



Stories to Nourish the Heart

Elisabeth M. Seidel

Edited by Jennifer P. Tanabe

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by

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Cover photo of Chambéry, Savoie, birthplace of Elisabeth Seidel, by Diesa Seidel

Art work by Yuichi Tanabe

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Advance Reviews for *Stories to Nourish the Heart*

It is from a place of honest introspection that Elisabeth openly shares her life experiences. Her willingness to put herself in a place of vulnerability subtly invites the reader to take an authentic look within. Through her commentary on topics from family values to global awareness, Elisabeth brings deep meaning to life's seemingly simple moments. The reader can expect a heartwarming, thought-provoking, inspiring read.

~ *Dianne Quinlan*
Red Hook, New York

In *Stories to Nourish the Heart*, my mom shares captivating reflections of her personal life memories. Through her stories, she uncovers hidden meanings and beautiful analogies that give our everyday existence purpose. This book will surely warm your heart and provoke your own soulful consciousness.

~ *Diesa E. Seidel*
San Diego, California

Thank you for your friendly reminder that a life of faith is a life of love. This is a time of troubled hearts, so your words are very comforting. It is very precious when God can be so near.

~ *Elizabeth Kiedler*
Austria

Merci pour ce très beau témoignage riche d'enseignements.

~ *Jean Pierre Nadal*
France

I can always deeply relate to your Insight Stories, Elisabeth. You are putting into words feelings that I feel/felt but do/did not know how to express. Thank you for touching many lives by extracting beauty in everything!

~ *Raymonde Meyer*
San Clemente, California

I enjoy reading Elisabeth's insight stories a lot. They are lively glimpses of moments we all experience. Elisabeth has the talent to give a special depth to those instances. This is of high value as it makes me realize that every minute must be lived thoroughly. As we share the same attachment to a lovely French region, the stories dealing with family roots make a special echo in my heart, keeping memories of the past alive. Remembering where we come from helps us find our way in life. So, thank you Elisabeth for your Insight Stories that help me slow down and reflect on what really matters.

~ *Karine Clement*
France

Elisabeth Seidel manages to gently convey a sense of the connections between family, society and the higher purposes of God in her new book, *Stories to Nourish the Heart*.

Though it imparts its wisdom via personal reflections, *Stories to Nourish the Heart* is more than a reminiscence. Rather it uses the personal to meditate on questions every person asks at one time or another. The questions don't seem quite so abstract when considered as part of the fabric of everyday experience. And Elisabeth shows answers are there if we are willing to look, in the eyes of a loved one, the working through of conflict, the sacrifice of duty, and the preservation of faith in the face of the unknown.

Told in loosely connected sketches, *Stories to Nourish the Heart* is an easy read in one sense. But at the same time, it offers much spiritual food for thought.

In Elisabeth's latest book, she finds ways to compare her own life's romantic serendipity with touchstones of current pop culture. In one example, she talks about getting hooked on a Korean TV series, "Crash Landing on You." The premise involves a rich South Korean girl, head of a business empire, who manages to land in North Korea while paragliding in bad weather. She becomes trapped there, and during the series, you follow her adventures trying to get back home, and in the meantime falling in love with a young high official.

"The new handsome superman comes from over there," Elisabeth notes. "The emotions there are strong. Their love is from their bone marrow. The food tastes like heaven. I just loved it. Being transported to another world where I never went before, but someone found true love there."

Ultimately, the love Elisabeth experienced with her husband, begun in a call to faith via an unlikely arranged marriage, and the work they shared in service of their church and in raising a family, opened her to divine grace in her own life.

By its series of spare yet thoughtfully contemplated vignettes, *Stories to Nourish the Heart* will gratify anyone who is looking to be more open to the lessons available in life's sometimes perplexing, but more often mundane events.

~ Joe Doran
Rhinebeck, New York

Dedication

These stories are dedicated to my tribe of 430 couples, and especially to those couples and their families, who, together with my family, are dedicating their lives and love for Heaven as 43 Blessed Couples. Thank you to:

Mathias and Catherine Alton Gagnerot, Elena Ballestrazzi, Brian and Tomoko Block, Lawrence and Marie Bond, Francesco and Sophia Lilian Rose Campillo, René and Danielle Chaillié, Christopher and Tanya Chandler, Jeremy and Kathleen Cirelli, Olivier and Fabiola Cornet Collet, Armand and Mylene Dano, Eduard and Gretta De Bengy, Bernard and Emily Delahaye, Chris Alan and Ye Lin Choi Derflinger, Josef and Monique Derflinger, Werner and Michiko Fehlberg, Kurt and Josiane Fredoux-Kohler, Fritz and Patricia Hartmann, Sebastian and Mereth Huemer, Morio and My Quyn Trien Kawashima, John and Maria Kenny, John Harris and Marie-France Kirkley, Alva Rand and Irmgard Mueller Lines, Hiromitsu and Kayo Ye Yong Masuda, Martin and Huguette Moloney, Emilio and Marcelle Murdica, Jean Pierre and Naoko Nadal, Charles and Janine Nadal, Yoshifumi and Anne-Marie Charruand Naka, Floyd Jr. and Chrystal Nelson, Kenneth and Hiroko Olivo, Kerry and Carol Pobanz, Kashu and Jocelyne Pointier, Ando and Betty Rodrigues, Robert and Angelika Selle, Karl and Erica Selle, Eric and Tomomi Selle, Wojciech and Aleksandra Skonieczny, Gianni and Merrylou Spiciani, Franco and Sholeh Amini Toccaceli, Namvan and Sunnie Van der Stok, Reinhard and Wilhelmine Walther, Piotr and Monika Zejer.

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I would like to thank all those who supported me in so many different ways so that this volume could be published:

My beloved husband Dietrich, my children Christopher and Diesa, all my extended family including 430 generations of our ancestors who form my foundation, which has extended into my tribe of 430 couples on the earth.

Those religious leaders who supported us, opening their church and their hearts to me whenever I needed them. In particular, Dr. Emmanuel Aydin of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Vienna, and Catholic priests Father Coen and Father Godé in Red Hook, New York, and Father Durieux in France.

In Toronto, Canada, theologian Dr. Herbert Richardson, high school principal Joe Belanger and his wife Micheline, and medical doctors Dr. Jan Kryspin and his wife Dr. Zdena Harrant, who all gave so much from their hearts to our whole family. Also, special thanks to Sir John Templeton, the American born British philanthropist, who supported my husband's work.

There are many more too numerous to mention here, but I love you forever because one way or another our paths crossed. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart! Dietrich and I will never forget you.

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Introduction

“Stories to Nourish the Heart” is a compilation of the reflections that Elisabeth Seidel wrote for her blog during the period from the spring of 2018 until the end of 2021. They are insights from her life, a life of faith and service to others, to those she has embraced as her extended family, her “tribe.” This tribe is not limited to her hometown (and in fact she counts several places as her hometown), to her native country, to her husband’s native country, to the country of her children’s birth, or to her adopted country of America; Elisabeth’s heart embraces people the world over as God’s children, children of our one Heavenly Parent. Here she shares life experiences that have nourished her heart.

As an introduction to her life, I will let her own words speak, from her autobiography¹:

I was born on October 18, 1945 in a small French town in the Alps. I grew up as a child in La Chambre, a village in Savoie in the French Alps, beautiful and close to nature.

When I go back to Chambéry (where I was born), St Jean de Maurienne (where I received my teenage education), or La Chambre, I feel that they are all my hometowns. I go back with an American spirit and with my father’s love and my mother’s love. I love France very much and cry over this country, how the revolution of 1789 and the resulting affairs of state now have separated this nation from God.

¹ Elisabeth M. Seidel, edited by Jennifer P. Tanabe, *Stories of My Life: The Search for True Love*. Lulu, 2019, pages 13-21.

My family, with many stories of the horrors of World War II and the crimes of the Germans, shaped my thinking as a young person. However, the most important thing, which I remember vividly, is that my father forbade me to go to church. Every day on my way to school I would pass the Catholic Church by crossing over to the other side of the street, thus avoiding being in front of the church and following my father's direction. ...

My family went through a lot of turmoil and my parents divorced when I was 17. I would tell my school friends that I would travel around the world and find something marvelous – I would find the truth. They looked at me in amazement. So, I went to work and to study in Greece, England, France and Italy. I felt some spiritual guidance in the summer of 1970 when I worked as a tourist guide. I took people to vacation spots, and again this intuition came over me that I would find the truth. But I would have to work hard; my life would not be easy. So, during the last week at the vacation spot, I delighted in the ocean water under the sun at the island of Minorca in Spain, enjoying a beautiful vacation before starting my life mission.

I returned to Milano, where I shared an apartment with a former Catholic nun. Although we were both in our early twenties, she already had the experience of a religious life. I had many questions, such as “Does God exist?” “Is there life after death?” “Where can I find true love?” She said she knew a group who could answer all my questions but, because I did not have a religious upbringing, I would not be able to understand their teaching.

That encounter in Milano, Italy was Elisabeth's first meeting with a member of the Unification Movement, the followers of Reverend Sun Myung Moon. She was eventually introduced to the group and began her study of the Divine Principle² in Italian. However, fate intervened and her teacher had to relocate. So, Elisabeth also relocated, to Paris in France. There she studied the Divine Principle in depth and committed herself to the movement. In 1976 she, along with many other European members, traveled to the United States to participate in Reverend Moon's public speeches at Yankee Stadium in New York and Washington Monument in Washington DC.

Elisabeth continues to tell her story in her own words:

Father Moon announced a Matching and Blessing³ to take place in February 1977. ... I truly experienced the love of God at the Matching and Blessing ceremony. When introduced to my husband, Dietrich, and looking deeply into his eyes, it was like a spiritual experience going through a tunnel all the way to heaven and sensing God and His profound love. God was looking at me through Dietrich.

For these two days of celebration, I truly experienced the kingdom of God on earth. I was smiling non-stop so that a few days later I even felt cramps from smiling too much. As the 74 Couple Blessing group at the New Yorker Hotel, we felt close to each other as true brothers and sisters. Tasting God's love through True Parents⁴ at the Blessing ceremony is the peak of one's life. Our couple was from Austrian-German and

² The teachings of the Unification Movement.

³ Reverend Moon acted as a matchmaker, introducing potential marriage partners from single members of the Unification Movement who wished to receive the Holy Marriage Blessing.

⁴ Reverend and Mrs. Moon are often referred to as "True Parents" by members of the Unification Movement.

French backgrounds, and we were well aware of the enmities between our nations. We were working for world peace and God's kingdom on this earth, thus on the way all things needed to be healed with lots of forgiveness, repentance and new beginnings.

From the first class of seminarians at the Unification Theological Seminary, Father Moon chose 12 students to study for a Ph.D. degree and my husband, representing Austria, was one of them. Thus, Dietrich and I started our family life in Toronto, Canada. We had many students from the University of Toronto who came to our apartment, and we taught them the Divine Principle and showed many videos about our Unification movement. I recall that professors also came and wanted to know more about Reverend Moon. We even had one TV interview.

Our children, Christopher and Diesa, were born in Toronto. I will always remember going with my babies to visit professors in their offices to tell them about our church. We had good relationships with the professors, and hosted several events for them in our apartment or the church center. In 1987 we moved to the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York, where Dietrich began teaching theology courses.

We continued witnessing and organized the Community Dinner Talks and took care of student families. Also, we responded to the need for taking care of ministers with Interfaith Prayer Breakfasts and marriage and family seminars, which initially started at UTS and then moved to our home. Father Moon gave us the blueprint of how to live in the kingdom of God

and we could experience God's love and the love of
True Parents.

While Dietrich taught full-time at UTS the Seidel family bought their home in Red Hook, on Thayer Lane. This rural location features in some of her stories, particularly in the section "On Nature." In later years, with their children now grown, they spent increasing amounts of time in Europe, particularly in Dietrich's homeland of Austria. They spent several months each year in Vienna where his mother and sister and other relatives lived, as well as visiting Elisabeth's hometown in the French Alps.

Sadly, Elisabeth's husband Dietrich, her true love, suffered declining health and in 2016, while visiting their daughter Diesa in San Diego, California, he ascended to the eternal spiritual realm. Although this was a life-changing event for Elisabeth, her faith and determination to live for the sake of God's will remained unshaken.

Elisabeth embraced the challenge of having to "go it alone" without her beloved, with courage and indomitable spirit, continuing to share God's love and truth with all she met. Many of her stories here are from these times.

These "Stories to Nourish the Heart" come from Elisabeth Seidel's heart, from the insights that she has realized through her own life experiences. I am confident that the reader will be moved when reading them. Some stories will bring great joy and comfort; others may lead to tears; while still others will stimulate reflection on one's own life, as the truths Elisabeth shares lead to realization and understanding. It is my hope that the words she shares here are like seeds that grow and bring forth beautiful blossoms and fruits to readers throughout the world.

Jennifer P. Tanabe, Ph.D.
Red Hook, New York, November, 2021

A. On True Love

Finding and living a life of true love is surely the goal of all people. Human beings were not created to be alone; we are social beings and crave the companionship of a life partner who will love us for eternity. No matter our age or background, we want to experience the emotion of true love, or our great love. Elisabeth shares how her mother-in-law, at age 97, was still fascinated by true love.

Once we have found that person with whom we can share true love, we never want to let them go. Even if we have to separate for a time, perhaps even a long time, true love remains a powerful force that continues to connect us.

Here are just a few love stories to warm the heart. Enjoy!



"I will be always with you, forever together"

Die Große Liebe

As I was visiting my 97 years young mother-in-law Oma in Vienna, I was surprised that she was still reading books. I thought she was only looking through magazines or mainly watching TV as entertainment, if she was not on an excursion, or playing dominos.

But to my surprise she was reading a book from the American author Pearl Buck, and the title was “Die Große Liebe,” means “Le Grand Amour” or “The Great Love.”

Wow! She is 97 and reading love stories! I realized this ideal of ours never dies. At 100 you can still dream about love, true love, the one and only. This quest never ever ends and reading about it becomes so exciting, interesting and fulfilling.

I told Oma, “I know who is my great love for ever and ever.” And she had me tell her again and again my encounter with Dietrich, her son, which was love at first sight. And how it stayed this way during our 40 years of married life and beyond.

We are born this way that love is part of our inner self, and the most interesting topic, even when you reach 97 years of age.

To keep a true love is great work. If you did not find it yet, do not despair. One day every one of us will find their true, unique, and forever love. This I believe.

Let's spread more love around us, more loving words, more smiles, more random acts of kindness, and especially if someone attacks you let's give back in kindness. We are changing ourselves so that a world of heart and love will come about.

In the photo, you can see me with my beloved Dietrich, Oma, and Dietrich's sister Gisela at the famous Prater in Vienna.



With Gisela and Oma at the Prater Vienna

The Stories that Made His Romantic Green Eyes Teary: A Viennese Love Story

I never saw my husband cry.

There were two stories which made his eyes damp or wet. Here is one of those stories. There is a legend of the *Spinnerin am Kreuz* (“Spinner at the Cross”), the story of the spinning wife. Her husband, a merchant, had left for the Holy Land Crusade circa 1375.

Every time we were leaving the Austrian capital to go home by the Vienna woods, we would pass by a hill which has a statue of the *Spinnerin am Kreuz*, south of the city called Favoriten.

Dietrich would tell me this story again and again, every time we passed by, and every time it made his eyes damp. It is said that the wife came to this hill every day waiting for her husband to return from the war. From there she could see far in the distance.

While she was diligently working on spinning the wool she waited with hope, anticipating the return of her love. Faithfully she went there every day, but no husband came back.

People started to tell her: Forget it, he will never come back, why don't you marry again?

But instead, she persevered for months or years, never giving up hope, and anticipating the return of her love.

One day as usual as she was working on her wool, looking far in the distance, when a man in rags appeared who was begging for food. She hurried to take care of this man, and suddenly realized it was him! Her husband had returned. What a joy and beauty there is in such faithfulness, after suffering and persevering to conquer her dreams.

Faithfulness made my husband eyes damp. Faithfulness is a heavenly emotion. There is value in being faithful.

To be faithful requires a strong conviction, a commitment. More than a feeling, love is a decision. Faithfulness is more than a feeling; it is a heavenly decision. Dietrich emphasized this over and over again in all his classes on “Marriage and Family.”

The first ancestors of humankind, Adam and Eve, did not keep the Commandment. They were not faithful to God and to each other. That is why they were chased out of the Garden of Eden. This has been the root of unhappiness.

Today one more time God is giving us a blessing. We are entering the age of heavenly emotions.

Love between husband and wife is eternal. The love between husband and wife cannot be given to another. If it is, it will be destroyed.

We pledge faithfulness, and include God in our relationship. This will bring peace in the family and ultimately peace in the world.

The New “Handsome” Comes from North Korea!

Usually, I do not like to watch any series on television. Most of the time I find them boring or not interesting, although I do like “The Crown” series about the British queen.

Then I tried another series, this time from Korea, and I simply loved it. “Crash Landing on You” is the story of a rich South Korean girl, head of a business empire, who, while paragliding in bad weather, landed in North Korea. She becomes trapped there, and the series follows her adventures trying to go back to South Korea, in the meantime falling in love with a young high official.

The new handsome, superman comes from over there. The emotions there are strong. Their love is from their bone marrow. The food tastes like heaven.

I just loved it. Being transported to another world where I never went before, but someone found true love there.

B. On Marriage and Family

Father Moon was well known as a matchmaker, often bringing together men and women of different cultures and races to make an eternal commitment to each other. He asked these brides and grooms to pledge to never break their marriage vows, but to love each other with true love and to create ideal families that would bring about a world of peace:

First, a husband and wife must always trust and love each other. Second, they must not cause any pain to the heart of their partner. Third, they must educate their children and grandchildren to maintain sexual purity. Fourth, all members of their family must help and encourage each other so that they become a true ideal family. Chastity before marriage and fidelity in marriage are of utmost importance ... so people can live to their highest potential as human beings, creating and maintaining healthy families.⁵

The task of remaining true and faithful to one's spouse, and creating an ideal family with them, is not an easy one! For many, finding the right person to marry is a major challenge with many temptations on the way. For love is the most powerful force and when it goes in the wrong direction the consequences are disastrous. Elisabeth is not afraid to share about such challenges, and the difficulties in maintaining a loving relationship with one's spouse even when they are the "right one."

Raising children raises even more challenges! Here Elisabeth shares many stories from her own family; stories in which challenges are faced

⁵ Sun Myung Moon, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*. The Washington Times Foundation, 2010, p. 202.

and overcome and lessons learned. She also shares deep insights learned from reflecting on what others have experienced, including several excerpts from her husband's writings on "Marriage and Family."

Love Is the Most Powerful Force of All

There is no greater force against evil in the world than the love of a man and a woman in marriage.

~ Cardinal Raymond Burke

As I was browsing Facebook, I stopped at this sentence from Cardinal Burke. I savored it for a long time. It was illustrated with a most stunning painting of a man and a woman dancing tenderly together as their kids, five and seven years old it seemed, sat and watched. What a beautiful sight! Love is the most powerful force of all.

On Tuesday August 13, 1963, I wrote in my journal: “It is wonderful to think that soon I will be 18, all of a life to fill, so many things to get to know, and not knowing yet who will be the man of my life.”

Fast forward to February 1977. Just a few days before our wedding day, February 21, I was in the library at Belvedere estate together with many single men and women. We had come there to hear a speech from Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

I had heard rumors that Father Moon, as we call him, was preparing to conduct a Holy Marriage Blessing soon. Instead of a speech, Father Moon asked if we wanted him to start matching us right away! I was taken by surprise, a little in shock, and suddenly overcome with anticipation.

Father Moon started on the spot. He would ask a male participant to stand up, ask a few questions and then point at a woman in the crowd. The two would then proceed to another room to talk and decide if they would accept the match. They would then return to the library and bow to Father and Mother Moon if they accepted. That afternoon 12 couples were matched. The next day the matching would continue.

When we were matched, Dietrich and I talked shortly. He said, “I like you.” I said, “I like you too.” As he was holding my hands, I was

looking into his romantic green eyes and transported into the heavenly realm where God was telling me, “I will love you through him.”

A few days later, on the 21st of February 1977, the Holy Marriage Blessing ceremony was held with 74 couples.



With some of the other 74 Couples and Dr. and Mrs. David S.C. Kim



Our wedding

So, I totally agree with Cardinal Burke: There is no greater force against evil in the world than the love of a man and woman in marriage.

Learning to Love

In the earlier years of our marriage my husband, Dietrich, was often late coming home and did not have the habit of calling to let me know. There were no cell phones at that time, but I was still expecting a call.

This was hard on me as I am a natural worrier: What happened? Where is he? Did something happen? And so on for as long as he was not home.

But because his Ph.D. thesis dealt with “Marriage and Family in the Christian Tradition,” he studied this topic deeply and I think one reason he became my true love is because he studied this intensely and became better and better at it.

So, I wish to share some of his findings:

My hope and joy about life was rooted in the experience of a loving family and I knew already as a youngster that priests were not permitted to marry. From that time on, I repeatedly asked myself questions about God and His providence. I especially had questions about why Jesus could not marry and have his own family and in this way be an example for his followers.⁶

This has been the thinking of Dietrich since a youngster. Later on, he said:

Building my marriage with Elisabeth and raising our children became for me the path of discovering the heart of God. I soon realized that beyond all my theological studies and intellectual pursuits, it is through the experience of loving human relationships, and in particular family life, that God wants to be present among us.

⁶ Dietrich F. Seidel, “Autobiography” in Jennifer P. Tanabe (ed.), *Unification Insights into Marriage and Family: The Writings of Dietrich F. Seidel*. Lulu, 2016, p. 6.

About a Loving Marriage

In an article, “Secrets for a successful marriage,” my husband Dietrich talked about the marriage experts who put great emphasis on the spouses’ character development, that is, their attitude and internal disposition:

In fact, most marital advice has to do with strengthening the roots of human relationships. Like the roots of a tree, our internal disposition also needs to be firmly grounded in the solid foundation of our value system and world view so we can brave even the greatest storms.

To achieve a good marriage, we need to develop two areas, namely, internal attitudes and external skills. Internal attitudes have to do with our spiritual lives, which define the roots of our marriages, while external skills focus on building and nourishing our marital bond.⁷

To nourish our marital bond Dietrich and I loved nature walks. My best memories are in walking the mountains of Austria and France through the hot sunshine, rain, or snow. The trees became our friends. They were part of ourselves, as well as the sky and the sun and the wild animals. He always preferred the unmarked paths down the mud and the hills. But, to please me, most of the time we walked the well-marked paths, the ones which almost always arrived at the next hut where hot soup or other Austrian specialties were awaiting us.

I was receiving so much love and care going hand in hand with my beloved, and absorbing in my body and soul the energizing and life-

⁷ Dietrich F. Seidel, “Secrets for a Successful Marriage” in *Unification Insights into Marriage and Family*, p. 150.

giving elements of nature. He never failed to mention each and every time how most beautiful God's creation is.



Walking together in God's creation

How I Prayed His Bicycle Away

In the early times of our marriage, we were penniless and Dietrich used a bike to go to his classes at the university. There was a lot of traffic in busy Toronto and I was afraid for his life, and I told him I do not like his bike.

In Austria they bike everywhere. Like the French needs their baguette every morning, the Austrian needs their bike. It seemed to me though that Vienna was more like a big slow village and Toronto was a modern, fast, too busy city. My husband refused to let his bike go, because it was so convenient and close to his heart, his country's habit.

There was no way he would listen to me. So, I prayed his bike away.

With luck and prayers his beloved bike was stolen. I felt such relief, thanking God while Dietrich was kind of upset having to take the bus from this time on.

When communication does not work, you can always pray for your godly wish to come true!

My husband was a die-hard missionary who always liked to sleep on the hard floor. He was used to the tough and rough life of missionary going around America, sleeping in vans, and witnessing or fundraising in the burning hot sun of Arizona or New York's cold winter.

After our marriage, when I moved in with him and he was a student at the University of Toronto studying theology, he had just a very small bachelor room rented from a group of students. There was only one single bed in there. So, in the middle of the night, when it was becoming too crowded in the narrow bed, he would tumble down and sleep on the floor.

Because of his habits, he never complained. He was always humble and satisfied. He was always happy living an ascetic life, and suddenly he had a demanding wife not crazy about this lifestyle. Fortunately,

shortly after, when a child was on its way, we could move to the married student apartment building which was a step up.

I never forgot how humble my husband was, and how humility can take you anywhere you want to go or to be. Even after he received his Ph.D., he never ever took on the air of someone who was achieving something, or proud of anything that could make him superior in any way. Living tough and rough gave him a steel will, and a life of devotion gave him compassion and true love for others. These were the foundation for a good and happy marriage.

After graduating from the University of Toronto, we moved to Barrytown, New York where Dietrich started teaching at the Unification Theological Seminary. There were no buses to go anywhere, and we had two children by then. It was time to think about getting a cheap car.



With our first car

We looked at advertisements in the newspaper. One car was advertised for 2000 dollars in Syracuse. We were still penniless, and thought we could borrow money. But God's angels were already working with us and for us.

When we arrived at the wonderful couple's house in Syracuse, Dietrich became instant friends with them, sharing his life of faith with them over coffee. The couple was so moved that the car became half price. We could buy it for 1000 dollars.

God always works in mysterious ways, loving us and caring for us in our day-to-day life.

Proclamations, Declarations, Pledges, Vows, and Promises

When a president takes office, he puts his hand on the Bible and pledges, “.... so help me God.” He is taking a stand. He is promising what he is going to do. He is involving our Almighty. He is making a declaration, a commitment.

The Pilgrims took a stand to put God first. This guided their life. They affirmed it; they declared it; they pledged it. This was the resolution which brought good fortune to them and America. They kept their word; they were trustworthy.

The Declaration of Independence was such a pledge before God.

When our first president George Washington was at Valley Forge, he kneeled in prayer. The task and responsibility were too much to bear for one person alone. He had to make a decision which was unbearable by himself. He searched for answers coming from heaven.

This is why we are moved in our heart and mind, and in awe when we see this historical portrait of our famous and beloved president submitting to our Heavenly Parent. It stirs our original mind that we should always include God.

God is a dramatic God. He can change the course of history in an instant, at the last minute. On all our coins it is written “In God we trust.” We receive answers if we knock and ask.

We affirm there is a God. We pray, we greet God every morning. We pray again, and then some more. Then we start resembling God. We keep our Heavenly Parent in our life; we never let go.

When we marry, we also make a vow. We pledge fidelity and to be together for better and for worse. We keep our vows. They are sacred. We do not vacillate in between. We keep our pledge. The family is the cornerstone of society, so it starts from there.

At our wedding Dietrich and I made a vow that we would stay together even beyond this world, because true love can transcend also the spirit world, where we enter the world of the heart, the realm of liberation. We wanted to be the guardians of true love.

May all your affirmations and proclamations this year brings good fortune and blessings to you, your family: husband, wife, sons and daughters. Because truly the family is the starting point of experiencing true love.

Making a World of Peace One Family at a Time

In his article, “The Significance of the family for World Peace,” my husband Dietrich quoted Mitch Albom saying, **“The family is the only secure foundation. You must have the support and love of a family or you don’t have much at all.”**⁸

Looking back at my relationship with my husband, I had many days when I was feeling in great agony. Those were the days when we had a fight. A volcano would erupt from time to time.

Dietrich’s Chinese Zodiac sign is the Ram (Lamb). He is extremely patient. My sign is the Rooster, and I am extremely impatient. When reading about compatibility between the Ram and the Rooster it says the relationship is most difficult but not impossible – the Ram does not know what to make of the Rooster.

So, we had to tackle so many impossible situations. My specialty was to erupt quickly; for him nothing would really trigger him. If I was hurt, unhappy, upset, or the like I would not talk to him for hours. But I was in very deep agony. All my energy, zest for life, *raison de vivre*, *joie de vivre*, purpose and goals were gone. I was most miserable.

Then I noticed the same pattern always coming from him, “We need to talk.” To show my dissatisfaction I totally refused at first, letting out some more steam and eruptions. But truly I was not happy in this state. No matter what, we had to work it out. We needed to forgive each other and reconcile and start anew.

Then I realized we needed to talk. He always left me plenty of space and a listening ear to digest all my arguments, but he was always the first to say, “I did not mean to hurt you. This was not my intention. Please forgive me.” Then I could open up to him again, letting go of my anger.

⁸ Mitch Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie*. New York: Broadway Books, 1997, p. 91.

The point was that both of us were absolutely anchored in God and in our belief that we must work out our differences to be a happy couple. And we would never let go of that.

To conclude, when there is a fight one of us has to say, “We need to talk” and apologize, saying, “It was not my intention to hurt you. Please forgive me.” Lend a listening ear and a forgiving heart and conclude it with a deep hug. Hugs are warm, cozy, bringing the affection needed for everyday life.

True love is not impossible. In fact, it is our *raison de vivre*, our *joie de vivre*.

Married at First Sight

Recently I felt drawn to the reality TV series called “Married at First Sight.”

Since there are so many singles feeling lonely and looking for love and marriage, a team of psychologists, sexologists, sociologists, and marriage counselors matched six couples from a large pool of volunteers. These six couples, matched by this team of experts, were supposed to marry the moment they met each other.

It looked a bit like my own matching and wedding.

In fact, those six couples, in my opinion, looked like excellent matches for each other. Even though this team of professionals claimed that nobody did this before, I have to say the Rev. Moon did exactly this during his life time.

With insight and intuition, by looking spiritually into our lineage of ancestors, and through our body characteristics, he would determine the best matches. But we still had our portion of responsibility to make our marriage work.

In his book, “Reflections on Unification Theology: Revealing the World of Heart,” my husband, Dietrich, wrote:

God’s vertical love is perfected through the horizontal love of human beings, in the highest form through the husband-and-wife relationship. That model is then extended to how families relate to each other, and how nations relate to each other. The whole Kingdom of God is characterized by these loving relationships.⁹

When we resemble God, that is our original value, our divine value. And, as Dietrich stated, we resemble God through the love

⁹ Dietrich F. Seidel and Jennifer P. Tanabe, *Reflections on Unification Theology: Revealing the World of Heart*. Lulu, 2021, p. 231.

relationship of a couple in a God-centered marriage. We can only enter the Kingdom of Heaven with our spouse. This is our salvation.

Today we need to recover the family, which has been under attack since the beginning of time. If we do not have a family, we do not have much at all.

That is why singles feel lonely and want to find love, and why popular television shows like “Married at First Sight” attract many viewers.

I pray you find your true love.

The Killer of Love

Here I would like to address a serious topic.

As I was browsing through a website called “HighNoon.org,” I was reading that a high school student was wearing a tee shirt that said:

LIVE FOR LOVE

PORN KILLS LOVE

This stirred a lot of discussions among the students.

THE KILLER OF LOVE

The average age at which students starts watching porn is eleven years old, yes 11. There are claims that the pornography industry is directly targeting children.

My cousin Karine, a high school teacher, said to me, “Every day at school I see the damage that cell phones and Internet do to our kids, this is why my husband and I choose not to buy cell phones for our own children and very much limit their use of the Internet.”

Addiction is fueled in secrecy, and conquered in a community.

Those dark forces out there are destroying our youth and our families, and must be conquered if we want to live a happy and fulfilling life with real love. Those addicted to porn cannot have a functional intimate relationship anymore with their spouse.

FIGHT FOR LOVE

Protection of the family is one of the most important tasks to save a sick society. Porn addiction destroy marriages and put people into deep depression and violent behavior. We need to heal all addictions and become functional again. There is a similarity between the illegal drug industry and the pornography industry.

BELIEVE IN LOVE

“HighNoon.org” and other websites are developing to help people heal. Like:

“FightTheNewDrug.org” or “EndSexualExploitation.org” and “YourBrainOnPorn.com.”

I pray for the healing of America and our own family. Let’s heal ourselves so that we can heal others. One day all of us will find the true love we are longing for.

Say No to Divorce

I asked my friend, why did his wife wanted to divorce him, such a fine man like him. He said, she told him that she did not receive enough love.

In our case we women always want more. In this case, less is not best but more is good. More love and more attention. More hugs. More cherished words, more time. All of the above. Love unconditionally. Not once but every day. A few times every day. How can this happen in the fast-paced world of today?

Well, when love gets going, is given, received, and given back, there is so much more energy, so much more purpose in one's life. The tiredness goes away, the suffering in other areas of one's life diminishes. It is a big dose of health, vitamins, and pick me up. True love can cure all, I always heard.

I was very demanding to my husband. How could he cope with me? Many times I asked, please listen to me, to my story, to my pain with so and so. It was serious. He had to drop whatever he was doing and give me immediate attention. Now I am so eternally grateful for those moments. True love was a therapy to feel better.

Every one of us has to find a true love therapy which make us feel better. Let's proclaim a love therapy where we are the invitation to make someone feel better, more loved, more precious, more needed. "It is in giving that we receive."

Always say no to divorce.

Mom! Be Nice to Dad

“Mom, be nice to Dad!” My daughter responded, one day after I was using a sharp tongue toward my husband. It came to me as a surprising shock, as I was not even aware of my attitude. Sometimes too critical, or impatiently babbling something too fast or inappropriate. It stopped me in my tracks and I could reflect on my attitude.

I was not nice. To my husband.

I had a lot of reasons why. I could enumerate all of them. In order of importance.

But in the end, it does not matter the reasons why.

What does matter in the end is if we could love anyway.

Being always nice and pleasant speaking, and reconciling and agreeable. This is an art. The art of living together.

Responding in kind when we know the other one is wrong, or we think he is. Forgiving and going over the hurt of squabbling.

In the end it does not matter.

What matter is if we could love, anyway.

I have been doing a lot of thinking lately, reviewing different situations in my life where I was not nice, and changing them in my mind to the right response.

It is said that when you go to the spirit world, you first review your life. You experience how the other person felt when you were not nice, by your actions and behavior, and also when you were nice, what pleasant emotions you gave to others. This will determine the region where you will be residing in your eternal home.

Some situations were not closed well the way I would have wanted, which means with ultimate true love. So, in my mind I process them, asking for forgiveness, and also asking my husband from the other side of the veil to work at it. We can continue our relationship between the two worlds to make in the end the perfect love we always wanted.

Let's be nice to each other.

Together Is Better

Upon getting up one day, I was mad, mad at my husband. Super mad. I did not like the habit of his to be late, very late, or a little late, but late anyhow.

I preferred Princess Diana's way. She could be late because of who she was, but she was always on time or early. Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable. This is a way to show love and gives the message, "I care about you."

When my daughter Diesa was at Marist college in Poughkeepsie, part of the Red Foxes basketball team, they had a rigorous training schedule. They had to be on the court or the gym at 5 am, which meant be there 15 minutes earlier for warm up. If they were late, they had to do push-ups. This has stayed with her for her whole life. She is always early for appointments.

Of course, Dietrich's mom (Oma) knew of her son's habit of being late, because whenever we were invited to her favorite restaurant, or any other place, it was hard to make it on time. One day Oma noticed I was frustrated and gave me some advice: "In these circumstances take your purse and go. Do not wait for him." Nice advice when your mother-in-law takes your side!

We were living in the woods one hour from Vienna. That morning, Dietrich was preparing to go to Vienna to teach at the Vienna International University, and I was supposed to go to the city with him. As usual things got scrambled and hurried, and I knew my husband was going to speed all the way to the capital, leaving me in a state of anxiety.

So that morning I took my purse and went. I not only took my purse, but I took the car as well, so he was left without transportation. He had to walk to the train station, change trains, and get the subway. He

would not be on time for his class for sure, and because of that, he was very mad as well.

Meanwhile I was climbing in the Vienna woods with the car, almost surprised by my actions. But I did not feel comfortable with the negative emotions stirring in my heart.

I was climbing up to the famous Hohe Wand, fuming all the way there. It is about 1000 meters high with a breathtaking view well loved by the Viennese for weekends or holidays.

I started walking away through the evergreens, trying to pray for the day, but was not doing so well. Then I found a hut, as you always do when you go through the paths in the Vienna woods. I decided to have some breakfast there. It was still in the early hours of the morning, so no guests were there yet.

I started feeling awkward as the owner was staring at me not understanding my German. He was wondering, “Why is she here by herself at this early hour, alone when everybody is still in bed, and she can’t even speak the language.”

The breakfast that day was not tasting so good. In fact, it was tasting almost bad. There was no flavor, no warmth to it. It tasted cold and unappealing. I was starting to feel all alone, from lonely to miserable. Was it worth all the drama? Could there be another way? I was feeling I was right and my husband was wrong. But is it not that we can let the right go, for the sake of peace?

I was not too proud of myself. I had to make a plan to become smarter than him, because deep inside I never wanted to fight. I like harmony and peace. So that day I made up my mind that I would say the time of all my appointments will be half an hour earlier. I will change the time with Dietrich and then relax and still be on time for my schedule.

I never liked to fight with my husband. Neither did he. The hardships and difficulties made us grow. Let’s not react with toxic emotions. To

attain a better character and lifestyle we should learn to harmonize with each other and always make peace. Together is better.



Together is better

When the Family Is Well, All Is Well



Family photo on Mother's Day

When I was very sick one day and could not get out of bed, my son, a young teenager at that time, made a soup for me with all kinds of fresh and colorful vegetables. It reminded me of my mom's vegetable soup from the mountains of the French alps. Her soup was the best soup one can ever have, because her garden grew in idyllic nature and was tended every day with utmost sincerity.

So, the son of the house was making a soup for me. From my bed, I was already rejoicing. I was surprised he could cut the vegetables perfectly, and put together all these delicious products of the earth in a big pot to simmer.

The soup tasted so good. Spiritual elements can go into the food when it is prepared with good feelings. The spiritual elements, the love, in the soup went deep into my bones, reviving me from feverish slumber,

and starting the healing process. The soup really helped me get out of bed that day.

I remember the taste of that hot soup, made with all my son's heart and attention, and care. Is it not so, that we always remember things which are offered with love?

This is a good memory of my son's filial piety.

Every day let us make good memories from our life. And if we have none or just a few, then we need to rewrite our life stories.

I Am Your Child, Please Always Check on Me

When my daughter was young and we could not be at home at her bed time, she used to leave loving notes for us, her parents. “Dear Mommy and Daddy, I love you a lot! Please check on me right now.” “Mom, all I need from you is love.”

For Father’s Day, she said “Out of everything I learned from you, the things that I will always remember are the things that nourish the heart. You are an inspiration to me because of your unconditional love that you give, unconditionally.” “Dad, I still remember the very first thing you ever taught me ... What it feels like to be loved.”

To be a parent, we learn to love unconditionally. This is why all of us should become a parent, to grow and feel God’s heart, because He loves us as a parent. Parental heart makes us more complete, more whole. Then we can love others too, as a parent.

If for any reason we cannot have children, then we can adopt, or be a foster parent, or adopt a loving animal with whom we can share our abundant love.

Orphans and Orphanages

Recently I spent one month in San Diego where my children live. My beloved son Christopher, while we were finishing dinner together in the busy town on Valentine's Day, took out his wallet to pay for the whole family.

As I looked at his wallet made of cloth, it was so falling apart, broken, and dirty, I was wondering why he does not buy a new one. He said this wallet had so much value and meaning because it comes from an orphanage where he bought it. He wants to send it somewhere for repair because it is so special to him.

There are so many causes to care for, why an orphanage? Then it hit me, orphanage: the kids without parents. How can a child be without a mom and dad and not receiving the love he or she is longing for? When I was a child myself, I always asked my Grandma Marie to tell me stories about her life in an orphanage in Lyon in France, where I guess her mom must have dropped her off for reasons we do not know.

In the summer when my Grandma Marie was still a child, perhaps seven or eight years old, she would go to a family in the mountains of Savoie in "Les Côtes" by Saint Etienne de Cuines. In exchange for helping to take care of the fields and animals, she would receive room and board. After the summer it was time for her to go back by train and I believe one lady from the orphanage would come and wait for her at the train station in Saint Avre-La Chambre. This day Marie refused to board the train, clinging to this couple who took care of her during the summer, holding their coats and sobbing. No-one could persuade her to get on the train. This couple with already many kids decided to adopt her and they became her new family.

Her new brothers and sisters became close with her and I met many of them when I was a child, and later their offspring. I heard they even gave her a dowry when she married my grandfather, Jean Jamen,

himself without a father. His mom had two children and the older one took care of Jean when his mom passed and was his only parent or witness for his wedding. They said that his father must have been an Italian man coming to France for work and had a love affair there in Monthion, a village close to Italy.

Even though my Grandma Marie was an adopted child coming from an orphanage, her adoptive parents considered her as their most beloved child. She could be raised in a loving family with brothers and sisters. This was a great blessing for her.

The love of parents is one of the most precious of all things. Parents do not keep grudges against their children, or bad feelings. They do not keep any record of wrong. Their love is infinite and eternal.

A Thankful and Filial Daughter

I just finished reading the book, “Where You Go: Life Lessons from My Father” by Charlotte Pence.¹⁰ The title of the book is from a favorite Bible verse of their family. It is their beacon and vision:

Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay.
Your people will be my people and your God my God
(Ruth 1:16).

Ruth is telling her mother-in-law that they are family; they are one unit now. Therefore, wherever life takes Naomi, Ruth will follow.

Here is a quote from Charlotte’s book that inspires me. Charlotte is speaking to her dad:

“You are going to be a good governor.”

“I will do my best.”

“You will be.”

“How do you know”?

“Because you are a good dad.”

When she was in middle school, Charlotte gave her dad a homemade book titled “The lessons you have taught me.” Among the many lessons contained in it, here are my favorite ones:

1. The safest place to be is in the center of God’s will
2. Devotions
3. If you lose your family nothing else will matter much.
4. Lead by example
5. Never shout; anger does not inspire.

¹⁰ Charlotte Pence, *Where You Go: Life Lessons from My Father*. Center Street, 2018.

I came to like Charlotte a lot because she always put her family first. She is so thankful to have the parents she has. She is so grateful for her brother and sister.

She is so thankful that her dad always dines with her mom. This means Mike Pence is not available for dinner meetings, because he always dines with his wife. I applaud this rule to protect his marriage, and his family.

The Pence family always pray together. One of their mottos is do the right thing and go home for dinner.

Charlotte also said that Mike Pence would rather lose an election than lose his family.

On the day of his inauguration as Vice President, as Mike Pence took his oath of office his voice caught on the last words,” so help me God.” It was a declaration, an admission that he would not be able to do it without assistance.

Charlotte remembers that the founders included this essential phrase in order to ensure the oath taker asked God for help, knowing full well that he or she would not be able to do the task alone.

Thank you, Charlotte, for showing us that you have a great, inspiring, strong family sustained by your faith and love. Your family circle is unbreakable because of your consistency in staying connected.

Charlotte, we love you, we love your parents, we will always be by your side because truly if we do not have a family, we do not have much at all. Families are eternal.

For My Mother

I wrote this poem in honor of my mother, originally in French. I want to share it with you, together with the English translation.

First, here is a photo of my mother, with her beautiful flowers.



My mother with her beautiful peonies

Parce que c'est ma mère

Beautiful mother
Mère de vie
Mère d'amour
Mère de coeur
 de bonté
 de tendresse
Mère généreuse
Mère pour tous
 C'est ma mère

Petite mère
Grand'mère
Belle mère
Belle dame
 très digne
Grande dame
Super Mom
 Beautiful mother

Mère de passion
Mère très aimée
Grand'mère adorée
Mère précieuse
 Un trésor de mère

Mère pour tous
 Parce que
 c'est ma mère
 Beautiful mother

Mère de confiance
Mère de conscience
Mère d'autorité
 d'honnêteté
 de vérité
 et justice
Mère de ses enfants
 C'est ma mère
 Beautiful mother

Because it's my mother

Beautiful mother
Mother of life
Mother of love
Mother of heart
 of goodness
 of tenderness
Generous
Mother for all
It's my mother

Little mother
Grandmother
Mother-in-law
Beautiful lady
 Dignified
Great lady
Super Mom
 Beautiful mother

Mother of passion
Mother well loved
Adored grandmother
Precious mother
 Treasured mother

Mother for all
 Because
 it's my mother
 Beautiful mother

Mother of trust
Mother of conscience
Mother of authority
 of honesty
 of truth
 and justice
Mother of her children
 It's my mother
 Beautiful mother

Mère de courage
tenace
Mère Bélier
fougueuse
Mère des montagnes
de lumière
de tonnerre
et des éclairs
Mère du ciel
des étoiles
et firmaments
Mère pour tous
C'est ma mère

Mère de pardon
de renouveau
réconciliante
unifiante
Mère d'un monde
d'amour
vrai mère
Mère de tous
C'est ma mère
Beautiful mother!

Mother of courage
of tenacity
Mother Aries
spirited
Mother of mountains
of light
of thunder
of lightning
Mother of heaven
of the stars
and firmaments
Mother for all
It's my mother

Mother of pardon
of renewal
reconciling
unifying
Mother of a world
of love
true mother
Mother for all
It's my mother
Beautiful mother!

Margaretha Vesely, My Beautiful Mother-in-law

To my most beautiful, most distinguished, most dignified, most beloved mother-in-law Margaretha Vesely. Thank you for your exemplary meaningful life. Truly I learned a lot from you.



Margaretha, age 17

One: how to be always cheerful, grateful, and happy despite all circumstances. Every morning you put on a beautiful dress, a tasteful

necklace, and your smile was on, as part of your getting dressed. I never saw you upset, irritated, or angry.

Two: You were always generous with everyone. You invited all family members to join you at your favorite Viennese restaurant Oberlaa, as often as they wanted, and as their schedules permitted. You often extended this invitation to extended family and friends. You made sure everyone was ordering sweets for deserts, topped with “schlagobers,” Austrian whipped cream, and the delicious coffee you can find only there.

You always gave a very large tip to the servers. You did it with love and care. So, every time you entered there, you were received like a VIP. You and Opa always bought newspapers from the refugees, giving tips as well, even if you had already the paper at home.

Three: You made it through the war. Being married at that time with a German officer, your family also suffered during this time. There was not enough to eat, so you had to go to the countryside to work in the fields in order to feed your children.

Four: There were other shockwaves during your lifetime, but you went through it all gracefully and courageously, always keeping your smile, your inner beauty.

How hard it was for you when your beloved son departed for America. He was still very young, and you could not see him for seven years. For a mother it was heartbreaking. I understand you. Then your son Dietrich came back with a French wife and you could not make sense of it all. In the past, French and German and Austrian nations were enemies.

Five: At the end somehow, we could all love each other, overcoming any distance or barrier. Today I declare you as the best mother-in-law and your son Dietrich as the best husband I could ever have.

We all love you Oma, and happy journey into your next life.

Our Treasures in Heaven

During our married life I often asked my husband, “What would you like to eat tonight,” and his answer was always the same: “Leftovers.”

Not very creative, but somehow he was always very hungry. I learned quickly that I must always have a huge quantity of food. It was not necessary for him that the meal be delicious or exotic; as long as it was a very big portion, he was satisfied.

He talked often about how his mom would make sugar noodles after the war, when food was still scarce in Vienna.

During World War II, when he was still an infant and the sirens were signaling that bomber planes were approaching and everyone had to take refuge, his family would run and hide in a basement, hoping they would survive. Oma, his mother, told me that Dietrich had pneumonia, but still they had to stay there for long periods of time, and shiver with cold. She was afraid her child would not survive.

Finally, they could catch the last boat on the Danube leaving Vienna, and escape to the countryside where Oma could work on a farm and there was more to eat. Life is often dramatic, like a novel till the last minute when God intervenes.

Dietrich’s grandmother, Leopoldine, had to stay behind. She could hardly feed herself. For a long time, she had only sugar in the home, so she took half a teaspoon in the morning and half a teaspoon in the evening. When they came back after the war her family hardly recognized her. She was so skinny and sick looking. She had to stay in bed most of the time to save her energy.

So perhaps this is one reason why my husband was always so hungry.

One time one of my friends asked me with an accusing tone, why was I feeding my husband leftovers? The point was that he never wanted to throw away anything.

In that sense he was always very thrifty. What did he want for his birthday? Nothing at all. Even though we always surprised him with something, he said that he does not need anything. I was pleased my daughter and I made sure we had decent and clean clothing for him. His motto was, “One way to save money is not to spend it.”

He was generous with others. During our very short engagement, he gave me all the money he had in his pocket. I was so moved by this gesture. I remember wanting to go to a coffee shop one day as we were taking a walk, but he never offered it to me. I wondered why. That was his style.

As for me, I always had a special love for rings, for exotic and beautiful things, that I could never have. My favorite would have been an emerald with the deep green similar to the one I saw in a Vienna Museum of jewelry belonging to kings and queens.

But his generosity of heart and care were the deepest; something credit cards can never buy.

He could have been a priest with all the restrictions and vows of poverty. Instead, he chose to have a family, and there kept his eternal vows of fidelity, faithfulness, and loving his neighbors more than himself.

This has been more valuable than anything. This is our treasure for all eternity.

C. On Nature

Nature is a wonderful teacher. All things created by God reflect God's nature, and our nature. As we learn from nature, we come closer to fulfilling our potential as human beings, eventually being worthy to be "Lords of Creation."

Elisabeth grew up in the Savoie region of France, in the beautiful French Alps. The small villages high in the mountains are surrounded by nature, and it is small wonder that she developed an affinity for God's creatures.

The Seidel family moved to the town of Red Hook, in the beautiful Mid-Hudson Valley of New York State, when Dietrich began teaching at the Unification Theological Seminary. This little town, surrounded by farms growing fruits and vegetables, with a few cows and horses, sheep and goats, and even llamas, is a place where it is easy to commune with nature.

In the stories in this section Elisabeth shares some of her experiences with God's creation, experiences that are hopeful and enlightening.

Mountains

When mountains are around me, I feel at home. I feel my best because I grew up in the French alps in a small village, and both my mom and dad have ancestors from this region.

We never had a TV at home, or even an inside shower or bathroom. We had one stove burning wood, and the bedrooms upstairs were cold. Even so, at night my mom would open my window a crack for fresh air. She said it was healthy.

The bathroom was outside next to the home. So, in winter you could easily freeze your butt in there. The telephone came later. To call my grandma I had to go through an operator. I remember my phone number; it was number 31 in la Chambre and my grandma's phone number was number 1 in Cuines. She probably was the first one to get a telephone then, as her number was one.

Even though while growing up I was not introduced to God, being in nature was the creation God made, and this immense beauty, calm, and serenity impressed me. All the views were breathtaking. In the summer sometimes I would go with my mom and neighbors to bring the cows high up on top of the mountain. Of course, we went on foot and it would take the whole day to arrive there. At 2000 or 3000 meters, you hear only the sounds of nature.

Even though I did not know about God, looking back I felt His presence in this immensity. Away from people, the sins of the world, away from anything human, I could hear something else there in my mountains. Being on top of the peak, you see the other side of the mountains; you are closest to the sky, and then to Heaven.

After we married, Dietrich and I and our children paid many visits to my hometown. One summer I recall, I really wanted to go back there on top of the mountains through a difficult and hazardous path, but I wanted to, even though I had physical limitations for walking such a

path. Of course, my family always went with my brother leaving at 3.00 or 4.00 am before the sunrise, and picked Edelweiss and Génépí, a mountain plant, to make liquor and ease the digestion.

So, Dietrich and I went one morning. This trip represented the course and road of our lives. After just one hour, I was already exhausted. I needed vitamins, drink, snacks, and the like, and needed to rest. After some rest I could hardly climb, so Dietrich pushed me from behind; that was helpful. Then he pulled me by holding a stick; that was helpful too. At the end, he took me on his back. But we did arrive there. We arrived at our goal, at our destination. It was a very joyful moment.



This summer, going back to my hometown, I took the cable car to go to the top of my mountains. I just wanted to see all the valleys where my ancestors came from, and pray there by myself but together with our Heavenly Father. With only the sounds of nature, there was God.

Bird Stories

A long time ago, when I was living in Italy, one day I started dancing in the streets of Milano. I was feeling so happy I was literally running to the Unification Church center because I thought I had finally found what I was looking for.

Then, one night, coming back home and feeling emotionally distressed and disturbed by what I was learning, and losing at that time my so called “boyfriend,” I threw my bag and coat on the sofa and headed to the kitchen. There were two birds in a cage there with the purpose of singing for me or on display for me to look at their beautiful colors. I sat by the kitchen table and started crying. That’s what I do if I do not know how to find my way.

Warm tears started falling from my eyes. I noticed when I started crying the birds started singing. I paused, and they paused too. Then I started crying again, then sobbing. The more I was sobbing, the more the birds sang with joy and more loudly. How could this be? I thought, I am in turmoil and those birds seem happy about my circumstances.

Through the beautiful creation that God made, He gave me insight that all those dramas will pass, and that He had me on the road He wanted me to be on. The road where I would find my direction, and the true purpose of my life, my life mission, and above all the man of my life, my true love for eternity. Love cannot be felt alone. We arrive at the kingdom in pairs.

Lately I have been working together with Dr. Tanabe, a colleague of my husband Dietrich. She also has birds in her kitchen. When talking meaningful things, or sharing some passages to include in a book, or a new idea, her birds accompany our discussions with joyful singing. And when they sing louder than our voices, we are on the right track. We feel God’s touch every time this happens.

Rev. Moon, affectionally called True Father, shared this bird story in a message entitled “Where And How Do You Want To Live Your Life?” which he gave at Belvedere on June 9, 1996:

When Father was growing up he felt he had to conquer every aspect of creation. Once Father caught a mother bird and three baby birds together and kept them in his house. At that point Father didn’t realize that there was a father bird. All of a sudden the father bird appeared and began to cry in a sad voice. When this father bird looked at Father, he cried even more sadly because True Father was the destroyer of this bird’s family. Then Father released the birds, one by one. The sad tone of the father bird’s song lessened. Finally, when all three baby birds were released this father bird seemed content. But when the mother bird was released then the whole family of birds greeted Father and then flew away. How did Father know that they came and greeted him? Because they circled Father’s house and then flew away.

We can learn so much about life and love from birds.

Birds are truly comforting to people’s hearts.

Thayer Lane, Where the Moon Is My Street Light

When we moved to our new home there were no street lights on Thayer Lane. There never will be.



Thayer Lane in winter

The nature, the evergreens, the night sky, the shiny bright stars, the North Star, the constellations, and the universe are there for all of us. Besides, among the celestial planets, when there is a full moon, it is as bright as it can be.

If you could see with spiritual eyes, you would see the warm fire of our hearts reaching out to each other and to God, love being the fastest of all, reaching across the oceans and mountains to illuminate, encourage, and heal those who have been wounded by angry words, irresponsible acts, means actions, bad choices, immoral behavior, and all the ugly things. If you could see with your spiritual eyes, you would see that there is a safe place with a loving couple standing before God, making petitions for others, and bringing them together as an extended family,

to reach a new level of understanding and happiness, fulfillment, and accomplishments.



Our house wrapped in a rainbow

Joy is to be found and elevated to a new world where God lives. The knowledge of God is the greatest knowledge of all. God's creation, all of nature, teaches us so much about how to live harmoniously with God and with each other.

Christmas Visit

I had a visit from above, from two magnificent birds in our backyard. They stayed on the tree for about half an hour, enjoying the sun in the freezing northeast weather. I think they were hawks.

I admired their beauty, their color, and their attitude to make my backyard their new home. After half an hour they flew away, parading their wings with blue, yellow, and orange, looking at me like they needed adoption or something.

This morning they came back. I could not believe they came back.

If they come back again, I will give them names and they will be my new pets. How beautiful is God's creation! Halifax and Margot. They came back.

Signs of the Times Bring Glad Tidings

Before the last neighbors' house even took away the spooky Halloween decorations from their yard, people in my neighborhood started having Christmassy front yards. The day before Thanksgiving suddenly almost all the houses were lit up with cheer and joy.

When the Christmas tree arrived in Rockefeller Center in New York City, the New Yorkers were shocked to discover in its branches, more surprised than themselves, a most adorable, cute, huggable owl, with her eyes wide open in amazement. This little owl could not comprehend how in the world she could make the trip from somewhere in the deep forest and arrive at Rockefeller Plaza, where she had never been before. She was starving and seemed stunned to encounter the busy, anxious inhabitants of the Big Apple.

This was a sign. God the Almighty sent a message to New Yorkers with the best ornament the Christmas Tree ever had. You see, the owl is a beneficial, protective, wise bird. It protects humans at night, and brings good fortune, announcing change and new beginnings with higher understanding.

In the frosty December cold winter, this owl brought cheer, joy, and comfort to all of us.

In the meantime, the little owl, given the name "Rocky," was fed, nurtured, and brought back to the forest.

In my own backyard in the Mid-Hudson Valley, we see all kinds of animals. My neighbor Leanne gives names to the visiting deer. One is Stella. There was also Haribou, the master with his big horns. In late October, drinking coffee with friends on my porch, suddenly a baby deer was chasing his mom, and right in front of our eyes, started nursing.



Stella and Haribou

There is Blackie, the wild cat, who lives in the bushes and refuses to inhabit the cat house with a special blanket which generates heat. He likes it better in the wild over there in the bushes. But every day he comes to Leanne for food.

Last winter I gave names to two huge visiting birds who came often, always as a pair. Halifax and Margot always chose the same tree when they visited me.

God made the creation at the beginning of time. He asked Adam, the first human being, to name each animal. We were supposed to be lord of creation and rule the world with love. But Adam and Eve fell. That is why God had to send Jesus the Messiah our savior. Jesus spoke about the marriage supper of the lamb which will happen at his return. May we recognize the signs of the time.

Wonderful Cats

My spiritual father, Reiner Vincenz, loved cats.

He had a longing heart for France, the country of Joan of Arc. As a German missionary in the late 1960s, a young man then, he arrived in Paris to bring a new revelation from God. Penniless, hungry, lonely, and rejected at the beginning, he felt comforted and guided by Joan's apparitions and messages to him. In fact, the day he found his first supporter, Henri, he was returning from his work at the American hospital in Neuilly. At Chatelet metro station he heard a voice telling him to go to the Quartier Latin. And there at rue Lhomond he found Henri.

But specially, he felt loved and inspired by cats! They would be in unexpected places, giving him signs of hope.



With Diesa in the French Alps

When I arrived in my hometown in the magnificent French Alps with my daughter this summer, we were greeted by an absolutely persistent, determined, loving cat. He came out of nowhere the moment we stepped out of our car, and decided to follow us and adopted us for an hour or so.

This “Katze” came with us up the hill. We would say *Chat viens!* (Cat come) and he would come as a dog would. When we sat on a bench, we said *Chat viens* and he jumped between us on the bench.



With Katze

What an amazing cat! I saw it as a sign from Heaven from my spiritual father who was encouraging me: Continue on the way always with hope, faith, love, and determination, like Katze le chat.

Before departing for France, our spiritual son and friend Sebastian gave me a quote which has been my motto over the summer:

Car à ses anges il donnera des ordres à ton sujet, pour qu'ils te protègent sur tes chemins (For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways) Psalm 91:11.

I meditated on this saying every day. I was indeed protected by God's angels. A fuzzy warm feeling came over me.

During our stay, we also went to visit Provence where one can see fields of blue lavender and where the sun always shines. Our hosts, Alphonsine and Claude, had prepared Provence style rooms and hospitality.

On the way there, we had so many experiences where everything was ready for us, organized by my angels. When the parking lot was full, one lady stood at the parking place waiting for us to arrive and park right there. She was an English teacher and happy to receive my bookmarks as a small thank you.

In another town, with the same busy summer crowd, out of the blue one shop keeper said, use my parking permit as long as you need it. The police know me, and I will not get a ticket but you will.

Manosque is a charming town in the south, not far from Aix en Provence and Grasse where delicious and exquisite perfumes are produced from fields of colorful flowers and scents of the south of France.

It is the town where Jean Giono was born and lived. He wrote *Le Hussard sur le toit* (The Horseman on the Roof) which became a famous movie, and one of my favorite ones. Jean Giono wrote so poetically and with much heart.

When I was standing in front of his house, Jean gave me a sign that he was with me and happy that I could visit his town. I felt a shiver on my scalp. This translates as a message from spirit world, from the world unseen, as they greet me.



In Manosque with Alphonsine and Claude

As we were touring the city, the city workers approached us, asking if we wanted a kitten found in one of the town's recycling bins. Alphonsine already had three cats and we were traveling so could not.

Coming back home to my adopted country of America, a cat was waiting for me.

His name is Winston. He likes to live on our porch, and comes inside only for eating or being petted. He is the outdoor cat who claimed our porch as his and took dominion there.



Winston

When it rains or thunders, he is a bit scared and runs under the porch, even though there are two cat houses on the porch that he could use. He likes it free and rough and sleeps on the hard floor. He is protecting my house and guarding it. Most of all, he keeps away the mice. The good part is I speak French to him, and we understand each other.

What wonderful cats!

D. On the Eternal Realm

Many people are understandably afraid of death, not knowing what comes after life or if there is even any “afterlife” at all. However, many people have testified to the reality of life after the death of our physical body, who have had Near Death Experiences, or have had spiritual experiences with those who have passed into that other realm.

Henry Scott Holland wrote a beautiful poem entitled “Death Is Nothing at All” in which he likens the end of our physical life to moving into the next room. Here is an excerpt from that poem:

Death is nothing at all.
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.
Everything remains exactly as it was.
I am I, and you are you, and the old life that we lived
so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.
Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we
enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

In this section Elisabeth shares some reflections on the eternal realm of spirit, and how she learned to continue to relate to her husband, Dietrich, when he passed on into “the next room.” Also included are a number of prophetic dreams she had, dreams which had a deep meaning.

The Love We Share

Because my husband and I were so close during our lifetime, we used to share everything; we talked a lot; we were the other half of each other.

So of course, I continue to share many things with him since he passed several years ago.

I talk to him while looking at his picture; I write letters to him. Sometimes he answers me, through a deep intuition, an emotion, a subtle presence, a certainty, a love sentence coming at me out of nowhere, like the other day. Then joy comes into my heart like a river of peace, a sense of protection, and affirmation of the eternal.

Is it not the cherished hope of humanity that we live forever? That there is life after life?

I am presently in my hometown in the French Alps, a small, pretty town that you can still find in the middle of the mountains. My friend Annick owns a bookstore gift store there, and she has been carrying my husband's books. The other day as I was visiting her to inquire if she needed more books, she said yes. I was surprised that she could sell English books in this remote place.

There was a man in the store choosing some books to buy and hearing our conversation he asked me if I was an author. I answered, "Mainly my husband but I did publish my memoir." We continued chatting and he gave me his card. His name was Thierry and he was a medium!

Soon enough, he said my husband, Dietrich, came from the other side to greet us. Thierry and my husband started a conversation that he reported to me. Dietrich was continuing his work there, and he said that everything is amplified, and in a sense has more power there.

They seemed to have a good conversation with each other. At the end Thierry bought one of my husband's books, "Eternal Life in the Spirit

World,” co-authored by Dietrich F. Seidel and Jennifer P. Tanabe. I was a little surprised by this encounter, but as Thierry said: “Nothing happens by accident.”

As I was exiting the bookstore, jokingly I said to my husband: “Dietrich, you forgot to give me a hug!”

A few days later I received an e-mail from my friend Elizabeth Kiedler (also a medium) and she sent me a message from Dietrich.

To my beloved wife Elisabeth [that’s me] much love
and blessings. I hold you tight in my arms forever. I
will never let go. Dietrich.

This is the type of conversation we have together, with a little help from our friends. For us it is so natural to continue our relationship because of the love we shared.

About Catherine

My friend Christine shared with me about her sister Catherine who passed away from leukemia when she was 19. Christine herself was 20 at that time, and they had been very close. At school they would find surprises in their backpacks from the other sibling, like special cookies or treats, or a note. So, their loving relationship could continue beyond this world.

One week before Catherine passed, she had a spiritual experience. She said a being of light came and held her in his arms, saying that her suffering would be gone very soon. It could have been Jesus or an angel who helps human beings transition to the other world.

This morning on Mother's Day, Catherine appeared to Christine wishing her a happy day.

I asked Christine, how does she appear to you? She said, like in a dream, but it is real.

In fact, also her ancestors, like her father and mother, are present for all the birthdays of each family member. Christine sees them happy to celebrate together.

Soon those two worlds will become one and we will spend time with each other as we wish. That will be the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven, where everything that has been separated will be unified again. Like our mind and body, difficult relationships will become harmonious, peace will come in divided countries, and parents and children will find loving relationships again. I am longing for this world.

Stranger Things

When my adult children came home for Christmas, one night my son suggested we watch an episode of “Stranger Things.” My daughter added that it is very popular among young people, and has a lot of followers. The title intrigued me, even though I did not like all the darkness and spookiness in the scenes. It deals with the underworld, and how the gates from hell have been opened and evil gets loose.

The series is about a town which opens up portals to the “other world,” or a shadow to our world (referred to as the “upside down world”). The entities from that other world are seen as darker or evil spirits who attempt to take over our world through the opening in the portal. But through the efforts of the main characters (mostly kids, especially the main girl character, 11 or “El,” who has psychic powers), they are able to close the portal to that world. In the end the darker entities are sent back to their world and have no more power, and cannot take over this world. My children concluded that there was some truth to this TV show.

When the world of peace comes, and the evil prince of this world has been captured, God will send his angels and helpers to work with the returned Christ. First the gates of hell will be opened, as the last frontline or battle between good and evil, which is shown very well in “Stranger Things.”

One of Jesus’ ministries was to liberate people from evil spirits and cast out demons. He himself had an encounter with Satan when he was fasting 40 days in the desert. He said “Away with you, Satan!” and “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.”

At the time of the Second Coming, with the power of Christ, we will be able to remove evil spirits and evil forces, in order for goodness, a new world of reconciliation, peace, and love to appear. The new Christ will open gates, remove barriers, and show the way to establish the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

When Father Moon was in Danbury prison, and Mother Moon was in their home in East Garden in Tarrytown, on the first day of February 1985 at 3 o'clock in the morning Father and Mother Moon conducted a ceremony. It was a declaration that the gates of Hell in the spirit world be torn down, and all the barriers blocking the way to earth be removed. Therefore, they opened the way for the stream of heart to flow forth.

Furthermore, we have entered an era where our ancestors, our grandfathers and grandmothers, in the spirit world can come down to us and coach us in everything.

It takes time for proclamations or prayers to be answered. What has been prayed for or proclaimed with a sincere heart will surely come to pass. Strange things really!

Our Ancestors

A young man about 22 years old shared his story with me.

Every day as he was riding in a van with other youngsters to go places for his Christian mission, he would see a man, whom he called one of his ancestors, riding on a horse next to the van. From time to time this knight would shoot at things hazardous to his wellbeing. He felt so peaceful and safe, because the knight was eliminating all negative influences before they could reach him.

Myself, I also receive insights, especially in the time between sleep and awakening. They can be a word from my husband from the other side, an encouragement, a strong intuition, a direction, a sure thing to do, an idea, a change of schedule, something I must do, something I must not do.

Prayers open our senses. The other day it seemed there were lots of people in my room. I heard them say: “She is our daughter on a mission. She is one of the 3000 who first opened the gates of Heaven.”

Our ancestors are real and eager to help us to accomplish our heavenly dreams.

Prophetic Dreams

This summer when I was visiting my hometown in France, I had two prophetic dreams.

On July 7th I dreamed that I gave birth to a child who could not breathe. It was lifeless. Then the doctor put it in my arms. He then tried to make it breathe by bending it back and forth. Still the child seemed deformed and sick. The doctor put it back in my arms. The legs and arms were falling apart like a broken doll. I was trying to fix it by putting the arms and legs together. I loved this child.

I was being helped. Monique, my spiritual daughter, was helping me to take care of this child, and then other people as well.

At the beginning of the dream there was a scene with people who were immoral and corrupt. At the end of the dream the child appeared alive in the arms of Monique, and I was to go with my child to meet many other parents with their children.

On July 9th I dreamed I was in a room with three babies a few months old, sleeping. There were a few more people besides me.

I noticed one baby could not breathe, so I called the nurse who was in the back room. She did not seem to be too eager to do anything. So, I felt it was my responsibility to revive the child. I tapped it three times on the back. Suddenly the young child took a long deep breath and revived.

My interpretation is that God gave us life. In Genesis 2:7, it says God breathed into Adam to give him life: “And the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” Without God we have no life. We are lifeless. Spiritual life is more important than physical life.

Today God is seeking His children who are lifeless, who cannot breathe, because they rejected God or led corrupt and immoral lives without any concern for others or for their beloved Heavenly Parent.

Sin has consequences, even if God is a loving parent, we need to attune with our parent's love and seek His will and direction for our life. Sometimes we need a spiritual parent to help us breathe, to guide us on the way until we reach maturity and can breathe on our own.

These dreams encouraged me to give spiritual life to the people of my hometown.

More Prophetic Dreams

I had two prophetic dreams about my hometowns of La Chambre and St Jean.

In one of my dreams, I saw in beautiful colors the bridge across the River Arc in my hometown. People were crossing that bridge very calmly and peacefully. On the other side it seemed so beautiful, like the new kingdom, a new world in a new heavenly land.

The second dream was very short but the message was very clear. The mountains around my hometown were crumbling down. Big rocks and stones were rolling all the way to the villages. It was a very dangerous situation.

At that moment I felt like a new Joan of Arc, telling the panicked people all in disarray, "This way! Follow me!"

Dream with Emmanuel Macron, President of France

On July 21, 2020 I had a vivid dream. President Macron arrived in what seemed to be an official car, together with a young child. [In real life, he has no children of his own.]

As he arrived, I opened his car door for him, and started attending him. He was so kind, and gracious and humble toward me. I offered them water.

I felt so much love for this child. President Macron was wearing his favorite suit with blue tones, which I felt was the color of France as our flag is blue, white, and red. His face was covered with white paste, like those Californian surfers who protect themselves from the sun.

President Macron was not speaking much, but he paid an attentive ear to what I had to say.

We were preparing to go somewhere, an official event or a conference where he was supposed to speak.

I was looking for more water, and President Macron said, you already gave me some when I arrived. He went to the cupboard to show me the glass he drank from.

I was wondering why he had white paste on his face. I was thinking maybe I should remind him to remove it, or maybe he needed it to be in front of the cameras?

During this time, I was holding the child with tender love, like this child was mine.

President Macron acted like a dear member of my family; someone I knew all along. We had a lot of respect for each other. I felt so close to him, like heavenly love was flowing through us.

After this dream, I felt he is definitely my new friend now, or my new spiritual son.

God's Problem Solvers

We Blessed Couples are God's problem solvers.

People are suffering here on earth. There is so much dysfunction and division. Sin is an addiction for most people. We are here every day to solve problems.

I remember when my husband, Dietrich, was counseling couples, he could always think of a remedy for their different difficult situations:

- The first one was always to keep faith.
- The second one, go to church together. This acts like a protection. We always need protection every single day of our life.
- Then, always pray together. This is our anchor, our stabilizer. Our assurance for Heavenly Parent to be with us.

I do not like to eat alone. I know for sure my husband does not like to eat alone either.

Now that Dietrich is no longer with me on the earth, I wish I could just see him next to me again.

In fact, we Blessed Couples are supposed to open up the communication between the two worlds. Even though we are not mediums, we can talk by feelings, sending loving thoughts, and receiving joyful impressions.

Sharing heartfelt sorrows rejuvenates our spirit of love, because we need to function as a couple in two different worlds, always together. As Dietrich said "I will be always with you, forever together." This way we continue to be God's problem solvers.

E. On Building Heaven on Earth

Father Moon taught that marriage is more than just the coming together of a man and a woman. In particular, the Holy Marriage Blessing is a precious ceremony in which the couple pledge to take responsibility to be co-creators with God of the original world of God's ideal, the Kingdom of Heaven:

Through marriage, a new future is created: Societies are formed; nations are built. God's world of peace is realized with married families at the center. It is in the family that God's Kingdom of Heaven is brought about.¹¹

Here, Elisabeth shares many experiences which reflect progress toward this Kingdom of Heaven on earth. For it is on earth that the Kingdom must be established first, through the realization of harmonious families centered on God's love, which they share with their extended families, friends, neighbors, and beyond.

The world we live in, however, is not yet ideal. Many people suffer with deep physical or agonizing spiritual pain. In order to establish Heaven on earth there must be healing. Several of these stories involve individuals and families who go beyond the barriers that divide us, bringing resolution of conflicts and healing of old and new wounds. There is much hope to be found here!

¹¹ Sun Myung Moon, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, p. 202.

About Prayer

Prayer with tears liberates the heart and feeds the soul. Talk to God as if He was your ideal Father or your ideal Mother, sharing your feelings of joy, sadness, worry, pain, disappointment, failures, victories, and liberation.

At this time in history God, our Heavenly Parent, wants to find ALL His children and communicate with all of us. We are living in a most special time where we can connect again and feel His guidance.

Some words from my beloved husband on prayer:

Prayer is a necessary condition for deepening our life of faith. Beyond this I try to crystallize the goal that life itself becomes prayer as a fulfilling and joyful experience.¹²

Since prayer is the expression of our partnership with God, we have to know our partner – His will, character, desire, and even His opinion about us. Jesus Christ revealed to us the suffering heart of the Father about the loss of His children in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Unfortunately, this central message is many times replaced by an impersonal feeling toward God, a feeling triggered through an overemphasis on God's omniscience, omnipotence, and holiness. If we understand God primarily as our loving Parent whose heart is grieving because of man's rejection, then we realize the dimension of God's compassion for the speedy return of all His children. This will be the foundation for our new understanding of prayer. The 'You' we speak to God should be closer, more

¹² Dietrich F. Seidel, "Prayer Life in the Christian Tradition and the Unification Church" in *Unification Insights into Marriage and Family*, p. 17.

intimate, than the ‘you’ we speak to our dearest friend, spouse, or even ourselves.¹³

¹³ Dietrich F. Seidel, “Prayer Life in the Christian Tradition and the Unification Church” in *Unification Insights into Marriage and Family*, p. 19.

Random Acts of Kindness

I will always remember when Joe Belanger, the school principal from the Catholic school that my children attended, invited my family to his vacation home. Out of the blue he gave us his vacation home for a week and the key to his motor boat.

I had been ill and praying to God, “I need to get away from it all and recover.” The boat on the lake, the breeze, the total break and peacefulness gave me new strength and new courage.

Joe was staying with his mother close by and they would drop by and join us in our early morning prayer. What a beautiful vacation it was.

When I visit my home town in the French Alps, I am always amazed how the neighbors, friends, and relatives get along with each other. It is a small town and everyone knows everyone. People dropped by often to the home of my mom, to have coffee, to bring some veggies from their garden, some eggs from their chickens. Then my mom would make a soup from it all and send me to bring some to so and so. These are all special memories.

Recently my friend Aldo has been dropping by regularly. He noticed my house needed some things fixed up. One day he fixed my porch. The week after he replaced my front door. Another time he repaired my toilet and bathtub. Also, he asked his son to dig something in my yard for the water to drain. And, when my pump was broken, he fixed it.

He does not want anything in return. He just does it for service and love. And I know well that God will send someone to his family when he needs it.

But that is not the point.

The point is how to be an Aldo or Joe Belanger to someone you know. God will send you to this special person.

Speaking without Thinking

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing (Proverbs 12:18).

Recently, as I was browsing through the newspaper at a local coffee shop, I happened to read my horoscope. It said: “You are advised to watch what you say. If you speak without thinking you can make yourself more enemies.”

Somehow, I had already done that. Too bad I read this advice for Libras too late. How important are our words! They can be like arrows being shot toward someone when we are in an argumentative mood. They can hurt someone’s soul, triggering anger and resentment back toward you, bringing up so much misunderstanding and confrontation that is not needed in our daily life.

We all have an opinion. The trick is to know how to express it in the right way, to explain our motivation, our concerns, the cause or person we are protecting or defending.

My husband was so good at it. I really miss that. He was my theologian. He could express anything with the right tone of voice, the perfect heart, and a bit of humor. He never took himself too seriously. He came up with the right words at the right time, never saying too much or too little.

Some days we are out of sync and all hell breaks loose. One time I had an argument with a superior. Dietrich explained to me why it was important to create harmony and peace before we left that place. In other words, he asked me if I could apologize. At first, I could not. Eventually I did. This act brought me good fortune. When we arrived at our new destination I was right away promoted to a new position.

The internal work going on in our heart propels our fortune to appear at a new level. The same is also true for the person receiving our

comments and our opinion, not to fire back, but rather to say “Ok. God bless!”

The Dissolution of All Conflicts and Resentments

One of my husband's colleagues, at the end of his life when he knew his days were numbered, decided to visit and reconcile with everyone he held a grudge against, or had difficult feelings or resentment toward. Those were the people he did not want to speak to, because anger and upset feelings would arise: Was he maltreated? Was he jealous? Did he fail to seek harmony and peace and love, to go the extra mile and go over the hurt coming from the others?

What he knew was that he was not going to take his house or savings or car with him. And he would be separated for some time from his spouse and family and friends.

He knew like a certainty, deep down in his guts, that he needed repentance, and most of all, to forgive and reconcile. This is why he went and visited many people. He did not want to break Heavenly laws. He wanted to be clear and free before God.

This action brought calm to his restless heart and a sense of wellbeing; no need to take heavy, ugly, spiritual baggage with him.

Myself, I fought my spiritual battles with numerous family members to achieve peace through service. I tried to love my in-laws as much as my husband loves them, or more. I kept reminding him to visit, to call, to free his schedule for them. One time I felt rejected by everyone, but Dietrich's sister, Gisela, and I became best friends through working our way through differences to reconciliation. My own brother deeply hurt me. I repented and cried to God about this point.

Family conflict started at the beginning of history and multiplies to this day. The one who includes God, our Heavenly Parent, will have a better chance to resolve conflicts. We will have the power to forgive all: Koreans and Japanese, French and Germans, blacks and whites, and others.



Reconciliation event between Austria-Germany and France in St Jean de Maurienne

God will give us direction, grace and power and forgiveness, as long as we are seeking Him. In God we trust.

The Families Who Are Healing the Divide

My cousin Michele from Paris married a black American man after World War II. Her beloved at that time was stationed in France as part of the American forces.



Michele aged 19 when she met her future husband,
Belton, in Paris in 1955

I remember her dad, Pierre, my favorite uncle, was a bit shocked that his only and unique daughter was leaving her country and her family to go and have a new life in America with someone from another race.

True love is color blind. I believe my cousin and all my friends who are from interracial marriages are healing the wounds created by

centuries of pain, slavery, misfortune, injustice and the like. If love abides with these couples, truly their children are stunning. They are special in God's sight. They are most beautiful, because it was the love of their parents that created them. Because they overcome it all. The pain became forgiveness. Love does not dwell in the weaknesses of the other, but covers the imperfections and the resentment.

Myself, I married a man of German descent, the enemy of France. The priest in my hometown, Father Durieux, said to me:

I had 14 brothers and sisters and my grandparents were living with us up in the mountain. That was a huge table of 19 people over dinner. The Germans came and burned our house. This was the first time I saw my father cry. One German soldier said to him, witnessing the scene, "I am ashamed to be a German."

This soldier repented for his country. He was so sorry that this beautiful family of 15 kids were left with nothing. My husband also repented publicly in my hometown for the crimes of his ancestors.

I am also so sorry to see the anger and unrest everywhere in America today. We also need to repent for things left unsolved. This is the time where we make the wrongs right. We say: "We are sorry, please forgive us, we love you."

It is the same in the family, especially if our marriage is for healing our nations. We say to our partner: "I am sorry if I hurt you, please forgive me. I love you."

On the next page are two photos of Michele and her family, and with me and my family. Michele received the Ambassador for Peace award. What a wonderful life!

Today all my love goes to these most special families who are healing the divide. World peace through ideal families. Is it not so?



Faith and Love and Forgiveness

If we have faith, believing the unbelievable, if we have love, loving the unlovable, and if we have the ability to forgive, Jesus said seventy times seven times, then our life will be worth living and meaningful.

Any act of love, of kindness, will make our credit in our bank of love go up. My husband always said, “Let’s make sure our love credit is high, then in times of hardship and struggle we have already a high credit.”

An act of love and kindness makes my heart melt. A couple of weeks ago, as I was taking my daily walk around the neighborhood, a lady who lives on the next street stopped me. She had just parked her car and was unloading her bags. She asked if I was celebrating Christmas. I said, “Yes of course.”

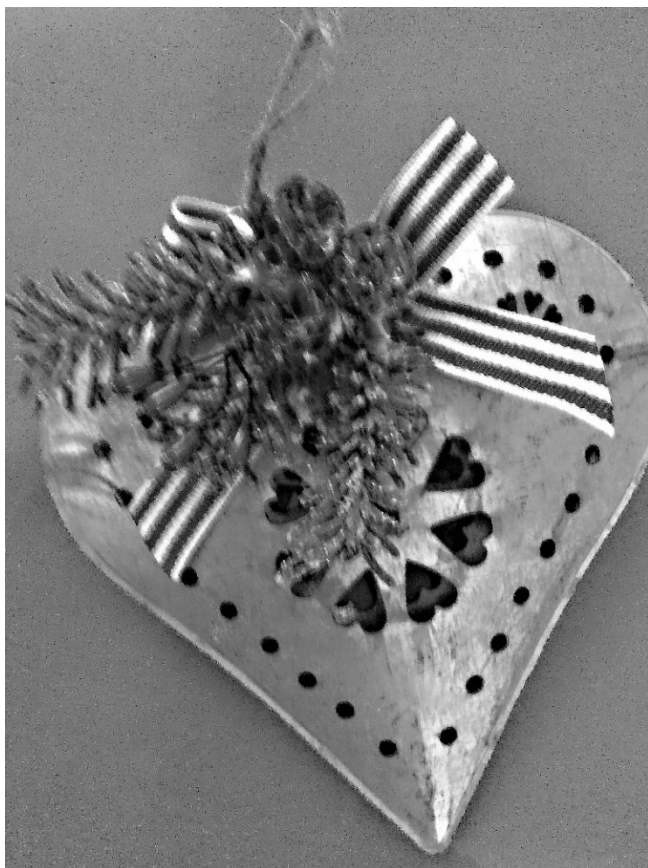
Then she said she had a gift for me. I was surprised because I had never met her before. She said it was from the heart – from her heart to mine – she wanted to buy me a special gift.

It was a beautiful silver heart for a Christmas decoration. She said that when she sees me walking, she thinks of our story that she read in the local newspaper. Then she gave me a hug.

Unexpected encounter that brings Christmas joy. Random acts of kindness that make the heart melt. Did not Jesus say to love our neighbors like ourselves?

And a gift to ourselves: to forgive, because when we cannot forgive, we have grudges. Grudges are no good for anybody, especially the people who hold them. They bubble up and then fester, fester, fester. So, we need to let go.

We do not let go of the truth, or what is right, or the seven virtues, but the arrows which came in our direction and wounded us. Time and forgiveness are the greatest healers of all.



The beautiful heart my neighbor gave me as a gift

So, this Christmas season, let's all make gifts of love, believing the unbelievable things, loving the unlovable, and praying for the ability to forgive all the hurts we received that could not heal until today, because today we are making a wish: We have the ability to forgive.

Let's Keep Our Smile

A smile brings good fortune. When we smile, it brings good vibes and chases away negativity.

As part of getting dressed each morning we put on our smile. This is what my mother-in-law and my husband did all their life. I used to love that smile of my husband each morning, blowing away my moody and sometimes grumpy state of mind.



Smiles

A smile is refreshing to others and to ourselves. It is a bright statement. A shining light in the gloomy winter weather. It makes our face prettier. It sends loving thoughts to others.

Did you notice when we smile people smile back at us? It creates an atmosphere of love, embrace, and acceptance. Let's put up the external first and then the internal will follow.

To live our best life, which for me is to be a person of love who reflects God's heart, we need to be able to consciously direct our thoughts, feelings, and actions in the right order and direction. Sometimes we do not feel like it, but we can try.

A few years ago, my daughter Diesa offered me a journal as a Christmas gift. In the beginning she wrote, from I Corinthians 13:4-8:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

And at the end Diesa put:

Mom is patient, mom is kind. She does not envy, she does not boast, she is not proud. She is not rude, she is not self-seeking, she is not easily angered, she keeps no record of wrongs. Mom does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. She always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Mom never fails.

~ 1 Elisabeth 13:4-8

At the end of the year, I was reminded of these words and was repeating to myself in my mind, "Mom keeps no record of wrongs."

So, I made it my New Year's motto: "Mom keeps no record of wrongs."

On Deepening Relationships

I visited Vienna with the American delegation for the Peace Starts with Me festival. When a few of us were visiting the heart of Vienna (which includes St Stephen's Cathedral where Dietrich used to attend mass) we bumped into a Federation for World Peace member from France, and we started sharing.

Although from German descent, he had been living in France for many years, and he explained to us that he had difficulties establishing deep and meaningful relationships. Because of that, he felt unfulfilled, a little depressed, and that his life was at a standstill. We encouraged him, "Never give up, continue the good work, at the end you will succeed."

But is it not true that it takes two to tango? To have a happy life, we must make peace within ourselves, in our family, but also with our close neighbors, and establish deep and meaningful relations to feel valued or embraced or understood. The give and take of love goes around and returns to the giver. We are born that way, to connect with each other in a family, to connect with our community with love, empathy, and care. No one should feel alone or neglected.

At Fairbanks Square loving community, I remember Stephan, who every day made a few trips to the garbage disposal. It was healthy for him to make a 2-minute walk from his apartment a few times a day; that made 10 minutes and there is your workout for a 90 years old young man. But most of all, in Fairbanks there are plenty of benches on the way to the garbage disposal and in Southern California the chances are you will meet someone sitting there. Stephan had plenty of opportunities each day to strike up a conversation, and that was even healthier than walking. He was indeed the first person I shared with about my tribe and the motto, "Together we can make a world of peace, one family at a time." He encouraged me and that made me feel good.

The other thing about Stephan is that he is always extremely helpful. When we could not put our sofa together, I asked him, do you know a young man who could help us? He said he was the young man and he could put this thing together on the spot.

Stephan is so proud of his wife, Judith, saying that every morning she goes to church to give communion to people. To hear that, I was already impressed, so Judith and I met and we had many prayers together, and many deep memories of sharing love joy and sadness together. It was her that I called in a very difficult moment. After the funeral home came to pick up Dietrich's body after he passed, I told Judith, "I am coming to your home for dinner tonight." She came to pick me up with Cathy, another wonderful neighbor and former nun. So, I had dinner with Judith and Stephan, and lunch with Cathy.

I want to try harder to make things around me more happy, more lovable. I want to take time to greet someone with a smile, and like Stephan did, serve someone today.

Did not Jesus say, love your neighbors like yourselves. If you love your neighbors, you already love God.

Making Beautiful Things Makes a Beautiful Heart

My friend Toshiko from San Diego is always making beautiful things, as well as John, her husband, a painter. Their home is full of colorful paintings. You can sense the heart and the soul expressed in these works of art.

Each time we had our Women's Federation for World Peace event in Southern California, Toshiko made exquisite Japanese flower bouquets, arranging the shades together with style, which enchanted our meetings. If I ever ask, Toshiko what are you up to right now? "I am making beautiful things," she will answer!



Beautiful flower arrangement by Toshiko

One evening with friends, under the leadership of Sarah, we created necklaces with pearls and metal pieces. This was very relaxing, and I was surprised that this activity could bring so much joy to us all.

My mom loved her garden and after retirement she was tending it every morning as a faithful tradition. She put care and love tending to the rows of vegetables which ended up in a soup every day. She also admired the orange lily flowers, planted by my grandmother, which

continued year after year to produce new generations, connecting us to our ancestors.

We truly live in a beautiful world that our creator GOD made just for us to enjoy, and for us to become creators ourselves. As making beautiful things makes a beautiful heart.

Let's Not Break the Laws of Heaven

Violation of heavenly law is called sin. Sin originated with the Fall of our first human ancestors. Disobedience to God's commandments brought misery and corruption and a swamp of immorality. Jesus fought evil by fasting 40 days and liberated people suffering under the influence of evil spirits. "Sin no more," he said.

At a recent virtual Sunday Service, we had a special guest speaker, Dan Burton, an American congressman of 30 years. He said the reason he likes our movement for peace is because it is based on moral values. Without moral values we cannot achieve world peace.

I totally agree with this comment. It was totally refreshing.

I believe also this is why for the seven years prior to our marriage, the Holy Marriage Blessing, Dietrich and I lived a life of abstinence, and traveled the roads of beautiful America and Europe as missionaries, inviting people to hear a message of hope and world peace. In these travels we found God our Heavenly Parent. We tried to live a life of prayer and sacrifice for others, loving people. Rejection made us develop a heart of love and forgiveness, made us stronger in our faith, made us the kind of person who can love our enemy. Sleeping on hard floors with simple food, fasting often, we were so hopeful to change the world quickly. It is taking so much longer than we hoped to change the world, but it has been a chance for us to develop a better character, a better personality.

On this foundation, after our most beautiful, romantic wedding, we could love each other with divine love, working out our differences, and including God in whatever we were doing. I truly felt God's love the most when I was with my beloved. The bickering and fights were forgiven as soon as we made peace with each other. Dietrich always said the best part of our fights was making peace.

Of course, we still hope for world peace; it is our purpose in life. Today God is actively working with humanity, even if we do not see His guiding hand yet. We need to go back to moral values to achieve peace.

The most important thing for our Heavenly Parent is that we reconnect with Him, through connecting with the church of our choosing; that we live a life of integrity, practicing the seven virtues, living a life of fidelity in our marriage, and avoiding temptations.

Today is a lucky day. Without being a missionary, we can do all of the above.

Join me in building God's Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven.

L'espoir Fait Vivre

When my daughter Diesa was in her early twenties, in January 2010 she planned a trip to Haiti to lead a camp for a young girls' basketball program called "Raise her."

Arriving in Haiti she met the amazing Dr. Renee, who created the Haitian Academy, with whom she would work on her program for the girls. One day, as she was waiting in one of the classrooms for the next group of girls who were late, all of a sudden she had an intuition, a gut feeling, an impulse out of the blue to grab her bag and get out as fast as she could.

At that moment of stepping out, she felt as if a big truck was rolling after her as the buildings started crumbling around her. It was the big Haitian earthquake which hit the island. Because she intuitively recognized God's warning, she could be safe. Soon after that episode, Dr Renee drove the school bus with Diesa to check on the casualties and bring people to the hospital, as much as they could. It was untold hardship to hear people screaming under buildings. At this point Diesa was drafted to the hospital, where she was attending patients and putting her hand to things she had never done before, like putting a cast on someone, or encouraging people with words when no medicine could be found.

She said it was amazing how people responded to words of care, of love, of reassurance, words of comfort, of hope: "You will be OK, you are tough, you will make it." Men, women, and children were grabbing her arm, or hand, or leg, thinking she was the American doctor, who could do everything and anything and with her around they would be OK; they would be safe. In Haiti, their motto is: *l'espoir fait vivre* – Hope brings life.

As for me at home, seeing and hearing the horrific news on television about the devastating earthquake, and trying to keep my hospitalized husband away from the news, I did not hear from my daughter. During

the longest 48 hours of my life, my dear friend Inge was with me, trying also to make sense of it all, and she kept saying to me, “She is tough, she is strong, she will make it,” doing with me what Diesa was doing at the hospital.



Diesa with girls from the Haitian Academy

Days after the earthquake in Port-au-Prince

Finally, Diesa could find a computer and email us a message which said:

I am ok!!! Be strong and courageous, and do not be afraid or discouraged, for the lord God, my God is with you (1 Cor 28:20). I am using internet at a missionary's house which only works sometimes. No cell service anywhere. Please tell my mom I am OK. I love you all. Pray for Haiti. We need medical help. Hospitals collapsed.

As I was finishing writing this story this morning, I read in one of my emails a friend of mine quoting John F. Kennedy, one of our past presidents, who closed his inaugural address with these words:

With a good conscience, our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking HIS blessing and HIS help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

The Love that Makes Us Heal

On one occasion my husband Dietrich had to be hospitalized, because of various health issues. My daughter Diesa, to whom her dad is her hero, decided to fast seven days for his complete recovery. This is a long time to go without food, with only water. One has to prepare mentally for that. It is a big enterprise for the body to adjust, and the mind to decide why we are fasting, and what will be the desired result.



Nurie, Jessa, and Diesa – friends forever

On the last day of the fast, to show their support, Jessa and Nurie, two of Diesa's friends, joined her in her offering. That very day Dietrich totally recovered.



Diesa with her dad

I will always remember the support given to us in time of need and difficulty. Friendship is beautiful, as is the special love between father and daughter.

On another occasion, as Diesa was preparing to go to Haiti for a special program for young women, she flew to Vienna, Austria, with her brother Christopher to spend Christmas time with us. Two days before Christmas, their father had a stroke, turning our life around. Diesa stayed an extra two weeks with us before flying directly to Haiti. Again, she fasted three days for her beloved dad.

Dietrich recovered, but it was painful, long, arduous recovery. But he did recover.

I believe fasts, prayers, good deeds, restitutions, help the healing of body and soul, bringing credits to our spiritual accounts.

We might be sick because of physical causes, but also through inheritance from past generations.

I realized my mom's suffering from anxiety was passed on to me. She had a tough life. Her first child was stillborn. It was during World War Two, and the midwife was drunk, she told me. So, as she was carrying me, she must have been full of anxiety.

I remember my medical doctor, Dr Teubl, telling me that we might inherit problems from past generations, but we can heal everything during one generation.

I believe also that love heals everything. My husband was for me a healer of my soul. He was also a healer to my dad. He was also a healer for many people during his lifetime.

The fasts, prayers, and love people bestowed on Dietrich added years to his life and made him feel better, treasured, and healed.

Let's heal each other of our burdens so that the world becomes a world we truly love; and let's love each other with the love which come from our Heavenly Parent.

Healing Hands

I remember the first time Dietrich held my hand. Just minutes after seeing me, he took both my hands into his, and said he liked me.

The second time he took my hand was a few days after our Holy Marriage Blessing, when I visited him in Barrytown. We went for a walk somewhere beautiful together with his friend, Dr. Masuda, and his new wife. Both couples were holding hands. I recall the nature being more beautiful than usual. The deer were greeting us. To walk hand in hand with my new husband was a heavenly experience; so much electricity and love was passing through our touch. During our life we always held hands.



Holding hands

I also remember when I was in the midst of trouble, hardship, sorrow, confusion, in the midst of tears, just to know his hand was near, and I could reach out to him, this gave me courage to go on. Without his hand nearby I could not persevere.

I remember sometimes feeling exhausted at night or early morning refusing to stand another 5 minutes at night, or refusing to get up. But hearing his voice praying to heaven, I felt so comforted and secure. It was music to my ears. Then I would ask him to massage me back to life. His touch transformed my depleted energy into new hope and new life. Hands have healing energy.

When my mother was spending her last days at the retirement home, in our hometown, my family took turns to be with her, that she was never alone. She was very scared of dying, because during her life she did not take the opportunity to love God, did not want to, or could not do it because she endured much pain with difficult circumstances, but somehow she loved her son-in-law, like her own son. So, Dietrich was assigned to be with her at night.

Somehow, she wanted to hold hands during the day with my brother or me, her daughter. She held hands very tenaciously. Even when she could not talk or drink anymore, holding on to our hands was the last sign of life. At night my husband would hold her hands with gratitude and deep love for his mother-in-law. He would sing lullabies to her.

When I remember the scene of my mom dying and Dietrich holding her hands singing lullabies from his sleeping bag on the floor next to her, tears roll down my cheeks. It was really comforting and beautiful. God must have been comforted by this scene as well.

Before Dietrich passed, he was in the ICU, intubated because he could not breathe anymore. So, the doctors had to trap his hands in what looked like handcuffs so that he would not take the tube out of his mouth. The moment I came to visit I would liberate him and hold his depleted hands. And when it was his time to go, the night before, our

daughter Diesa, holding his hand, asked him to wait a little longer until we all came again to say good bye.

The hands of Blessed Couples receive the divine power of Heavenly Parent. Now that Dietrich is not here, how I long to hold his hand again.

May All Our Dreams Come True

One night, during a very difficult time in my life, I had a beautiful dream.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going, they say. But at this moment I could not keep going. It was like an invisible enemy was disrupting my life, and attacking me with invisible weapons. Everything seemed at the darkest point; no light or hope in view.

I also knew that when the darkest moment of the night peaks, the dawn is near.

This is when we search for God, for a meaning, for a solution. On our knees, we try to shed tears of repentance not just for ourselves, but for our family, our ancestors, and our country.

In my dream that night, I was at a place called East Garden, where there was a gathering of holy people. Saints, you might call them. The holy lady in charge of the gathering saw my tears and she came to me, first looking at all this profuse water coming out of my eyes. And as each drop was falling on my cheeks, one by one she was drinking them, leaving me with a heavenly emotion of wellbeing, hope, joy, peace, and love. As God promises us in the book of Revelation, He will dry all our tears.

Today, as America and the world experience a very dark point, we know we cannot do it alone. We need to bring back our Heavenly Parent into our life. He has a plan. We are all His children. Let us pray and take responsibility. Then God will lead America and the world to the kingdom of heaven on earth as it is in heaven.

Good heavenly forces are coming from above. God will dry all our tears. The time is near.

America, Land that We Love

When I first came to America with a group from Europe, my spiritual daughter Christiane, who was already there, handed me a beautiful, huge Hallmark card which said: “America land that we love.”

At that time, I had never heard about Hallmark cards, and was overwhelmed by the sky scrapers. It felt like I was stepping into another world a new world, a dream world, so different from the European countries where we were coming from. It seemed that we had already made the decision that America was the land we loved.



I love America because when you first arrive in New York from somewhere else, you feel liberated.

I love America because if you go out for breakfast there is bottomless coffee, as many as you wish. If you are a senior, it is discounted. In my country if you order a coffee and they happen to be busy, you remind them and they bring two coffees instead. Even if you order just one, they make you pay for two anyway.

I love America because there are Burger Kings everywhere. They always make it YOUR way. When I go to France or Austria and miss America, I go to a Burger King.

I love America because you can order drinks with free refills. The drink size makes you feel so loved: Small, medium, large, and supersize.

I love America because the ice creams are jumbo size, with glittery colorful candies, nuts and chocolate on top.

I love America because if you take the bus and happen to have no change, sometimes they can let you ride anyway.

I love America because if you are working for a cause you like, you can do a “GoFundMe” and strangers donate.

I love America because if your neighbor catches you with a tear drop, she will ask what’s wrong, and before you know it her whole church is praying for you.

I love America because on his death bed my dad told me: Always remember and be grateful that the Americans saved us during the war here in France. They have strength, leadership, generosity, power, courage and love.

I love America because it is the country of Elvis Presley.

I love America, because this is where I met my true love.

I love America because my children are Canadian, French, and, above all, American. They can be all of the above.

Mostly I love America because on the coins it says “In God we trust.”

Mostly I love America because some states like South Dakota can affirm in their motto “Under God the people rule.”

Mostly I love America because it has been God’s country.

Backward Thinking to Forward Thinking

In our precious family, the mom (me) was labeled “backward thinking” by the daughter of the family, and the dad (my true love) was labeled “ok thinking,” because of who he is, she said. Backward thinking means I do not fully comprehend or acknowledge the hurt of others in the past or present, she said.

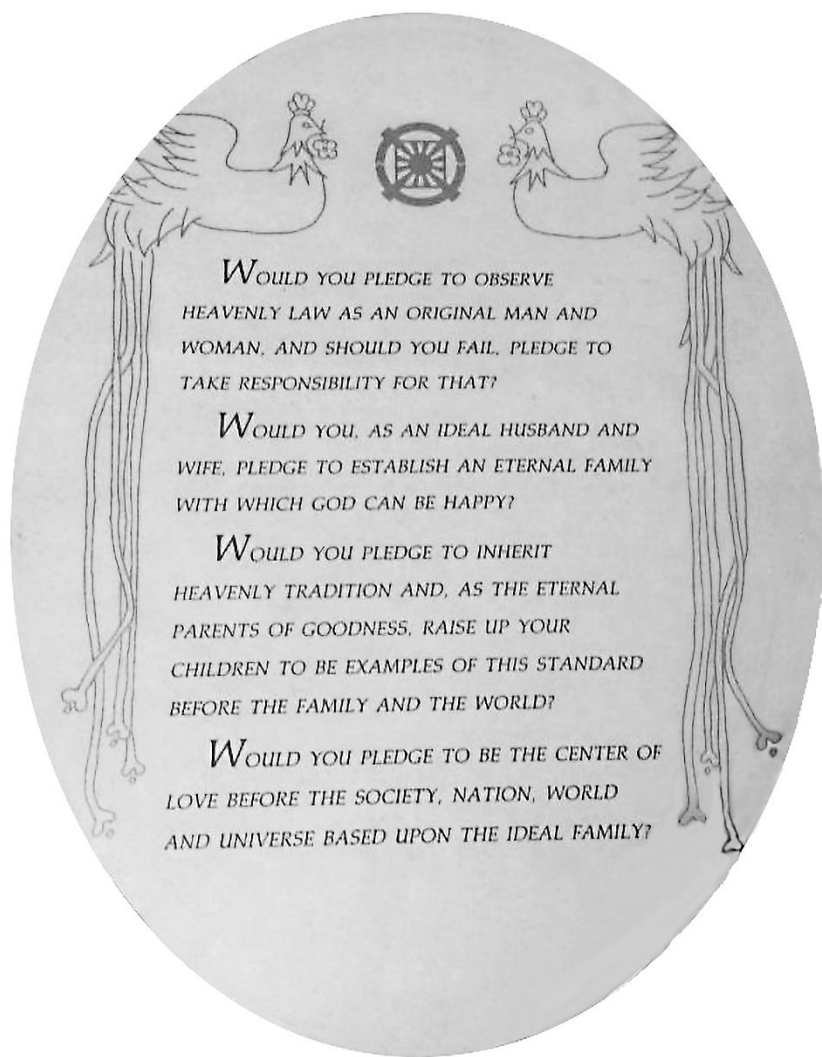
I myself am from the older generation who happened to make amends and reparations for the unity and reconciliation and restored love between the European countries who were at war with each other. Dietrich, my husband, came from German Austrian parents, with ancestors from Hungary. I have French and Italian ancestors, and ancestors from the House of Savoy, which was once a sovereignty in Savoy between Switzerland and Italy in the French Alps. Often, my husband talked about the Alps, as you find them in many countries. The mountains united us.

Because of the World Wars, reparations between the French, Germans, and Austrians started right there the day of our holy wedding. That was day one of the 40 years of reparations, amends, and true love, the time we were married together on this earth. Through loving me, my husband brought comfort and reparation to my ancestors.

I was representing all of them. Through loving me unconditionally, he could reverse the pain, suffering, and abuse of the World Wars. Even some days I was not lovable, he loved me anyway. True love has no borders. By giving true love, the wars were forgiven.

Myself too, I had to learn to forgive, even when it was impossible. I did forgive. Our marriage blessing was for the sake of our nations.

So, I would say that the quickest way to offer reparations is to be more loving, more forgiving, more embracing, and as Jesus said, “Love your enemy.”



WOULD YOU PLEDGE TO OBSERVE
HEAVENLY LAW AS AN ORIGINAL MAN AND
WOMAN, AND SHOULD YOU FAIL, PLEDGE TO
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT?

WOULD YOU, AS AN IDEAL HUSBAND AND
WIFE, PLEDGE TO ESTABLISH AN ETERNAL FAMILY
WITH WHICH GOD CAN BE HAPPY?

WOULD YOU PLEDGE TO INHERIT
HEAVENLY TRADITION AND, AS THE ETERNAL
PARENTS OF GOODNESS, RAISE UP YOUR
CHILDREN TO BE EXAMPLES OF THIS STANDARD
BEFORE THE FAMILY AND THE WORLD?

WOULD YOU PLEDGE TO BE THE CENTER OF
LOVE BEFORE THE SOCIETY, NATION, WORLD
AND UNIVERSE BASED UPON THE IDEAL FAMILY?

Our Holy Marriage Vows

When we walked into this room to receive the holy wine ceremony at the Belvedere estate and three days later at the New Yorker Hotel to receive the holy water at the marriage blessing ceremony from the late Rev. Moon, who is well known for marrying former enemies to each other, we did not fully realize how much hard work it would be to love one's enemy. It took 40 years.

My daughter, Diesa, who first said in one of our conversations that whatever I was saying was backward thinking, after hearing me talk about our love story she agreed that this was forward thinking, because of our determination and desperation to love each other despite our differences and our parents and grandparents and ancestors being former enemies.

I am eternally grateful to my late husband that we could do this to advance peace and love for all humankind.

F. Our Tribe

In the Bible, Jesus said that we should be perfect, “as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Father Moon echoed this teaching, stating that after receiving the Holy Marriage Blessing we should be co-creators with God of the Heavenly Kingdom. We do this by developing a parental heart not only toward our own children but also toward the wider community, helping them to establish God-centered families. He called this becoming a “Tribal Messiah.”

After Father Moon’s passing in 2012, Mother Moon reiterated this teaching, and encouraged everyone who had already received the Holy Marriage Blessing to share this blessing with others. She established the standard of 430 couples receiving the marriage blessing, 43 of which should be fully involved in the work of establishing God’s Kingdom on the earth. A couple who was able to embrace these 430 couples would then be recognized as Heavenly Tribal Messiahs, receiving the CheonBo (Treasures of Heaven) award.

The stories in this section reveal Elisabeth’s determination and efforts to accomplish this task of loving a whole tribe of people, particularly those in her hometown of St Jean de Maurienne in the French Alps.

A Peaceful Marriage for a Peaceful World

Forty-three years ago, on the 21st of February 1977, in the Grand Ballroom of the New Yorker Hotel in New York City, this very day became the best day of my life.

Dietrich and I made the most crazy, out of this world, commitment to love each other, not just for better or for worse, in health and sickness, but to love each other not only during our lifetime but for all eternity. And not just that, but also pledged to bring harmony to our extended families. It is not enough that the husband and wife love each other well, but all the relatives finally love each other also. We made this commitment together with 74 other couples.



With Father and Mother Moon after our Holy Marriage Blessing

It was the best day of my life, where I could have a glimpse of God, Our Heavenly Parent's love. I met my husband, the love of my life, for the first time only three days before we were blessed in the Holy Marriage Blessing ceremony.

Today as I look upon my journey through heaven and hell, trying to love my enemies in difficult scenarios, I am grateful. I am so deeply grateful.

Now, as I am flying to Seoul, South Korea to celebrate Reverend Sun Myung Moon's 100th birthday and the 77th birthday of his wife, Dr Hak Ja Han Moon, the Mother of Peace, I am reminded of my meaningful life, of my commitment to my pledge 43 years ago, that a peaceful loving marriage brings a peaceful world.

I am reminded of this unforgettable love, going all the way vertically to our 430 ancestors, and horizontally to our 430 couples and families who pledged to be faithful to each other and to God, and to attain during our lifetime this highest, most honorable blueprint. I am grateful to all those with whom we could share our vision of hope, of love, of family, and tribe.

Thanksgiving and Harvesting My Tribe

This is the time now when we have to bring the fruits of our life. What are the fruits of my life?

When Dietrich passed, I also had to review the fruits of my life. How many people did I love? Who are in my tribe?

I started remembering all the people I knew, and the relationships where I could change something for the better.

I thought about all my spiritual children, the people who received the Holy Marriage Blessing; the people who are going to be part of my tribe one way or another.

I started making a list of all of those people. Do I really care for them? Can they truly live with me? can I cook for them? Can I go to their home if they are in trouble? Not only my brothers and sisters in faith, but for all those who are part of my tribe.

In our life we realized we always had to have a clean and loving environment in our home so whoever would come would feel the presence of God, our Heavenly Parent. And we should have food for them.

When Dietrich was very sick at the hospital, we had already started to build our tribe a long time ago. I told my husband, "Do not worry, I will take care of everything. I know you wanted to do much more for our Heavenly Parent."

In about six months, my editor, Dr. Tanabe, and I published two books from Dietrich's writings, with more on the way. This is our witnessing tool for our tribe, together with the books from our True Parents and our testimonies.

In France, one cousin said that she got to know our church through reading our books and she enjoyed them very much.

I have been working with Seiko Lee, a Japanese soprano. She came to my hometown in France first, and we had some small successes. From then she did many benefit concerts in Europe and New York, especially for Dr. Aydin's Syrian Orthodox Church in Austria. The most successful event was in 2017 in Vienna where we were able to do a blessing ceremony with the concert. Also, her concert at my house when I invited several ministers for dinner was memorable. I believe her music opens doors of the heart.

Now I have claimed my tribe of 430 couples and families. For this I needed discipline and lots of love.



Holy Marriage Blessing in Syrian Orthodox Church, Vienna

Heavenly St Jean

I visited my hometown of St Jean de Maurienne in the summer of 2019 to bring heaven's blessing to the people. Already long ago, when my husband and brother went for hikes all the way to the top of the mountains, Dietrich would pray for the people living in this area. Then we established a holy ground at the Chapelle St Marguerite, where people have been praying for centuries trying to connect to God in these beautiful surroundings, high in the Alps.



Chapelle St Marguerite

I first asked for help from spirit world. I called on John the Baptist, who is the patron saint of the whole diocese, to please work with me as I have not yet my own John the Baptist representative here in St Jean, so I chose the real one. I went to see his relics in the Cathedral Saint-Jean-Baptiste where a woman from St Jean de Maurienne, Saint Thècle, brought back one thumb of John the Baptist from the Holy Land. I prayed and told him I can help him get redeemed. I also asked Humbert aux Blanches Mains (Humbert the White-Handed), the founder of the House of Savoy, to support me; and of course, my husband who is in the spirit world. So I was in good company, but I still missed my brothers and sisters since I was the only one here.

I started with a book table at the market. It was not so efficient; I could bless one person (whose husband is in the spirit world) in four hours. It was in a way symbolic of all the suffering here in my area. For one hour this lady shared her heart with me, all the incredible pains she had to go through. How much she loves her husband. I counseled her to forgive. Then she drank the holy wine. She wanted to pay me. I refused. Every day I had holy wine in my purse. I could bless one to three couples a day. This took a lot of energy.

I had no car, no ride, nobody to support me, so I asked the priest, my friend Father Durieux, to give me a ride whenever he was preaching or find me a ride, which he did by asking the mayors to pick me up. It was kind of a shock that this could happen. So, everyone got the marriage blessing renewal vows, was sent to my website for education, and joined the mailing list to receive my monthly “Insight Stories.”

A few times a week during the summer, Christians celebrate mass in the small chapels in the mountains. I had some foundation there since I used to go in the past to celebrate mass with my friends, the priests, in these small villages.

After the mass, there is a potluck so this was a good opportunity for me to bless people. One by one I explained that I work with the Women’s Federation for World Peace and the Family Federation for World Peace to protect the family, to stay faithful to their spouse, to raise their children to live a pure and good life; all the vows that American couples renew. And I asked them to be part of my tribe.

Then, one day there was a big celebration in the cathedral in St Jean with a potluck afterwards. There were about 100 or more people, so this time I went table to table to make announcements and give holy wine to people.

The whole town took on a heavenly atmosphere of returning to God. I heard comments like, “When I saw you, I knew at once you are a fighter.” “You have something to share and transmit.” “This was a

special encounter, I feel renewed.” “I am so happy to meet with you. You are God sent.” “I am not married yet; can I please have some holy wine to keep with me until I marry?” “Can I have please some holy wine for my son and his wife who love each other, but my son has cancer, he needs holy wine?” “Can I please have some holy wine for my friend?”

Father Firmin from Central Africa asked me to pray for 103 couples that he is taking care of, who are getting ready for marriage when he goes back to Africa. There is so much trauma there because of extremist groups. There are never safe.

It was a love encounter with my people, my tribe, and, most specially, Christianity. I became a counselor, a prayer partner, a friend, and a listener. I could bless about 120 couples, and because of the mayors representing their towns, and Christians responding after many years of hardship, persecution, and bitter tears, it was a day of victory. Because of blessing Christians and blessing four mayors, I could declare my hometown as Heavenly Saint Jean de Maurienne.

Heavenly St Jean Part 2

About a year after I finished giving Holy Marriage Blessings to our tribe of 430 couples, and received the CheonBo (Treasures of Heaven) award together with my husband, who is already in the spirit world, I determined more than before that my life is a testimony, and my lifestyle is witnessing.



CheonBo (Treasures of Heaven) Certificate

The text on the certificate reads as follows:

Practicing a life of faith rooted in *hyojeong* (filial heart) that comes from absolute faith, absolute love, and absolute obedience inherited from the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind, the couple here named has completed the Heavenly Tribal Messiah mission; moreover, they have taken the lead in building Heavenly Parent's and True Parents' ideal of the

kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. This plaque is therefore awarded to this couple as an inducted CheonBo Blessed Couple that has fulfilled the mission of citizens of Cheon Il Guk.



Receiving the CheonBo (Treasures of Heaven) Award

Before departing for my hometown again, I received spiritually that I should write down and accomplish a list of 43 couples, the core of our tribe, who are totally committed to the Holy Marriage Blessing and the establishment of a world of peace.

I am a team person, and since my husband had already ascended, at first I felt so lost and alone. I did not know which way to go. I never

knew I could write something or say meaningful things on my own, because I always related with my husband. I did not feel whole after his passing. I felt I am half a person. I am like an injured person with no arms, or legs, or hands. I need him to feel whole. I am too burdened by being alone. It took time to renew our relationship from different worlds and unite to accomplish our mission.

Every day when I was greeting his picture in the morning I asked him, “So what are you up to? What is it that you are doing all day? And what is your mission?” I received an answer early morning one day, which made me realize more deeply that to accomplish our life mission on earth is very important.

He said, “My main mission is to love you, in order for you to have the strength and power to accomplish OUR mission while on the earth.”

Even if sometimes I feel still lonely or ask myself how can I do it without him, the answer always comes: “Just go. Just do it. Open your mouth and say something. Just love. Just do it. Ask and it will be given; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened.”

I received from spirit world that on my daily walk I should open my mouth and say something to whichever neighbor I meet.

I arrived in my hometown again in the early summer this year, 2021, after debating if I should go or not because of the Covid situation. I always ask my husband what to do as a habit, talking to his picture for a few days. The answer came, “You always do what you want anyway.”

When I shared that with my daughter, she was laughing as she was going to accompany me there for two weeks, and she knew from the past that it was always true. She said that not only do I do what I want, but I also convinced her to come along.

When we arrived in le Corbier, a neighboring town of Heavenly St Jean, high up in the mountains, before we took our luggage out of the car, we decided to get some fresh air and take a walk by the beautiful

Alps. At this time, out of nowhere a cat appeared and started following us like a dog. I thought it was so odd. The cat stayed with us for about 45 minutes, jumping up on the bench with us when we were resting. We just had to say “chat viens” and he would come. He was determined, charming, without fear, persistent, and loving. It was truly heartwarming.

At first, I was collapsed on my bed for days with exhaustion, time change, altitude, and some of my cousins having panic attacks trying to persuade me to get vaccinated and terrified to go out or meet anyone. It did not look good at all. I kept remembering “Katze,” the cat who welcomed us.

Over the next few days, I suddenly remembered that my spiritual father, Reiner Vincenz, had a very special relationship with cats, especially at the beginning of his mission in France when he was all alone looking for a way to find spiritual children. Cats came to him to comfort him and gave him signs and hope.

In my hometown, Heavenly St Jean, I felt grateful even for all the struggles and difficulties I experienced trying to give God’s love to people. It is indeed the treasure buried in all the rejections which makes us grow to love even our enemies. In going this course, I took a lot on my shoulders, and I also received a lot. The true love of God that I experienced, mostly through my husband Dietrich, the Holy Marriage Blessing given to me by True Parents, these are our treasures for all eternity. Now I am sure I am forever surrounded by the love of God and True Parents, and the love of my spouse.

The CheonBo course, the Treasures of Heaven course, is what I truly experience as the way people now can receive total salvation. Through this all the children of the world will be saved; nobody left behind. It is a formula, and when one finds a formula, it is a treasure. This is Heaven’s treasure.

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About the Author

Elisabeth Seidel grew up in Savoie in the French Alps. She spent several years living, working, and studying in Greece, England, France, and Italy. After becoming a missionary with the Unification Church, she traveled to the United States where she was introduced to and married her beloved husband, Dietrich, whose parents were from Germany and Austria. Committed to their marriage, and to resolving the resentments between former enemy nations, they spent many years researching and giving seminars on "Marriage and Family Enrichment."



About the Book

"Stories to Nourish the Heart" is a compilation of the reflections that Elisabeth Seidel wrote for her blog. They are insights from her life, a life of faith and service to others, to those she has embraced as her extended family, her "tribe."

Here are some comments from her readers:

"Thank you for your friendly reminder that a life of faith is a life of love."

"Thank you for touching many lives by extracting beauty from everything!"

"I enjoy reading Elisabeth's insight stories a lot. They are lively glimpses of moments we all experience. Elisabeth has the talent to give a special depth to those instances."

"Through her commentary on topics from family values to global awareness, Elisabeth brings deep meaning to life's seemingly simple moments."

Visit her website at
www.dietrichfseidel.com

