

In Memory of Keith Cooperrider

Crescentia DeGoede
June 27, 2019



Name: Keith Cooperrider

Spouse: Sara Cooperrider

Children: Caner, Kensy, Kara

Birth Date: April 2, 1947

Blessing Date: February 8, 1975

Ascension Date: June 27, 2019

A Glimpse at One Man's Walk with God By Keith Cooperrider

I was born on April 2, 1947, in Berkeley, California, and was raised in Seattle, Washington. I have one brother, Bob and two sisters Kristi and Sally. In 1969 I graduated from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where I was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, with degrees in Math and Physics.

Sara and I were Blessed in marriage on February 8, 1975 in Korea (1800 couple Blessing) and we have

three children, Caner (40), Kensy (38) and Kara (32); and two grandchildren Ash (6) and Owen (3).

After graduation I saw my friends settling down, but I thought there had to be more to life than Portland, Oregon. I wasn't a Hippie, but I wanted to see the country, and a little more of the world, before I settled down. So, one summer weekend in 1969, I left Portland in my 1960 red Volkswagen bug, which was partially converted into a camp car for sleeping, and drove to Los Angeles. I also visited New Mexico for about a month and had an incredible experience with the people there who had taken me in.



While on the way to Los Angeles, I decided to head for Griffith Park and felt unusually happy. I had this premonition thinking, "something good is going to happen tonight." I was visiting the Planetarium in the Hollywood Hills – very close to the Holy Ground – when I was approached by two ladies, Lisa (Martinez) Take and Barbara Ream. They were telling me something about something ... whatever... and invited me to follow them to their "center." I thought, "Well, all right. These people may be a little weird, but they don't seem too bad. Let me go and see what they're doing."

I followed Lisa and Barbara to their center, located on Virgil Avenue near Wilshire Boulevard. Jon and Sandy Schuhart were in charge of the L.A. Center and the movement was called the Unified Family then. Margie Stahon, Susan Miller (Wayne Miller's cousin), Gary Jarmin, Ray Barlow (Gary Jarmin's cousin), Gary Fleisher and Dr. Joseph Sheftick were there, too. There were about ten people in the center at that point. Since I was determined to continue my travels, Jon spent an intense week teaching me the Divine Principle that involved many deep discussions. But after a week, I thought,

"Okay, this is good, but I'm planning to travel for a year, and I've been out for only a month. I'm out of here guys. Have a nice day."

Before I left Los Angeles, the members gave me a heartwarming send-off with the addresses of centers in

Colorado, Florida, and Washington, D.C. I ended up checking out the center in Colorado Springs, where David Flores was the center director at the time. I spent a couple days with him and left again to continue my travels. I drove to New Orleans and Florida along the southern coast. I couldn't find the center in Florida but I finally got to the one in Washington, D.C. around mid-summer. Along the way, I found myself explaining to people in both Spanish and English that Jesus didn't come to die and then realized, "Hmm, I believe in this Divine Principle ... I'm explaining it to people." I still had the address of the center located on Upshur Street in Washington, D.C. and after 7 months of traveling, I arrived in the city in the summer of 1970. I visited the center on Upshur Street. Again, I thought that I'd just spend a week or two there. Well, here I am, 49 years later.

While living at Upshur House, the former Libyan Embassy and eventual National Headquarters in America, I got a job with NASA programming on the Land Sat at NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. Within two years, I was asked to join the Church Headquarters staff. At first I served under Farley Jones, who was president from December 1969 until February 1973. Shortly after the 1970 "777" Couple Blessing, we consolidated by bringing members from all over the country here to D.C. in 1971. There were about 105 members staying at Upshur House preparing to participate in the soon-to-be Day of Hope campaign with True Father which would tour throughout the nation. Dr. Young Oon Kim, one of the four early Korean pioneer missionaries to America, was the spiritual leader of our east coast American movement at the time. I remember that we members had put a badminton court in the vacant property next to Upshur House, and Ms. Kim was very good; she slaughtered everybody at badminton! She was also very thoughtful and had a tremendous influence on me. On December 18, 1971, while visiting my family in Oregon for Christmas, True Parents came to Washington, D.C. from Korea by way of Canada. Like a number of other members, I received a phone call from Upshur House telling me I had to come back.

Sara Sack (Cooperrider) and I led a center near George Washington University at 2104 "0" Street in 1971 for a year. Paula Hunker, as well as Gerard Willis and Dan Holgrieve, came during that time. Other people came through that center, too.

I learned the Divine Principle from Dr. Young Oon Kim's book, "the red book" as we called it then. Its Principle of Creation is something like 27 pages; the Fall of Man is another 20 pages; and the Mission of Jesus is another 23 pages. And the whole thing just flows.

Look at the current Divine Principle book: 536 pages! It's too long. This is one of my pet peeves. We've got the best, most incredible philosophy and explanation of God and the Universe. We just haven't produced the materials to get it out to people. This huge cumbersome 536-page book isn't going to go viral, for sure. Ms. Kim's whole heart was to teach the Divine Principle to the American people with the red book. Later, Farley created the home study course and my wife worked with Farley on publishing it in 1981.

But back to the early days in 1971-1972 – Philip Burley was teaching what was called "Level II." It was an advanced training in The Divine Principle, and he put together a beautiful slide show with art and images and diagrams. We haven't progressed past that in the last 45 years. To me, that pretty much was better than anything you see today. Today, it is like a PhD course. It's gotten so complicated. Philip Burley's presentation was simple. We just read one section every day, 20–25 pages. Everyone in the center was teaching, learning, developing and growing in the Principle. It was beautiful! That was at Upshur House in the early 70's, where guests came to hear the Divine Principle and we read with them. That's the way we taught the Divine Principle then. We built a relationship and then shared a special truth together.

Shortly thereafter, we started the DP workshops, and I was involved in some of those workshops. We developed a class of expert teachers. Eventually, we started to feel that we couldn't teach our guests anymore, that we had to bring them to the workshops so they could be taught the right way. I think that really hurt our movement. We stopped learning, we stopped teaching. We started thinking, "We can't do this. We can't teach them the Principle. We have to bring them to so-and-so" or whoever was teaching. It wasn't good. A lot of people joined at the workshops, but overall, I think it wasn't the most positive development.

Farley Jones was president of our movement in 1972 when Father sent out pioneers to all fifty states. Headquarters was set up at Upshur House. We were sending pioneering members out and had to find a way to communicate with them afterward. I was the pioneer representative, meaning I was the communication link to all these people. Members would call asking questions such as "Where's the Holy Ground?" "How do I get literature?" "What do I do about this?" et cetera. I would answer these types of questions.

In 1972 we also began the Belvedere Project. We organized candle factories and distribution to raise funds for the down payment on the purchase of the Belvedere estate which was the site selected for a national training program and residence for True Parents. We set up factories in Berkeley, in Denver, and

in College Park, Maryland. We had a center in College Park then and set up a distribution system. We sold scented candles in brandy snifters door-to-door and shop-to-shop for two dollars each, three for five dollars. With the entire American movement working, we made a couple hundred thousand dollars. Back then, that was a lot of money. The Japanese movement was also involved in raising funds for Belvedere. Several Japanese sisters came to America to train us in more effective selling practices, and, following their example, we began selling flowers, candy and other products.

From 1972 to 1982 I was involved in almost all the Unification Church legal matters, except for 1976 when I was at The News World in New York City. I was assistant to Farley Jones and later executive assistant to Neil Salonen, who succeeded Farley as President in 1973. We hired corporate lawyers – Melrod, Redman and Gartlan – to help formalize the many legal matters that we had to deal with. We sort of made the movement more "corporate" at that time; until then, we were pretty ragtag. People were out there as pioneers, establishing new centers. In 1973 we rented a large building at 1365 Connecticut Avenue NW, right off Dupont Circle, to be our National Headquarters. Headquarters was upstairs, and we opened the Ginseng Teahouse in the basement. Bill Selig and Luis Patino joined there.

During the 1973 "Day of Hope" tour, we set up a mobile office in a Winnebago which we affectionately called "the Benjamin," a motor home serving as a mobile headquarters during every stop of the Day of Hope tours. We had photocopying machines and desks in there so that Neil Salonen, then National President, could communicate with Washington, D.C., and anyone else that required his attention. We traveled to all the new centers in the Benjamin – our makeshift mobile Headquarters. That was quite an experience!

I don't remember exactly when this happened – sometime in the mid-seventies – but the course of the U.S. organization was changed when we started setting up separate state corporations to protect possible liabilities. So there was the Unification Church of Arizona, Unification Church of Michigan, et cetera. One center got a lawsuit from one of those state corporations, and someone sued them. They said we got a default judgment of a couple hundred thousand dollars, and then they were going out of status because they weren't filing their reports and everything. We thought, "This isn't working. We're still getting the problems.

The problems are still coming to us, but we have no way of knowing that these things are happening. We're not getting the 'notices' or whatever." So we changed our structure. We went back to the California corporation, which has remained in place to this day. All the activities throughout the country are under one entity: The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC). We finally had control, because any lawsuit would come directly to us. But there was still a liability risk, and it could happen anywhere in the country. It wasn't perfect, but central control was better.

I was also involved in all the property purchases in New York; that is, Belvedere, East Garden, and Tarry Hill Four, a group of properties in Tarrytown. I was the link to the lawyers, negotiating all that. Belvedere was across the road. We bought 400 acres of property in the area. Father's goal was to build a university there. In the summer of 1975, National Headquarters was moved to 4 West 43rd Street, the former Columbia University Club in New York City, and I was the first Unification Church resident there. The night I came was just after the official closing. The building was empty and there was just one small, 45-watt lightbulb at the end of the hall. I slept right at the front door in my sleeping bag. It was so creepy!

Then we purchased the New Yorker Hotel, the Manhattan Center, Mt. Kisco, and the former Barrytown Seminary which had been owned by a Catholic order. One of the lawyers who was fresh out of law school had, as his first assignment, to oversee moving the graves from a cemetery at Barrytown that the Christian Brothers had established there. We didn't want them on the property, but to move them was a difficult task. We had to get the consent of the descendants to agree to move them. That was quite an issue.

In the summer of 1976, Father held a rally at the Yankee Stadium in New York. The night before, the wind picked up. We had these balloons held down with mesh-like bags that we were going to let go at the grand finale after Father's speech. As we prepared for the event, there were packs of children running around, fighting and grabbing at the bags, trying to release the balloons. I was worried that they were going to hurt themselves. Since I was responsible for security on some level, I said, "Protect those balloons. Take those kids away!" Somehow, the balloons survived their onslaught and the release went off as planned.

Eighty days later, on September 18, 1976 The Washington Monument rally took place. I was responsible for the buses that would return some of the 300,000 members and attendees to their homes from the Monument grounds at the end of the day. Despite our efforts to have a seamless operation, some of the buses broke down. That was an incredible day.

Sara and I were matched at the Su Taek Ri Training Center and blessed in the 1800 Couple Blessing at the Chang Chung gymnasium on February 8, 1975. It was so cold that a number of the sisters wore long johns under their wedding gowns! After our Blessing, Father sent out missionaries – American, Japanese,

and German members – to pioneer 183 countries throughout the world. I put in for Nepal and Madagascar and one other, but I didn't end up going. Neil Salonen wanted me to stay at Headquarters. Members such as John Harries, the Hannas, and Susan (Finnegan) Fefferman had all been really successful in their respective pioneer states, so why not send them to other countries? It was a logical step. They had great success, but the sending out of missionaries slowed the growth of the American movement. It was the same for our Japanese and German members too; their best members were sent out. That was Father's standard. The second level of leadership in America was less experienced. America really sacrificed for the rest of the world, but these pioneering members built great churches in their respective countries.

In 1976 I went to The New York Tribune as the general affairs director. Then in 1977, I went back to Headquarters in New York as treasurer. My wife, Sara, was the IT director. We got a computer – a DEC-PDP 11/05 with 32K of memory for Headquarters. It had tapes and a 20-megabyte disk drive. The computer had less storage than one of today's cell phones and they were as big as a washing machine. That 20-megabyte machine cost \$70,000. Consider your cell phone a bargain! I was running a computer system to handle the financials because there were people out in the states who needed a system to combine all that. I wrote the code in Fortran, and Wayne Steffan helped me do it, too. I didn't know accounting at the time, but I learned that it is a very simple mathematical system.

As HSA Treasurer in 1977, one of the first things I did was help Headquarters with a medical claim bill that Headquarters had gotten from their insurance company for \$50,000 because multiple claims had happened. I had determined that they had already hit the "Stop Loss." They had already taken the maximum. So we didn't have to pay that \$50,000 but rather negotiated all the way. Someone told Father that I was a hero because I saved the movement \$50,000. Many years later, in late 2015, my last year that I worked at The Washington Times due to a brain tumor, the brain surgery and 7-day hospitalization that I had at the National Institutes of Health was totally free: food, parking, operating room, and doctors. There was no cost whatsoever. And this was probably a \$200,000 operation. It didn't hit our TWT insurance plan at all. So I saved \$200,000 on this end and \$50,000 on that side. I started my career and ended my career saving money!

I designed and programmed this financial system that consolidated all the records from the different states and recorded their checks and cash receipts properly. It took care of everything, appreciating the assets and, I believe, is still the basis of the system that we're using.

In 1980, Father directed Dr. Mose Durst to replace Neil Salonen as president. I liked him and I continued my role as treasurer, but Dr. Durst also brought many new people with him from the West Coast which was understandable.



In 1982, due to a chance meeting in the stairwell of the New Yorker, Dr. Bo Hi Pak asked Sara whether she would like to come to The Washington Times, a conservative newspaper True Father was establishing in the one-newspaper Capital City, to run the Computer Services Department. The person initially hired for the job went AWOL. Sara and I talked about it. Our two little boys, Caner and Kensy, were three and one year old at the time, and they needed grass and trees and room to play. They used to ride their little tricycles up and down the halls of the New Yorker, I'm sure, terrorizing our older residents. The whole time we lived in New York, every Sunday Sara and I would borrow a car and drive to New Jersey just to find a park with grass and trees. I was excited at the prospect of moving back to Washington, D.C.

I came along with Sara in September 1982 and eventually became the controller at The Washington Times. And sure enough, we found a house with grass and trees and settled in Bethesda, Maryland, where we live today. In 1982, I reported first to Jack Brown, who was the chief financial officer (CFO) at the time, and then, when Jack Brown retired, I became the CFO, and reported to several great men who led The Times during the next thirty years – among them, Paul Rothenberg, Bill Paul, Ron Godwin, and Dick Amberg. I remained at The Times until the last day of 2015, when a cancerous brain tumor made it impossible for me to continue working. I had not planned to retire this way, but in a fitting final month, The Washington Times actually broke even, and I was able to walk off into the sunset, satisfied that my "life's work" had borne fruit.

I'm sure that each member has a unique and rich story to tell, based on the many experiences that Heaven provides while living a life of faith during the Providence of God. These are just a few of mine.



Seonghwa Ceremony

Date: Saturday, June 29, 2019 at 11:00 AM

Location: The Washington Times Building – 3600 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

On Thursday, June 27, 2019 at 2:00 AM our wonderful brother and friend Keith Cooperrider made his transition to the spirit world. He was surrounded by his wife and children.

After a long battle with brain cancer, Keith is now able to dwell eternally in the warm embrace of our Heavenly Parent. He has lived a victorious life as a child of God and True Parents. The family is so grateful for all of the prayers and support.

