

Words from the Emcee - Sun Myung Moon Christian Crusades' Celebration of Life

Gilbert Fox
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Sun Myung Moon Christian Crusades' Celebration of Life Emcee Gilbert Fox

I was on the first Day of Hope tour in 1972. Since then I have seen an unbelievable amount of growth in this movement. Reverend Moon said our movement would grow, but I could hardly believe it then.



He took a group of 75 young people and turned them into effective workers for God. They are doing all kinds of things now. We have seen an amazing change and transformation throughout the movement: Since the 1972 Day of Hope tour I have worked in Alabama and Illinois. I have found that work rewarding and valuable, but I feel happy to be able to be on the tour this time. I never did get the experience of going from state to state on a One World Crusade team. I am really enjoying the experience of this tour. It is so exciting, so fast-paced.

I am working with a saint, Col. Bo Hi Pak. He is so uplifting, so encouraging. He is training me to be an evangelist someday. That is a great honor. I feel I am in a turning period at this time, and now I would just like to do the best I can with him and for Christ.

Finding the right way to introduce the Celebration of Life is not easy. I have to be full of life, and show great joy and vitality and radiance. I have to find the words to say correctly what I am feeling. Sometimes the words just aren't there until I get out on the stage and the spotlight is on me. Just before the spotlight comes, God hits me. I jump out on the dark stage and grab the microphone. God hits me like a storm trooper and shows me what to say. When I start speaking, it is inspired.

I feel that the Celebration of Life is a very powerful spiritual experience for people that can change their lives. I just personally want to help convey that.

I look forward to every city I go to. Right now I am just bursting with excitement to get to New Orleans. I know Nancy Callahan very well. Two years ago she was left off in New Orleans just a couple of hours before I was left off in Birmingham, Alabama. When I get to New Orleans, it will be the first time I have been

there since that day.



As the Day of Hope tour ended, the New Hope Singers International looked forward to the new potentials of the Celebration of Life program

The New Hope Singers International

The New Hope Singers International is basically made up of men and women who formed the New Hope Singers on Reverend Sun Myung Moon's 1973-74 Day of Hope tour. A notable addition is Mr. Ivan Janer. Mr. Janer is a professional soloist, formerly with Leonard Bernstein's The Mass. He has been a member of the Unification Church for several months, and in the short time he has been with the New Hope Singers International he has added a great deal. His personality matches his talent. He is a remarkable person.

We have come a long way from the choir's original conception, which was to sing three or four numbers at the opening of the banquets and speeches. Their numbers have been choreographed for the Celebration of Life by Mr. Randolph Rimmel, who is not only their choreographer, but also their director, arranger, and spiritual advisor. Mrs. Linda Rimmel accompanies the choir on the piano.

Three ensembles have been formed from the singers. "The Light of the Moon" performs on the third night program. This is a quintet of young men playing jazz, arranged by Mr. Rimmel, sometimes with soloist Carol Rogers.

The second night features "Lou's Folks" -- a folk quartet playing American folk music with a good strong beat.

On the first night a folk trio sings -- the "Kearney Boys." On the Day of Hope tour, as they were going cross country on an icy road about 3 a.m., their truck jumped off the road, ran over the embankment, flipped over, and landed on its wheels. Two men were sleeping in the back of the truck. Of the other two in front, one received a slight contusion on the back of his head and he went back to the choir. The other three, who were unhurt, stayed in the nearby town of Kearney, Nebraska until the rear axle was fixed. They had to support themselves and also raise the money for repairs. The three played music and raised almost enough money to pay for half the repair work. They found homes to stay in and made many friends there. They therefore named their folk trio the "Kearney Boys," after that town.

The singers include different types of people from twelve countries and cultures-but they work together very well. What is interesting to me is that they are able to travel together across the country with great efficiency, without delays. Forty or fifty people travel together in a bus, almost as fast as one could travel by himself. They are constantly working to improve their act. It is getting better and better-with additional numbers and changing arrangements.

The Korean Folk Ballet

It makes everybody on the tour feel really good to be with the Korean Folk Ballet. They are so loving and pure. I think their innocence is just so disarming. They have helped me out so much. They laugh about the funniest things, the simplest things. But I know that after a year or so in America, they will change.

Miss Na Kyung Pak is the daughter of Col. Bo Hi Pak. She was raised in the Washington, D.C. area, and knows English very well. She is a very serious girl, always considering how she can do everything possible to help accomplish our goal and mission.

She is a very mission-oriented person, and it is very inspiring to work with her.

A typical member of the Korean Folk Ballet is Miss Ki Hang Yoon, the aunt of Na Kyung Pak and sister of Mrs. Bo Hi Pak. I feel she is typical in her true beauty and innocence. As the head of a lion in the Mask Dance, she works so hard, running around bent double in a large lion skin, carrying a heavy lion head. Her health had been delicate all her life, but she wanted so much to be part of the Korean Folk Ballet. So she practiced very hard. The lightest girls carry the head, because at the end of the dance the back girl has to lift up the front girl and the head both. I have seen Ki Hang come out of that costume with tears in her eyes, exhausted and faint from the heat. But the girls just keep going, with real dedication.

Another member, Miss Sun Hi Moon, a niece of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, traveled in this country with the Little Angels when she was nine. Philip Burley, now an IOWC regional commander, traveled with the Little Angels at that time and remembers having met her. They rode together on the bus many times, conversing in her broken English, trying to piece together some things about the world. He can remember telling her then to always smile, because she had the most beautiful, radiant smile.

When Mr. Burley met the Korean Folk Ballet in Austin, he came up to greet them and recognized her, and she in turn recognized him. She told him she always remembered his advice to keep on smiling. There are lots of stories of the Korean girls traveling across the country. It seems that they would rather trade their hamburgers for ice cream any day. They really haven't developed a great taste yet for the American food, but you never hear a word of complaint from any of them.

Their leader, Mr. Moo Kyung Lee, is a genius. He can come into a stage, with no lights at all and set up a light extravaganza, all by himself. But he is a humble man, and won't take any credit for himself. All of us on the staff love to work for him. Mr. Dae Oh Son teaches the Divine Principle in Korean. When they have time they go through the entire Principle, and then take an examination. This weekend in Austin when we held a workshop for guests, the dancers also heard lectures all day Saturday and Sunday.

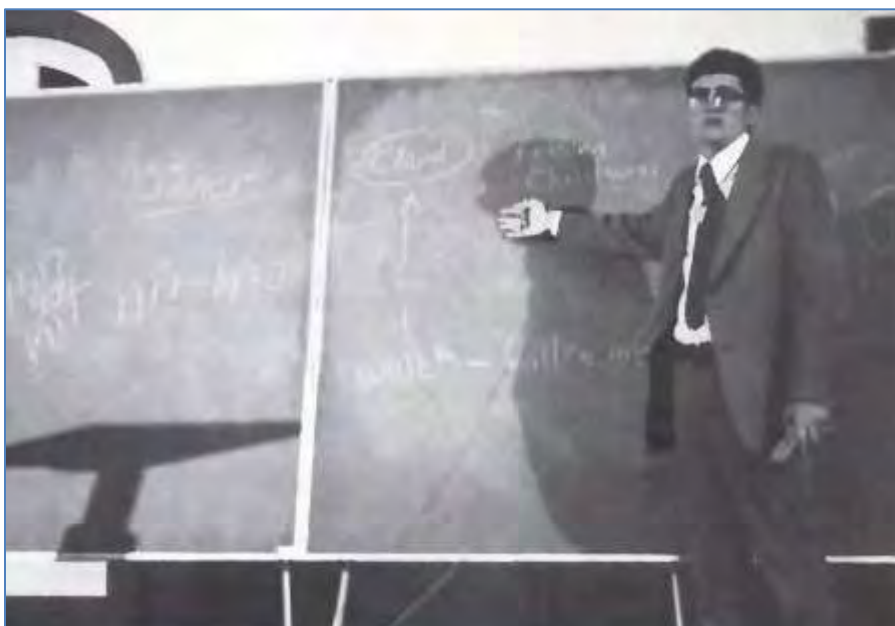
Many contribute to the complete Show

When Marion Dougherty comes on stage, she shows such sincerity, depth of character and heart, and desire to set the world on fire that she really inspires me. Col. Pak has really been working closely with her to help her improve her talks, giving her great love and support.

The technical staff has been doing a dynamite job. They have gone from having to set up lights, movie screen, and a projector at the Day of Hope banquets to putting on entire theatrical productions. And they haven't gained any more members! In fact, they have a couple less now.

Mark Nilson has a 'Super Trouper,' a gigantic spotlight, the best kind one can get. Tom Burkholder uses an entire sound console-he can just about launch a rocket ship! Dan Bozarth takes responsibility for the entire stage management. He seems to have the job right under his thumb.

Tony DiMarco arranges the entire front end of the program, handling the crowd, literature, and setting up the Rainbow Reception. He never complains; he always exhibits good sportsmanship, encouragement, and a supportive spirit.



Terry Walton lectures at a Celebration of Life workshop

The workshop

The workshop staff gives guidance and counseling and coordinates arrangements with the regional director. Mr. Sudo sent Gil Fox (Illinois Mobile Unit Commander) and Susan Finnegan (Ohio State Representative) to the workshop staff. At the head of the workshop staff is Terry Walton, a lecturer from the Belvedere International Leadership Training Center. He brings the standard of workshop presentations that we want to see established across the country.

We feel the workshop has a special mission. The Celebration of Life is the heaviest responsibility of the summer for the regional IOWC teams and directors, who are putting a lot of effort into making the program a success. The ability of the region to organize the follow-up to the three Celebration of Life programs is really greatly limited, so Mr. Salonen felt that in order to have a good follow-up we should have a basic staff traveling with the Celebration of Life.

Susan and I have had the responsibility for organizing the workshops. Our pattern is very simple. We usually arrive on a Tuesday and visit the workshop site, going through a checklist to make sure all the facilities are up to par and sufficient for a weekend workshop.

Our workshops consist of a large group divided into smaller sub-groups or teams, of eight to ten people. A team of eight people would be ideally made up of three or four members and four or five guests. Most workshops have had ten to fifteen teams involving guests and almost an equal number of members only. The teams are headed up by state leaders or mobile unit commanders, and focus on developing a deeper understanding of the Divine Principle and a deeper and more mature commitment to God and Christ.

The guest teams have been staffed by team leaders from the local area or the regional IOWC. Our feeling is that the local area has to be the one to nurture the guests. Susan and I don't appear in front of the group so much; rather, we encourage the team leaders and give them direction.

The workshop has developed in every way—from the organization of registration and getting the first lecture on the go as quickly as possible, to organizing a schedule which will offer the most of the Divine Principle and also develop the deepest relationship among all present.

We no longer have a light fellowship on Saturday night of the workshop. Instead, we have a deeper sharing, hoping to create an experience in which people can feel God and experience His heart. So, we often have an inspirational talk followed by certain games which develop trust between people. Then we have deeply spiritual songs, often led by Frank Kresen from Kansas City. Such songs can strike a very deep and personal note. We close the night with a very serious and stirring prayer, led by some deep member. We encourage both the guests and members to more thoroughly commit themselves to the second coming of Christ and prepare to receive his spirit.

We feel that this is a foundation laid on Saturday night for people to be able to receive the conclusion of the Principle the next day. In our first four cities, about half of the people who have come to workshops have signed membership and have moved into a center or have gone on to follow-up workshops the week afterwards.

We believe that the workshops can be so effective that 90 percent of the guests can join. People have been having a conversion experience, through receiving the Divine Principle, sharing in very serious fellowship, and hearing deep inspirational talks. Across the country, we need more deep, inspirational speakers.

The workshop staff is very united. We trust one another and work together closely to accomplish our goal. We listen to each other's comments and criticism and accept them. Mr. Salonen has worked very directly with us and is very much interested in the workshop plans and what we are going to do to accomplish them.

The workshop in Minneapolis was located on a camp by the beautiful St. Clair River. I think that campsites by a river could very possibly be the best kind of workshop location, offering a very peaceful and relaxing feeling. Going out into the country separates people from their old kind of lives; life is more primitive, so they depend on each other more. It is easy to create a good spirit. All this is helpful, but the key factor is how much we can unite with and trust each other.

The Minneapolis workshop was a high experience, although Mr. Spurgin, the regional IOWC commander, was not able to attend the workshop because of a national conference. Everything gradually developed until we had a very dynamic group and many, many very deeply moved guests and members. Many people commented that they had been resurrected and reborn spiritually because of the workshop. Eleven of them stayed on for a five-day retreat, starting the day after the workshop.

Maybe we are on the brink of a revival in the Unification Church. I have felt a change in the movement in

the month of May-a powerful upswing. A lot of people have gone through troubles, but are overcoming them and are entering into the spirit of this new work. The workshop is offering a great deal of hope and light to our whole country. I wish I could go to a workshop every weekend in all SO states. Mr. Sudo's region, for example, has workshops every weekend. The lectures he teaches are the most powerful experiences; all the members in that region are on fire. Mr. Sudo is stirring up the country and there is a revival going on in the Mid-West.

A small group can take a few guests out to a nearby park, lake, river, or stream and teach the Principle. It doesn't need to be an expensive weekend. It can be very primitive. The Ohio Unification Church used to take a tent and camp out. Everyone had to help build the fire, and they lived primitively together. That will give people an experience with God faster than almost anything else.

Our job is to show how workshops can be effective, how we can move people to tears by just bringing them to God. When they know the truth, they can't help but cry. That's the point. So we have a great hope and we will do our best for God and Christ.

In Austin, Texas, we have had the experience of hearing Dr. Joseph Kennedy speak at the workshops three or four times, for over an hour each. These have been the most inspirational and moving talks. He can lift people up, and just shake their hearts and show them how God is really working today. I hope that we can learn from him. I feel like he is a special older brother God has sent to us. Dr. Kennedy can share with us the soul and heart of the Principle.