling that something was wrong.

She was in an incubator, and we constantly talked to her. I would give her massages and do different things with her. But the baby was not getting enough nourishment; she could not suck correctly. They told my wife that she would have to breastfeed using a pump and they'd have to freeze the milk. The problem with that is, any type of stress will stop the milk production. My wife was going through a tremendous amount of stress—tremendous. I can remember she was connected up to a machine. It was like being in a closet. The pump would be going, and I was wondering if my daughter was going to live or die.

We finally found out that she had congenital heart disease. She was given last rites; they didn't expect her to make it. She went through an operation, and it was a long and scary process. But she recovered, and then she came home with us. That would

have been a moving experience enough, but a week later the symptoms came back. She had to go to the hospital again and have another operation. And then after that, my daughter had a stroke. So things kept building and building. Finally, we were able to take her home.

It was an unbelievably stressful situation—just unbelievable. Our main thing in handling this situation was to draw whatever strength we could from God. But how do you handle it for yourself mentally and emotionally and spiritually?

That whole experience made us become very close parents. In today's society you tend to go in your different directions, that's very easy to happen. That's why this experience, I think, turned us around.

When I was incarcerated here we had a terrible problem in that my daughter, who's six now, wouldn't leave my wife's side. My problem was that I was so very close to her. It was like she had two mothers, if you will, because of the situation.

My mindset

After I was in here I had been going through recounting that situation in my own mind. "You've gone through the situation with your daughter—now what? Now you're incarcerated. How do you get the strength to go through *this*?" Talk about indemnity, you're looking at a long period of suffering.

And that was my mindset, if you will, when I met these two Oriental people. Here I was in Danbury and I was working outside and I had a 10-year sentence and it just didn't make any sense. It was like I was being plucked out and put in this situation.

At that time I had started going to

Father gained respect, and people's image of him and the general atmosphere of the prison began to change—slowly.



Bible classes. They have volunteers that come up here, basically fundamentalists, who go over the Bible. I got involved out of curiosity. I was a Catholic, and had gone through as an altar boy. So this was a good opportunity. I was reading the Bible constantly—things that I'd missed. So I found myself reading the Bible, going to Bible classes—and watching Rev. Moon! It was a strange situation; especially for someone who is not ultra-religious.

In Bible class I would ask questions and I would argue. I shouldn't say I'm a skeptic, but I'm not afraid to ask if I don't understand. A lot of times I had to say, "I don't know what you're talking about." At the time, just before I sat down to talk with Father and Kami seriously, I was having a problem with the fundamentalist Christian point of view that the only way to heaven is through faith alone, irrespective of any good works. In other words, you have no responsibility. It just went against my nature; it just didn't seem right.

Just about that time, I would see Father and Kami periodically sitting out in the back, and I'd be working out there on the grounds. And I remember Father would pass by. I didn't even know whether either of them spoke English. We'd just smile and say hello.

I was well aware of the media and what the media had said about him—monster, brainwashing, whatever. Whether or not that was true I didn't know. Not even a week before he came, I had had a discussion with another inmate about the Moonies. The first thing I said was, "Well, they'd better not try that on my daughter [brainwash her]." I vividly remember that discussion.

Father took a backseat

There was one fellow here, a Quaker who speaks Japanese, whom I knew. I grabbed this guy and brought him over to where Kami and Father were. We tried translation. I don't know what I said; I just remember wanting to ask a few things. The communication was difficult because I felt the man was communicating differently from what Father was saying. It just didn't make any sense.

Through a number of experiences at the camp, Kami and I started talking. During that period of time we had a few discussions—three-way discussions; Father took a backseat. He was very, very quiet. We'd talk about different things; but not at any length. We really didn't know each other that well.

Over time Kami and I developed a very close brotherly relationship, and I asked him if he would come with me to Bible class. He said, "Okay, as long as we sit together." He didn't want to be put into an awkward situation. He didn't want to create an atomic bomb if he said something controversial. He trusted me. I understood and said okay. He entered into a number of conversations in Bible class. When someone said something outrageous he just had to speak up. And then there would be a banter back and forth, in good spirits. It's a dangerous thing in prison and in religion if you're not coming from a good heart. Most people took it right, but some other people couldn't understand what was going on.

Kami and I began sitting down and going over the Bible and his interpretation—at my request. He was very reluctant to preach about the Unification Church. Certainly Father

did not preach. Father had promised he was not going to be "converting" people. As far as the wardens were concerned, they didn't have to worry about him brainwashing anybody. I was very much aware of Father's promise.

At that time my relationship with Father was not a very deep relationship, quite honestly. To me he was a very nice Oriental old man. At times we had sat in the visiting room—my wife, my daughter, and myself—near Father and Mother, just giving them respect and privacy, but we didn't really talk.

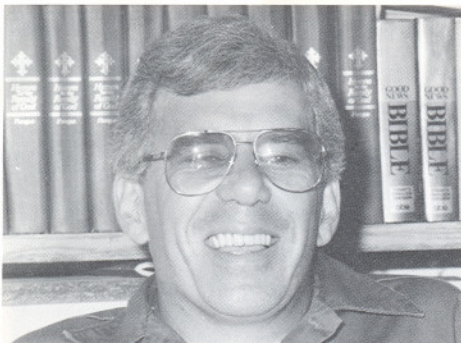
Kami would keep telling me about Father. Many things I couldn't relate to; many things I couldn't understand. I knew that this guy, this old Oriental man, was very important to one person here that I knew. His complete importance I didn't know—to the world, let's say. We were only dealing on an individual and a family level.

Our relationship grew

Father and I got to be very close a few months before Kami left. Father would take any free time that he had and he'd play pool for hours. It wasn't one of my favorite things, but I'd wind up playing pool with him.

But most of my time with Father, both before Kami left and after he left, was spent talking, communicating with him. It wasn't playing pool. The time Father and I spent together was very serious. It was difficult because there were always people around.

A few months prior to Kami's leaving, little did I know that everything Kami and I had shared Kami had reported to Father—every detail about me! He had told Father about my own personal background and a



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number of things in my case. Father knew everything by this time. He knew more than I did! I was at a disadvantage, not realizing it.

I questioned Father. I learned what he believed and how he thought. And I saw how he treated people. He was tremendously respectful to everyone and their opinion. He wasn't liked by everybody, but he was respected by everybody, no question about that. He gained respect, and people's image of him and the general atmosphere of the prison began to change—slowly.

We talked about everything imaginable. We laughed an awful lot. We talked about our families, we talked about the history of the church. I knew certain things about his life. I knew he had been in prison before. I asked him about that, about the death camp. He did not wear it as a badge; you had to coax certain things out of him. He didn't go into too much detail about it, but he did explain what he had to go through in that camp in order to talk to people. You could only talk to people when you were getting food or going to the latrine or something.

One of the strange things was the analogies Father made. I told him my birthday was August 13, 1945, and he said that I was born right at the time the church started. He found that to be very interesting. There were a lot of other coincidences. He would ask me questions about my life and when I told him he would look stunned as if to say, "Well, that's very odd!" We used to laugh. He talked sometimes about the brainwashing thing, about being zapped, that type of thing. Hilarious. A number of times we talked about the bad publicity, but that was something he never dwelled on—how bad things were.

Father/son talks

At times Father would reprimand me for not being serious, and at other times for not understanding his humor. He was very serious about his humor! And I would try to understand. I'd see him looking at me once in a while or vice versa. You do that as you develop a relationship until the point that you have some deep trust.

We discussed my relationship with my wife and my daughter. He'd talk about my daughter as if she were part of the world—not just as mine. We talked about some other tragedies in my past that I had gone through, and he was very concerned. We had a lot of father-son talks, that type of relationship.

Kami and Father talked about going to pledge service. Of course that was a big thing. I thought to myself, "Pledge service?" I asked, very openly, "What is this that you're doing? What is this three o'clock in the morning for?" Respectfully, I mean. I could talk this way to Father and he would respond this way, knowing where my heart was coming from.

Sometimes Father and I would miss dinner. I would mess up. We would be walking outside talking and then I'd realize, "Oh, gee, it's dinnertime," and then we'd have to run. I would get so involved in the conversation that I would forget. There was always one more page Father wanted to read or one more point he wanted to make to me personally about something. Father would say, "Wait a minute! Forget about dinner. This is more important. This is the rest of your life!"

We talked an awful lot about business—about ethics in business. I learned

about things that were happening with the church, with Ocean Church, with CAUSA, or whatever it might be. I remember Father telling Kami about the speeches and videotapes that were going to be sent out. He let me know about everything. I wouldn't talk about these things with anyone else.

I met Mother a couple of times, and I met Father's children, Peter Kim, Rev. Kwak, and a number of people who came up. Most of the time we didn't have the same visiting day. It was an odd/even system, so only on occasion did we have visits together. And it was good because I didn't want to intrude.

My belief in Father

I don't really know how our relationship developed. I know it developed over time. My belief in him just grew. Father and I connected very quickly in how we felt about some things—very quickly. I had many of the beliefs that he had, and I believed in him. I was called a hard-nosed skeptic by some, that's very true, but I knew I wasn't being given a sales pitch by Father.

Kami had shown me the papers from his case and there was something strange here; I realized he was being punished for who he was and not because of what the case made out. It was amazing, because my case was very, very similar. I thought, "They're burying these people!" It was because of all the propaganda about brainwashing, taking away the young children, that type of accusation. "Well, how did that happen and where are these people?" I thought. "Where are all these young kids who were selling flowers and were hurt so bad? Where are the complaints?" If it

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was true then there must be millions of testimonies about it, but nobody came forward to say. Something was wrong somewhere. I knew not to trust the media. I knew that I could trust my own judgment about Father.

Father expressed himself very physically to me. When he made a point he'd poke me in the chest, hard. Boy, physically he's strong! He's in good health. We'd be sitting on his bed and we'd be talking about something and he'd poke me and almost knock me over. That's exactly how it was; that was the type of close relationship that we had developed.

Sometimes I read different things in magazines about Father and he comes across as not being real. But he is *very* real—physically and spiritually very real. He makes a conscious effort to be very close. I was fortunate enough over the period of time he spent in prison to get close enough to him to know that he's not an act. He is who he is. He certainly didn't put on any show for *me*. Because we didn't expect anything to develop.

Many of the things I read about him are amazing to me. People ask me, "How could you be involved with this man?" Oh, because I know him. Had I not known him you could forget me. The only way I could have believed the things I believe now is because I met him.

As time went on, Larry [Evola] and I would both spend time with Father. People didn't understand that. We're not the same type; we're completely different people. People would say about me, "What is going on with this man?" I mean, I took a lot of heat, which was okay. We had a couple of arguments. "You're making a fool of yourself," some people would say. I had attended Catholic services, Protestant services, Jewish services, all different kinds of services, and people were wondering, "Who the hell are you?" That would bother people.

It didn't make any sense to them—how I could be into these different religions and also spend time with Rev. Moon and still be the same person. Especially when it became a last-

ing thing. It wasn't a fad. No profit was going to come out of this; I mean, I knew he would be leaving.

Certain inmates were upset that I had developed a relationship with Father. Father had to tell me just to stay away from them; let them be. But I had no problem talking to them about him. It just made them so upset. Most of the time I had to turn the other cheek. I explained in the simplest terms that I had become closer to Father than I had to my own father. I'm sure this kind of thing happens to many people. That's the type of relationship we had developed. "Yes, he's my friend. That's where it's at. I'm not afraid to stand up for a friend. That's our relationship." To me it was very easy. □

We will bring you the rest of the interview in our November issue. Because Bill is currently incarcerated, the aspects of his case and many personal things that he shared cannot be printed at this time.