

## 50 years ago, on January 15, 1973, one hundred Unificationists missionaries from Europe In New York

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Excerpt of my memoirs in progress



Today, 50 years ago, on January 15, 1973, one hundred Unificationists from Europe arrived at New York's Kennedy Airport. They would soon join 10 already existing mobile One World Crusade teams made up of American members, which True Father had organized some months before. I was fortunate to be one of the new arrivals. To our total amazement, True Parents themselves, who some of us had never met in person, were greeting us in the arrival hall, after our going through customs.

American brothers, led by Joe Tully helped to get our luggage onto two buses, that then whisked us away to Belvedere. Our eyes must have been wide as we adjusted from the familiar small scale of European cities, to the expanse of New York's freeways, broad avenues, and, of course, the skyscrapers which in real life were many more times as overpowering than they were on postcards.

Arriving at Belvedere, seeing its vast manicured lawns, long driveways, and its vista across the Hudson kept us in awe even more. The main house of this estate had become True Parents' residence a few weeks earlier. We would learn that American members had been fundraising on weekends, holidays, and their hours after work to build up a \$600,000 fund. It took untold thousands of hours of dedicated work of several hundred brothers and sisters to achieve the goal before the end of 1972.

As it turned out, our group would be the first among so many more following that would enjoy Belvedere training. The European brothers stayed at Angora house, and the sisters above the garage. This was the reverse of what later trainees encountered, with the brothers above the garage, and the sisters at the more cozy tucked away Angora house.

We learned that True Father himself had supervised the purchase and set up of beds and bunk beds to accommodate us. There were a few empty beds, because the Dutch contingent of twenty had been held up by visa issues and could not make the flight. They would join us some months later, swelling our numbers to the more providential count of 120.

(To be continued)