

## Hoon Dok Hae with True Family – 1<sup>st</sup> May, Oslo, Norway

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Time with True Family is always precious, and each Hoon Dok Hae is a unique spiritually charged experience in itself. I felt so privileged to attend the first session of their Norwegian stay, representing the European Youth Department I found myself sitting at the front of their suite of the Continental Hotel. The hotel was opposite the Norwegian National theatre, but the real performances that day would be in their suite on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor. However, this time was extra special as we were surrounded with the loving presence and attendance of so many True Family members – Ye Jin Nim, In Jin Nim, Kwon Jin Nim and Hyung Jin Nim, and Kun Yeon ah nim (Hyo Jin Nim’s wife), Hwa Yun Nim (Kwon Jin Nim’s wife), and Yeon ah nim (Hyung jin nim’s wife) were accompanying True Parents. This current European tour – ‘the founder’s tour’ is definitely a family occasion.

Won Ju McDevitt read a speech from May 11<sup>th</sup> 1969 from the Korean text, and Tim Elder’s simultaneous translation (quite remarkable) helped us understand Father’s words – a call to action that sounded as vibrant today as it must have 32 years ago. The words encouraged us to: “be people who can give, not take, you must always be contributing to the church – you must always be adding’ ... ‘we should help each other, not be indebted to Rev. Moon – we must not depend on the parents – but we will establish a foundation through this difficult course”. This foundation has certainly been established, yet returning to Father’s early speeches is clearly a way to connect with his original teachings through new eyes.

The end of the reading kicked off a session of singing (about 21 songs). Won Ju McDevitt and Mrs Song sung beautifully and passionately. Father was requesting Korean songs; the mysterious melodies built a special atmosphere that opened all our hearts, whilst Father would whistle, finish off the lyrics and dance with his hands.

In turn, Father requested all the True Family members to sing, which was such a precious experience to behold (Father repeated how this fact made it a very special occasion). As a loving father, he warmly introduced each family member and glowed with pride and joy as each one sang from their hearts. The diversity of characters, and their closeness was embodied by them for us to witness. In between he shared words of direction, affection and some light hearted reflections – joking that Norway mean ‘let’s play’ in Korean, he warmed the atmosphere.

I was even asked to sing a song, a moment I never expected, I sang ‘Jerusalem’ (a hymn about messianic hope in England, whose words are from a poem by William Blake) in a few different keys, with lyrics

incorrectly repeated. Despite somewhat struggling to the end I felt no shame, and no judgement on such an occasion; immersed in a culture of heart, each person singing out loud whatever was inside.



After many songs, Father requested that Yeon ah nim (Hyung Jin Nim's wife) share a testimony before singing. This was a precious part of the morning, that helped me to more deeply connect to her important mission as one half of the international leadership couple of our global family. Her heartfelt sincerity, and natural beauty brought a shift in my perspective – so I want to convey a few of the points that she covered in her testimony: As the daughter of a 777 couple, her parents were church pastors so she was used to church life. Growing up in humble church facilities her job was to empty the toilet pots and take care of the fruit trees in the church grounds. As it was one of the classic A-frame churches of the Korean movement, bats would often take rest in the high ceiling, and she would clean up their droppings as part of her devotion. Through serving the church she grew to love the church – and through loving the church she learnt to love herself. This is the simple but profound back-story that formed the core foundations of her life of faith. She gave an overview of the 3yrs of their pastoral work as a couple, and the challenge to be filial children surrounding the messiah. Also, she reflected briefly on key aspects of their ministry so far: the strong desire to become independent as the father country from Japan, the painful but necessary mergers in the restructuring of the Korean movement, support for the many Philippine / Korean couple overcoming the many challenges of adjusting, rejuvenating the attitude towards tithing and witnessing as a Korean movement. Yeon ah Nim expressed gratitude for True Parents Blessing – encouraging us to be proud of the Unification church, expressing how True Parents had raised them up: 'the reason we exist is because of the love of True Parents'. The reason I exist is because of them'.

As a 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation, still not always fully appreciating or understanding True Parents' role in my life – this really resonated with my heart, it struck a chord that rang true. True Father's request for her testimony was truly inspired, I had never given enough thought to her background, her origins and foundations. But I believe we can gain a lot through that heartistic connection and shared experience. As a couple, Hyung Jin Nim and Yeon Ah Nim are so spiritually bright and radiant – they are standing as 'trees of life' to us all and are such a reassuring force. Taking on such great responsibility with such love for God and True Parents – love that is constantly growing and developing.

True Mother concluded the Hoon Dok Hae with 'Battle hymn of the republic' in Korean Language, but with English choruses so that we could all join in. The session ended with dancing, Pres. and Mrs Song led from the front, mirroring True Parent's dance moves (the rest of us were not moving as naturally) we were all so happy to see Father and Mother dancing to end what was such a happy Hoon Dok Hae. Perfect preparation for the afternoon's success! Cham bu mo nim ok mansei!

