

Edwin Ang, Berkeley, California, 1962



I was born in Indonesia, but I was studying economics at the University of California at Berkeley in 1962 when I received a letter from a fellow foreign student, Peter Koch, inviting me to a small pioneer center of the Unified Family. Peter had sent out letters to all the foreign students there, stating that he had an important message for their countries. In response to that letter, I called him, stating that I would like to see him at a later time as I was in the midst of preparing for my oral examination for my doctoral degree in economics. However, when he told me that the message had something to do with a “new revelation,” I consented to see him that Thursday evening.

At that meeting in an apartment above a Chinese restaurant in Berkeley, I met Miss Young Oon Kim and some of the early members. After the Divine Principle reading session, I was so inspired that I stayed in the apartment until 4:00 a.m. to ask Peter many questions. This conversation gave me a good idea of what the movement was all about. That experience led me to investigate the claims of the Divine Principle by visiting churches and spiritual groups in the San Francisco Bay area, including the Golden Gate Spiritualist Church. After I faithfully attended the Thursday-evening Divine Principle reading sessions for two or three months, Miss Kim asked me to become a member. I responded by signing membership in December 1962. In the process of studying the Divine Principle, I found that it gave me the best interpretation of Scripture and a good explanation of life itself. It integrated science and religion, faith and reason, through the Principles of Creation. For example, I could see that the double-entry

bookkeeping system of modern accounting bears resemblance to the Principles of Creation.

Later on, I was told that out of about 1900 letters Peter had sent out to foreign students at the University of California at Berkeley, about 25 responded to his invitation; however, I was the only one who joined.

During the 48 years of my life of faith in the movement, the first few years were spent primarily working on my dissertation. However, I was able to bring two sisters to the movement, Elke Klawiter, who was blessed to Johann van der Stock in 1969, and Rebecca Boyd, who was blessed with Neil Salonen as part of the 777 couples in 1970.

The year after I joined, Peter Koch went to Germany as the first missionary to Europe. Shortly after that, Paul and Christel Werner and Elke were sent to Austria. These pioneers became the founding missionaries of our Unified Family in Europe. Rebecca was asked to pioneer a center in Florida.

So, there I was in Berkeley, alone, continuing to work on my dissertation. Then, in 1968, Miss Kim sent, first, Farley Jones to help get the Center started. That summer, Betsy O'Neill (Jones) came to add a boost and a feminine touch to our efforts. The three of us worked together, which served to jumpstart growth in the Center. When Betsy returned to New York to resume her graduate studies, Helen Ireland was sent to Berkeley to take her place. Our Berkeley Center was growing.

In early 1969, True Parents arrived in America. The older members were called to Washington, D.C., to prepare for the Blessing. During the lectures given by President Hyo Won Eu and translated by Mrs. Won Pok Choi, I found myself seated next to a young lady who a few days later became my wife, Marie Leckrone. We were part of that 13-Couple Blessing, which is a part of the 43-Couple Blessing worldwide.

When Marie joined us in Berkeley 40 days later, we were living in

a small, cramped second-and third-floor apartment on Milvia Street. There were 10 of us, and growing. We needed more space, and with the help of God and others, we were able to acquire 2955 Ashby Avenue (on Route 13). We moved there on Friday, June 13, with 13 members. We began to see that 13 was a very special number for us!

From that point on, we continued to grow, and by the time True Parents came to the United States in late 1971, we had three thriving centers with around 70 members. Some were students, and some worked in our businesses; one was called Logos-Litho-Print, and another was a secretarial service. We also had some brothers working as house painters.

When True Father initiated the Day-of-Hope tour in 1972, we were overjoyed that the last city of the tour would be Berkeley. By that time, we had sent many of our members to be trained by Father and to support him during the tour. As we made preparations for the Berkeley event, we heard of how difficult a time the earlier cities on the tour were having in filling the halls for three successive nights. Also, we were ordered to sell the tickets at \$18.00 each. We began to prepare intensively, getting a hall in the Claremont Hotel near our Ashby Center. When the Day of Hope buses arrived, we were so nervous and anxious to make everything go well. Just before our event, we supported the Day of Hope event in San Francisco; then it was our turn.

Just before the first evening's event in Berkeley, it started to rain, and we were really apprehensive that we wouldn't be able to fill the hall. But by the grace of God and many prayers and hard work throughout the national tour, the hall was jam-packed, with people standing. All three nights the hall was filled. We were so happy to hear Father report that because of this success, the entire tour could be declared a victory!

Marie was then one of five blessed sisters (including Rebecca Salonen, Diane Fernsler, Hillie Edwards, and Betsy Jones) who were chosen by True Father to serve as itinerant workers (IWs) who would travel throughout a 10-state area of the country to support the lone

pioneers sent out after the Day-of-Hope tour. Then, in December 1972, many changes were made in leadership roles, and I was asked to be Regional Bus Commander of the New England Region. This began several years of various missions, moving around the country: from Massachusetts to Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, Chicago, and then, Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York from 1977 to 1994. When I left my last mission, at the Unification Theological Seminary, I counted the number of graduates at that time to be 777!

During these years of active leadership, I did not have the time to reflect on the path that my life had taken. But after leaving the seminary, I have been able to look back and see quite clearly how God really has guided me throughout my life.

I was born in the small farming village of Bowerno in East Java, Indonesia. My parents observed Confucian holidays and rites but allowed me and my siblings to attend a Dutch Reformed missionary school and a Sunday School where we were exposed to Bible stories. World War II interrupted my schooling, allowing me to support my father in his business. Later, when I moved from the village to the city, I took private tutoring in English, Chinese, and math with the intention of going to China to finish my high-school education. In 1947, when I arrived in Hong Kong, I heard that the Communists were making advances on mainland China, so I decided to stay in Hong Kong and attend St. Stephen's College, a Church-of-England missionary school, in order to finish my high-school education. Just prior to graduation in 1949, I and five others of my graduating class became Christians.

For the next four-and-a-half years, I worked with a Dutch shipping firm, during which time I studied accounting, receiving an Associate Degree from the International Institute of Accountants. But I still had the fervent desire to further my education. I prayed hard to God that if he gave me the opportunity to further my education, I would do

anything God wanted me to do. What came to me was the desire to help poor countries develop economically.

Then a miracle happened. Out of 126 applicants, I was one of the five who were finally selected by the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia to attend International Christian University near Tokyo on a full, four-year scholarship. Upon my graduation with a B.A. degree in 1958, I still cherished the desire to go on with my graduate education in economics. I was fortunate to be accepted by the University of California at Berkeley, which employed me as a teaching assistant and where I began my post-graduate studies in 1958. To me, this was another miracle. Eventually, in 1973, I received my Ph.D. in economics.

I haven't used my education to help poor countries economically, but God has been able to use me to help develop our movement in the earlier years and UTS in its formative stage. Also, through my life's journey, my experiences confirmed the authenticity of Divine Principle and our movement again and again. Through my participation in True Parents' rallies and the Celebration of Life Rally with Dr. Bo Hi Pak, I realized the results couldn't have come about without God's blessing. Also, when True Father selected more than thirty of our UTS graduates to go on to earn their Ph.D.s at top-notch seminaries and graduate schools of religious studies in America and Canada, I observed when visiting them that they had not learned of any higher truth than what True Father has taught.

I must mention, too, that it was my privilege to work closely under missionaries who were sent to the United States by Father: Miss Young Oon Kim in Berkeley; Mr. Sang Ik Choi and his group from Japan for seven months, helping them to settle down in San Francisco; and Dr. David Kim, the first president of UTS, for 17 years. Finally, I served as a member of the board of the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation (KCFF) created by Dr. Bo Hi Pak, for a number of years.

More recently, I have been devoting my time to prayer for our

Blessed Central Families and helping those who come to my attention, while at the same time I'm trying to find the resources to carry out our clan, tribal, and national-messiah missions. I also enjoy spending time with our children and our seven precious grandchildren, which gives Marie and me great joy.