

## Back home again in Indiana

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March 18, 2014



*A demonstration in support of the National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis*

It is the 40th anniversary of the 32-city Day of Hope tour that began on March 16, 1974. This is one of several historical tours that contributed to the growth of Unificationism in America. Carol Rengnez, then member of the One World Crusade (OWC), shares her personal account of the events of this tour that led her to attend True Father's talk in Indianapolis 40 years ago and officially become a Unificationist in Detroit.

I remember going to the church center in Indianapolis for a lecture, and a group of Unificationists walked in the door, so excited, with little flags on sticks that said, "Forgive, Love and Unite", "Support the President", etc. I discovered that they had just met True Father at the Detroit airport where they had held a rally to support President Richard Nixon. I asked them, "Why did you not ask me to go, too?" I was a part-time student and working full time at General Motors, but when I saw their joyous faces I saw I really had missed something special, but was not sure what it was.

### **Something is Going On**

My cousin came to stay with us in 1973. I had not yet heard of True Father or Unificationism. One day, she came back from the store down the street and said she had met a "China girl" asking for donations. Days later it was my turn to go shopping. On my way I heard someone say "One World Crusade." I looked around, then down, and saw a "China girl" holding a can marked "One World Crusade," with some single dollar bills in it. I didn't say anything but just gave her two dollars and then went into the store. Later my cousin and I both agreed, "Something is going on."

A year later, my mom read aloud from the newspaper, "Forgive, Love and Unite." She agreed with the statement. Another evening, she remarked, "A Korean missionary is coming to speak here in Indianapolis." Hmm. In the fourth grade, one of the nuns had told us about Korean Christians who would refuse to deny their faith. When they did, their enemies would chop off their heads! My faith wasn't as steadfast as that. The same year at band camp, we learned the Korean folk song "Arirang." I loved it.

One day, my friend met a "German girl" at the transmission shop. She told him, "If you want to get tickets to hear a Korean missionary speak, go to the Holy Trinity Church," where her team was staying. I was interested too. "Hmmm ... something is going on," I said. We went together to the church basement and Gabi, the "German girl" answered the door. Another girl invited us to a table to talk about the speech coming up and showed us some books. As I reached for the Christianity in Crisis book with True Father's portrait on it, she pulled it back, as though the book were too precious to be held by just anyone. She gave us the tickets though.

### **No Answer**

The night before the speech, I was babysitting for my five younger brothers and sisters on my parents' 29th anniversary. During the evening, my brothers had a big fight. I ran upstairs and prayed more

fervently and desperately than most nights. “My parents love each other so much, and they love us so much, but why can’t we brothers and sisters do that for each other?”

In all my 18 years of prayer, God never answered. I can’t remember a time when I didn’t believe in God; I just always did, but not getting answers was starting to bug me. I did everything I was supposed to, but those statues never talked back to me. No vision came, as it had to the three children of Fatima. No voice came in a burning bush, as it had to Moses. Since the age of 10, I spent my playground time practicing the organ for Mass, but even then, when I was all alone in that church, God never spoke.

This time, I took Him by the shirt and shook Him. I told Him that I knew to be really happy, I had to go help poor people. But He needed to give me a sign as to what to do—maybe the Peace Corps? I cried and cried, but still no answer, not even intuition. “What kind of God are you?” I yelled. No answer.

### **A Sign**

The following day, with that chip on my shoulder, I went with my friend downtown to Monument Circle for the speech. As we parked the car, we heard a band playing. “Something is going on,” I said. We ran, and saw a brass band playing in front of the Columbia Club. “Hurry and go in,” Hildegard exclaimed, “You will miss the program!” As we entered, we read the “Forgive, Love and Unite” speech posted in the lobby. The New Hope Singers began the program. They were so vivacious and their rendition of “Ezekiel Saw the Wheel” was beautiful.

Next came the fantastic introduction of True Father. True Father looked so elegant and dynamic, and True Mother had that beautiful, creamy complexion and a knockout smile. True Mother sat down and True Father began to speak with the aid of a translator.

As the fast-flying, energetic Korean syllables came out of True Father's mouth, people started to stir. As he spoke on the topic of John the Baptist not understanding how to help Jesus, some began to make loud comments. The real nasties were the older women with mink coats, huffing and cackling. When their feathers got too ruffled, they started yelling out loud!

I was so ashamed. The whole room started to buzz with murmurs and shouts. How horrible, I thought. This man came all the way from Korea to tell something to the people of Indiana, and these loudmouths are taking over his speech. I wanted to stand on top of my chair and tell them how ashamed they should be, that if they wanted to speak, they should use their own money and get their own hall.

I was burning inside, but too timid to actually do it. Instead, I thought, “I will give him my eye contact to show him that I support him.” However to my surprise and everyone else’s, several seconds later True Father began to sing a Korean folk song! People were so surprised that they calmed down, and the fur-coated chicks left the room. Then True Father began to speak in a very different manner: dead serious. I tried to keep eye contact. I wanted to show him that no matter what, I wanted to hear what he had to say, but a few times I had to look away, as I felt he was looking through me.

When the program finished, I saw the Christianity in Crisis book on sale in the lobby, the same book the girl at the church wouldn't let me touch. “Now I’m gonna buy it and read it!” I thought. My friend bought a book titled New Hope, and we exchanged them with each other. We also signed up for our first workshop.

We couldn't understand everything True Father was saying, but he was so serious about it. He had total conviction about how Jesus got the short end of the deal, so to speak, that I wanted to hear more. Two months later we joined the movement of New Hope and were able to be at Madison Square Garden that same year.

### **A Church on Every Corner**

When President Abraham Lincoln asked for 7,500 volunteers to enlist for the Civil War, Indiana had 200,000. Indiana limestone was used to build the Empire State Building and other historic buildings, and her farms fed the nation. Tough cookies like actor Steve McQueen, who did his own stunts, came from Indiana, and they are some of the best homegrown, homespun people anyone could ever meet.

Many tough-cookie brothers and sisters who joined in this state went on to be True Father's driver, security, top lecturers and top go-getters for The Washington Times newspaper. I also heard True Father was interviewed by an Indianapolis radio station prior to the speech. He loved that interview and the city. Indianapolis was the first city on that tour, to ask as the first question, “What do you believe about Jesus?” Even for journalists, the first question was about Jesus. People used to say, “There are more churches on every corner in the state of Indiana than any other state.”

After recently looking through old photos, I found a photo of my dad at age 8. It was a picture from his first Holy Communion, rosary in his hand, hair all greased down. On the back of the photo was written, "1930, Holy Trinity Church"! My grandma and dad had gone to the same church where I received the tickets for the 32-city Day of Hope tour! I realized that God does speak, but in mysterious ways.

I like to reflect on this quote from True Father, and feel proud to have been a part of that "young generation":

"In my generation, I developed a national-level foundation (Korea) and brought great victory. My strategy in America since 1974 was therefore to connect the foundation of this spiritual victory to the substantial world stage through the young generation." (1986.01.21)