

## We Were There: Spiritual highs

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*Photo date and location unknown*

I was in New York Church when Rev. Song took over. He was a tall, burly, charismatic guy. He'd been the leader of a kid's gang on the hill in Pusan where Father and Won Pil Kim built a hut out of cardboard. The kids harassed Father at first, then came over to his side and helped him.

Anyway, there were all kinds of Korean leaders. Some would tell you how to clean your car's engine with a toothbrush.

I was on the front desk at 43rd street HQ when Rev. Song came by. He sniffed the air and I heard him say "Spiritual smell...good". Then he smiled and walked away. A few minutes later a whiff from the kitchen hit me and I realized he'd really said "Pizza smell.....good."

My sleepy night shift at the front desk was interrupted the next morning by rapid footsteps coming down the stairs at 3am. Rev. Song trotted by and out the door, followed quickly by Roddy Joyce, our Aussie general affairs brother.

Later that morning word went out: Rev. Song was inviting every member in New York to dinner at the WMC. He had gone out to Hunt's Point Market, the wholesale food market, and filled up the van with food. Then he'd driven to the New Yorker, taken over the kitchen and spent all day chopping and slicing and cooking with his boom box blasting Korean rock music.

Members filed in from all over: headquarters staff, center members, Il Hwa members, office members, OWP folks, Japanese, you name it. The dinner line went slowly because Rev. Song insisted on serving dinner personally to each one who came.

Then we filed our full bellies into the ballroom, where our new regional leader took the mic and delivered a very heartistic speech in what we presumed was English. It had a lot of feeling, even if we couldn't understand most of it. We could make out 'brotha and sista' and 'family feeling'. Then he announced individual entertainment.

He would point to a group of members and boom out "German members! Sing!" They would huddle in their suits and ties and decide on the song. Most of the groups went willingly enough, but one business group tried to get up and quietly tiptoe out.

"What doing!! Stay! Sing!!"

He was so jovial, yet so forceful that everyone sang. By the time it was half over, we were laughing so hard our stomachs hurt. Rev. Song penetrated the stuffy, official 'I have an important mission' atmosphere of New York and reduced us to a family, either singing or rolling on the floor. As Kerry Williams put it later "It felt like we were all drunk, only nobody was drinking."

Do you remember a spiritual high? Or an interesting time with a Korean leader?