

My Thoughts on Pioneering Memphis

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Dear Louise (Berry [Strait]),

When I first arrived in Memphis, I was staying at the YWCA. It was a place that was very lonely, and with an extremely depressing atmosphere. I quickly realized how important it was to find a satisfactory center and begin to work: teaching and witnessing and finding children for Father, But it was not an easy task. I'm sure that most of the pioneers found this to, be true, Many times, you would find a home that would be just right, and then the owner would learn that you were single and refuse to rent to you.

I realized that we had much to overcome. Not just our own weaknesses and youth were barriers, but also the reputations of others who had come before us and left a bad feeling. Once I had found an apartment which was acceptable, I began to work to become familiar with the city. I found colleges, schools, parks, shopping centers, and other available places for witnessing.

It was a very difficult situation. I quickly learned that there were many laws and ordinances which were designed to keep peace and order" in the city, but at the same time, hindered our work. I began to try to find contacts within the police department and city hall who could help me to understand how to accomplish what was needed to be done and yet remain within the law. Making these contacts was also a rather difficult task. In a city this large, there are many people trying to accomplish many different kinds of work and all of them want special favors. The key people become very hardened and inflexible because so many times their leniency has been misused.

On the campuses, other than the state schools, you find that there are also many rules, presumably to protect the students from influences that could lead to problems. I found that in spite of a rather long period of relative calm, there is an atmosphere of mistrust. Memphis still remembers the violent riots of a few years ago and recognizes the rising tensions that still exist in spite of the attempts of the Chamber of Commerce to paint a glowing picture of the new face of Memphis. So any new group is viewed as a potential catalyst to once again ignite the racial fires.

Well, I found the apartment on April 15 and began working slowly learning how different things are than in an established center. Even though I had experienced living in a small center, I had no idea of what was in store. I gained a whole new respect for those brothers and sisters who had come before me into the family and who had dedicated themselves to the long, difficult task of bringing the American movement to the point where Master could dare to begin directing its affairs.

When one has been living in an established center, even though one is somewhat aware that there is "a lot" happening, I really doubt he ever realizes just how much it was. I know that for the first time I began to appreciate on a really deep and loving level all of the sacrificial service that must be the mission of every center director. Even in a small center, where one is involved in many different tasks, I doubt I ever realized the responsibilities laid upon the director. You know, it is one thing to go out witnessing, or to be responsible for cleaning or cooking, or to contact public relations people, or to direct prayer meetings, or to raise those people that Father sends your way. But I quickly learned how different it was for the director. I learned that it is a great responsibility to not only understand each aspect of the work thoroughly and to be involved in it, but also to have to accept the responsibility to organize each thing and see that it is carried out to its conclusion. I guess in many ways these are things that we should have known before we came out to the field -- just through intuition or common sense -- but even though I had some idea of what lay ahead, I think it was only through the actual experience that I truly knew the love

and dedication of those who have directed our work through its first long years of struggle.

Louise, I know that much of this is rambling and not very practical and factual, but it is a strong feeling of love that I am trying to express. So often we talked of love and our "family" and now lucky we all were to have been called to the Unification Church. But I think I am just learning the meaning of love. After I had been in the new center about one day, I became aware of a deep desire to be attached to each brother and sister in our family.

I bought a map of the United States and created a map of the American Family. Each Center established and pioneer and two heavenly bus teams had their places. I felt the United State shrinking in size to one very close, warm, and loving family. Each morning now I study the map for a few minutes before going to work or going out witnessing. I see not just far away states but brothers and sisters who are sacrificing themselves gladly for our work and for our Parents, I feel, as I said, a new depth of love for the first time. Whenever I get a letter from anyone at Washington or in the field, I feel like a child on Christmas morning.

I am aware of getting the greatest gift of all, the love of a brother or sister who has taken the time to share his heart and mind and love. I am aware that this is the foundation of our work in America -- this unity of heart and mind and love. I think I am only just beginning to understand some of the things that our Master told us during those months he was here. It is this love, just now beginning to glow from each state and city where there is a brother or sister, that is the true hope for America. We each see -- the doubts and fears and loneliness of those in our cities and become aware that we alone have the truth that will free them and allow them to share in our family. We alone have the new truth from God which will fulfill all of their longings and dreams. And in this awareness we are filled with God's desire to embrace all of His children together. And no matter how long or how hard or how lonely the battle, we fight on. Each person who has seen God's ideal as an achievable reality sacrifices all that he has for that ideal. I think we are just beginning to realize the significance of this in our movement now. For the first time we are really working as a unified movement. Oh, I know there are still problems: we still fail to communicate, we still criticize -- but a new unity is very clearly arising. There is a close bond between Washington, the established centers, the pioneer centers, and the bus teams. Although, each group is totally involved in its own mission and sees it as vital, each one is totally aware that his mission is nothing -- it cannot succeed - - without the other parts. And the bond of love grows stronger and begins to weave its way through the United States to provide the foundation for the unification of this country.

This dream slowly but surely is becoming a foundation in reality, not just a foundation in faith. So, to return to Memphis, I began to prepare for the arrival of the bus team here, and as I have said, there were many seemingly insurmountable problems. But then I would receive a letter from another pioneer -- who just had a feeling that he ought to write and Father would reveal so the new hope or success or contact or progress, and a new determination would grow. For nearly a month, I struggled and ran into wills, and tried to go around them, and found that they were too wide. And it was just one week until the arrival of the bus, and I had very little tangible fruits of the hours I was spending. I began to fear that I had taken the wrong course, that I should have directed my energies in another area -- and then Father began to harvest His fruits. First, a newspaper that I had been regularly trying to contact came through.

For over a month I had been in touch with the religious editor, who either refused to talk to me or told me to call back after I had "established" myself and proven my intention to stay in the city. So one morning I called her, and she very frankly told me that she had no intention of doing an article. She had read our pamphlets and received our releases, but she just didn't see any way that she could help me. She said she would wait to hear from me some other time when I had something really different, but even with the bus team she didn't think she could help. I remained at home that afternoon to complete some paper work that had to be done.

About 3:30 that afternoon the phone rang. The conversation on the other end of the line went something like this: "Hello? This is Beth Tamkey from the Commercial Appeal. I've changed my mind. I don't know why. I've decided to do a story on the Unification Church. I don't know what changed my mind. I still don't understand what or why you're working here. It doesn't sound logical. But can I come over and see you? In about a half hour? Fine."

And the result of this was the longest article that Saturday in the religious section of the largest circulation newspaper. I received several calls from people who said they were sure that they couldn't agree with everything that I said but that they wanted to wish me luck and pray for me.

Then I met Captain John Molnar. He is the head of Special Services at the Police Department. After being transferred to about 7 or 8 extensions, and being told that my problem was hopeless, it was really a pleasure to talk with this man. He truly wanted to serve the people of this city. I told him about my inability to get rally permits because of city ordinances, about not being able to get permits from anyone for anything. I explained that the purpose of our movement was unification, that it was a religious movement, and that I wanted to remain within the limits of the law. I explained that I did not want to

become known as another group which just did whatever it wanted to outside of the established limits. He was quite impressed with the very different focus of our group as compared with most young people today. And said he would do some investigating for me. When I went in to see him a few hours later, he had gotten me an appointment with the mayor's aide. Inside of an hour, I had permission not only for some park rallies, but also for one on the City Hall Plaza, which was to be covered later by two TV stations, one radio station, and the major newspaper again.

My next appointment was with the Board of Public Solicitations. I had submitted an application for a permit for the bus team a month earlier -- I had not heard a thing. I met the woman to whom I had sent the application. She told me that the board had not passed on the application and would not get to it until the next meeting on June 14, several weeks after the bus team had left. But she had seen the article in the paper and was quite impressed. Later that afternoon she called me to say that she had just put the permit into the mail. It seems that there had been an emergency meeting of the board, and she had taken the news article which she cut out of the newspaper that weekend and the application, and some Unification Church literature to the board meeting. Just as they were getting ready to adjourn, she got them to approve it.

Next was the problem of a meeting hall. For over a month I had been working on that to, with no luck. Everything costs money -- much more than I thought either I or the bus team could afford. So I had resigned myself to holding the meetings at my apartment. Then someone gave me the name of a chaplain at the University of Tennessee Inter-Faith Center. It was a long shot.

They didn't let out their facility to events sponsored by non-university functions. But they might have some other suggestions. A call to this man resulted in a two-hour interview just two days before the arrival of the bus team. I was questioned by two of the four chaplains there. They also had seen the article and thought it was quite good, considering the reputation of the columnist. But they had many questions. I answered them as best I could. They said they would do some checking for me and would call me the next day. The next morning their secretary called and asked when I could come down to pick up the key to the chapel -- they had decided that I could use it for the entire week if I would promise to vacuum the floor each night.

Well, there it was. All of the things that I had been struggling with and feeling so unhappy that they had not come through. Suddenly at Father's working they were accomplished. I guess that was my foundation of faith -- just to hang in there and keep trying. Well, Louise, I don't know what else to say. Everything worked out quite well. The bus team arrived and had a pretty successful three days -- in spite of the holiday weekend. I was sorry that they had to leave early, but am very grateful for all they accomplished while they were here.

I want to close with a reiteration. I know that our work will succeed. It will succeed on the basis our unity in love -- and will succeed in direct proportion to how well and how quickly we are able to perfect that unity. This is indeed a time when we must take care to "Safeguard the Unified Front."

Love to all my brothers and sisters,
In the Name of Our True Parents,

Diane Frink