

## Reflection: It Went Dark...

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*Kitty Wojcik and fellow missionary, Robert Beebe, in Moscow.*

For all the indemnity conditions that brothers and sisters in the American Movement have done, where does our institutional memory for making meaningful conditions, laying concrete foundations to better ourselves, families, ancestors and our world begin?

Before there was Cheong Pyeong to address ancestral plights, there was leaving your home to move into a communal church center to dedicate yourself full-time to teaching, winning members and loving those who joined. Your family missed you but wished you well as you set out on a course to “save souls” and love your enemy. With that, an explosive growth of membership occurred in the American church throughout the 1970’s.

To strengthen and expand the new-found church membership, church activities developed into several categories: witnessing, fundraising, administration and public outreach. Witnessing required the complete dedication of one’s heart to another person. Fundraising required hours of extra-long, out-of-the-box canvassing, salesmanship, the establishment of the culture of “personal best” and physical endurance. Administration of the church required organizational, financial, legal and communications know-how for the adoption of institutional structures across cultural lines – that was no small feat for a band of highly selected members. And then there were those involved in governmental outreach to individuals in higher office and upper echelons, where members spent their waking hours creating publications, attending meetings and creating conferences.

During this era, members paid indemnity by moving out of their childhood homes, foregoing or quitting university and passing up a meaningful career. The offering of one’s life was a deliberate payment for historical, personal and collective transgressions with a hope for future well-being and reconciliation. At the same time, happiness blossomed with the promise of liberation and abundant blessings for our family, ancestors, nation, God and self.

In this early era of the American movement, members were taught that every dime earned through fundraising paid a historical price and that those who asked, and those who gave, shared a common, redemptive bond. It was taught that for each moment the fundraiser, witnesser, administrator or professional continued to teach, serve, sacrifice and love, that the Providence moved forward, and our ancestors benefitted. We, hour by hour, lived a life of unlocking historic chains that bound heaven and earth, along with and including our ancestors who played an active part and who learned lessons alongside us and grew as we did. During those days, personal and collective growth was profound. We, on most occasions, loved the people who gave back and often found not only our God waiting with blessing for the movement, and ourselves, but with blessings for everyone. When we couldn’t succeed, when a day didn’t go right, when obstacles to loving or giving to others weren’t overcome, tears of repentance flowed in prayer rooms where brothers and sisters revealed an incomparable, beautiful heart.

In the mid 1970’s, the 1,800-Couple missionaries went overseas. Their mission was to negotiate successful witnessing strategies with international counterparts they had never met and literally did not understand. Alone, in a foreign land, sometimes at night, our missionary brothers and sisters looked up into the sky and wondered how their friends, family and spouses were doing back at home? They wondered if they would ever see their homeland or loved ones again. The missionaries would confide in God (and sometimes to each other) that they were afraid, out of their element, making mistakes and woefully incompetent. Our God would tell them that he would use their strife as a “love note” able to bless their home country, their loved ones, their ancestors and the nation they came to serve. Some of those members suffered in prison, were misunderstood, grew ill, and some died away from their homeland. Each of them rested in the knowledge

that their contribution earned some portion of liberation, personal victory, national reconciliation or a spiritual enrichment from a God that promised it would.

During the early 1970's and through the mid-1980's, the American membership entered the Blessing era. Movement-wide calls came for mothers to go to the front lines and children went to nurseries. The 43, 777, 1,800, 74 and 2,075 and other US couples were called to consider the task. Husbands and wives came to unforgettable decisions and documents show that in 1983 approximately 1,770 American blessed couples said "yes" to the restitutive "nursery" path. The couples and children negotiated a tsunami of complex experiences and feelings. Their offering, correspondingly, provided a spiritual tidal wave and immeasurable payment toward their personal, collective, historical and ancestral debt. The impact of this condition still reverberates on some of those families today.



*Kitty (far left) with children, Natalia, Gil, Ricky, Tath and Sonny at Tath's nursing graduation dinner.*

By the early 1990's, an explosion in the birth of second-generation children occurred. However, the realization that some Blessed couples were not conceiving children also became apparent. The membership moved to comfort those couples through the heart of adoption. Couples came forward to give the gift of lineage to their brothers and sisters who might not have one. For those couples that felt called to give, a love offering of immeasurable value took place. Was money exchanged? No. Was love exchanged? Yes. Were ancestral chains unlocked? Yes. Were historical prices paid? Yes, and beyond compare. How many families were impacted by the extraordinary love displayed? I don't know the number but each one was another explosion of redemption through love.

In some way or somehow during the late 1990's, the American member's legacy of giving from the heart (and from the gut) went dark. We began receiving invitations to pay cash amounts for redemption. No discussion, recollection or factoring in of the American movements' vibrant, intense, vivid spiritual giving history endured or factored in.

From the early days in the American movement, many acted in tandem with their ancestral line. From Day 1 as we attended Divine Principle workshops and seminars our ancestors benefitted and spiritually grew when we acted in good faith. It was also clear that some ancestors were good, and some were "not so good," but all had access to growth through the personal integrity of their descendant. There was an understanding that resentments were untangled and mistakes corrected through providential heartfelt activities. Our ancestors went with us from place to place around the world and from mission to mission over the twenty-some-odd-years, and then in the 90's a level playing field was created where everyone started from zero. The highly trained group of spiritual ancestral warriors that stood beside us through incredible hardship, supernatural offerings and cross-cultural reconciliations were now unsung and in need of "formal" education.

I went through the 40 Days National Messiah Training and gave financial contributions although, as a widow with six children, it was hard to do. It was hard to reconcile the notion that a family of means had greater access to redemption than a family without means, but I soldiered on. While in line to make my offering at Cheong Pyeong the cashier asked me, "Aren't you going to include financial support for your ascended husband?" I was taken back, "What?" I thought my husband was the most faithful man on earth, led an exemplary, sacrificial life, and gave everything he had to and for the church, he left his children with the most valuable thing he had, a spiritual inheritance, but not much else. Was she telling me that he was now at the mercy of monetary payments? Well, there was no institutional memory of the American memberships' course and walk of faith. It didn't exist and it didn't matter. I looked at the cashier, fighting off the indignation I felt and the insult to his memory and bit my tongue as I declined her offer. The so well-worn tool of vibrant, limitless heart-based offerings to reconcile the past not only went unknown; it went dark.

*Kitty Wojcik is a 2075 Couple, joined the church in 1973, participated in MFT, IOWC, NY Church, Oakland, CARP, foreign missions, and AFC. Kitty's family participated in the 1983-1986 nursery campaign, served as birth parents in 1989 and sent a much-beloved, victorious Tom Wojcik to Heaven in 2001. She currently serves as a volunteer director with the Blessed Family Association.*