

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 20

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If we pay attention to our lives, we can see the many faces of God and experience His many moods. Sometimes, we find ourselves in the trenches with God the Captain, telling us to fix bayonets, then blowing His whistle, ordering us over the top. Other times, we dance, and God leads us smoothly, lightly, joyfully. The God who brought our family to Santa Rosa, seemed to emerge from the verses of the "Song of Songs" and seduce us, leading us through idyllic pastures and manicured vineyards, as if in promise.

We never expected the Santa Rosa we discovered. A good friend of mine in law school, Steve Skikos, had grown up there in a large Greek family that owned a thriving produce business. Whenever Steve spoke of his hometown, he disparaged it. He had attended Cardinal Newman High School and remembered it as provincial and lackluster. Every negative thing he said about Santa Rosa appeared to be corroborated by what we had seen from the Highway 101 freeway exits. Steve swore he would never return there, and we had over the years absorbed his distaste. Thus, when Cindy received

an offer to interview with a radiation oncology practice there, we accepted the invitation with no small degree of skepticism. We flew into San Francisco, rented a car at the airport, and began our drive North. As we thread our way through 19th Avenue and Golden Gate Park in the City, we felt our deep attachments pulling at us. Crossing the Golden Gate Bridge brought smiles to our faces and joy to our hearts. We spoke about how much we missed Northern California. The drive through Marin County, into Sonoma County reminded us when we first married, how we would seek those rare free moments to visit the wineries for tastings. As we entered Santa Rosa and made our way up to stay at the Flamingo Hotel, we were struck by the hotel's Art Deco theme and the quirky Pink Flamingo on a pedestal thrust into the afternoon sky.

Santa Rosa was growing on us.

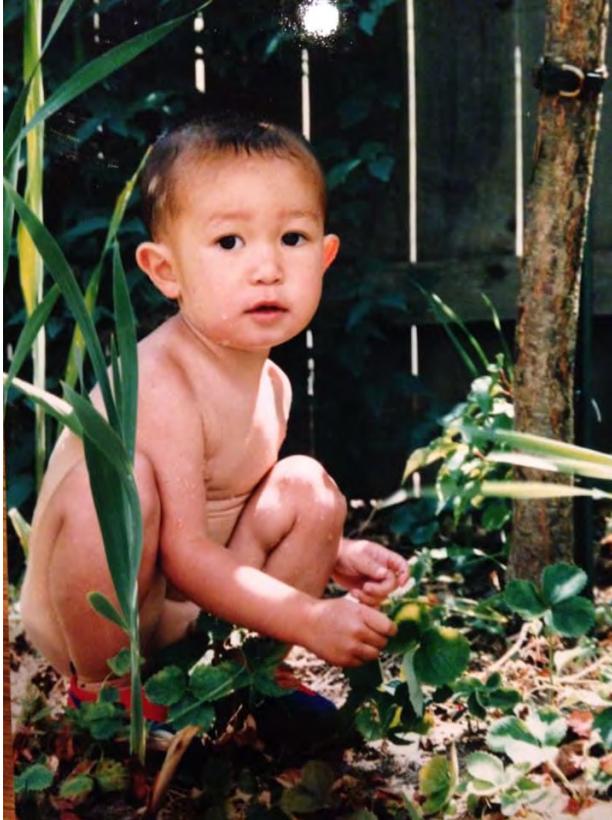


As evening came on, we drove into the Valley of the Moon just as the moon rose over the Coastal Range, where Jack London had built the Wolf House. The moon was huge and yellow casting a bright light on row after row of grape vines along the country road lined with rustic sights, ranches, and vineyards that climbed up the side of the mountains. Everywhere, massive redwoods interspersed with gnarled oaks cast moon shadows that created a mystical, even magical air. By the time we arrived at the restaurant, we had both decided that our dear friend Steve must have been trying to hide this treasure from us.

The Kenwood Restaurant sat back off the side of the road. As we entered, the three doctors joining us for the evening's meal, sat at the bar with the German Swiss owner, Josef, smoking (what I later discovered) a Cuban cigar. I commented to one of the partners on the beauty of the full moon, and he laughed, saying, "It's like that every night." So began our evening. The next day, Cindy spent at the clinic, meeting everyone, and discussing the structure and business of the practice. I explored Santa Rosa, looking at the neighborhoods, schools,

and parishes. I fell in love. Fortunately, Cindy also liked her future partners and the manner in which the business side of the practice had been structured. Before we left, we found out that they had interviewed a number of other possible candidates over the past few months and had closed the interview process before Cindy had applied - they only reopened it by chance when one of the partners saw her resume. As soon as we had arrived back home in San Diego, they called and offered Cindy the job.

On weekend trips to Santa Rosa, we soon found a home to rent in a quiet neighborhood. As it turned out, we lived only a block away from George and Zetta Skikos, the parents of Steve. Very devout Catholics, they happily welcomed us to their parish at St. Eugene's. The Skikos children had all attended the elementary school attached to the church, as had the children of one of Cindy's new partners. With their guidance and support, we soon had Misa enrolled in their kindergarten.



I decided not to look for a local firm to join right away. Instead, I began consulting on government contract fraud cases and doing a bit of legal work as it came my way. Most of my energy went to our young children and to settling our family in a new community. As part of this effort, I began attending Mass daily at St. Eugene's and getting to know the pastor, Monsignor Frank Gaffey. I felt strong ties to Monsignor Gaffey. He came from an old San Francisco family, as did I, and he had gone to St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California right down the street from where my paternal grandparents lived. My grandparents had been very active with the seminarians, often hosting them for meals and providing a social network for them away from their own homes. After seminary, Monsignor Gaffey earned a PhD in American Church History at Catholic University. As we developed a closer relationship, I felt a condition I had set when I first joined the movement in 1973 was bearing fruit. One afternoon, I went into the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the campus of Catholic University and prayed. Inspired, I took Holy Salt and blessed the main altar of the church, claiming it for God

and True Parents. As a PhD candidate at Catholic University, Monsignor Gaffey would have said Mass at this altar or at the very least, concelebrated with others on ceremonial occasions. We soon began meeting for breakfast and I began to introduce more Divine Principle to our discussions. The concepts and theological language appealed to Monsignor Gaffey, and he exhibited an admirable openness of mind and heart, a disposition which would soon bear fruit.



One weekend in June, Cindy's mother came up to join us on a trip to the Mendocino Coast. We celebrated our anniversary in a beautiful rustic home, set in the redwoods, that belonged to one of Cindy's patients. While sitting on the porch, enjoying the night sea air and distant crashing of waves, I slipped very naturally into prayer. As I did, True Father visited me. The experience was an unusual one. Usually, I communed with True Father heart to heart, or I would have a dream. This time, it was as though Father had astrally projected. His spirit swept through me, at great speed. Afterwards, I felt Father had visited me to check on my wellbeing and to let me know that he was guiding my family in our unfolding course.

