

Nora Spurgin, and Hugh Spurgin, NYC, 1967, & Washington, D.C., 1968



We heard the Divine Principle and joined the Unification Church during the 1960s, which was a time of great moral and social turmoil in America. Hearing a clear, systematic, optimistic presentation of the nature of God and the universe was profound and drew upon our deepest sense of responsibility to respond to the Messianic call of the True Parents. In the Divine Principle, we found answers to our questions about the purpose of life and the meaning of human history. For Nora, who was a devoted member of the Mennonite Church, hearing the Principle meant being called to be a “disciple” — on the one hand leaving a very comfortable spiritual lifestyle, while at the same time experiencing the challenges and excitement of the cutting edge of a new spiritual age of hope and peace. For Hugh, who was active in the Presbyterian Church, it meant discovering a profound, new worldview that satisfied his curiosity about the mysteries of God, the universe and history.

Nora joined the Unification Church on April 12, 1967. A student at New York University, she was doing her master’s thesis on whether religious organizations are instrumental in changing basic value systems. Nora heard the message of the Divine Principle as part of her research and was moved by the clarity and logic of the Principle. Upon hearing that True Father had come to complete the mission of Jesus, initially Nora struggled, since she was a very strong Christian. However, she came to believe that the Principle was true and that God had chosen her to be one of the early pioneers of our church in America.

Hugh joined the church on September 18, 1968. He had moved to Washington, D.C., to work for the Department of Navy. Two weeks after arriving in D.C., he was invited to the church center to hear Divine Principle lectures that were presented by Nora and others over a three-day period. Hugh was fascinated by the Principle, especially its comprehensive explanation of life and history. For him, the Principle answered the question of why people suffer, which is a concern that had preoccupied him since he was a teenager.

We met True Father and Mother for the first time in December 1968, and our lives were fundamentally changed by that encounter and by hundreds of subsequent personal experiences with our True Parents. The night before meeting our True Parents for the first time, Hugh had a dream of True Father as muscular, strong man. On October 21, 1970 in Korea, we were blessed in marriage by our True Parents in the 777 Couples Blessing with six other American couples. We have four children.

For more than 40 years, we have worked together in many different roles with our True Parents with many different missions in a variety of places. Both of us led International One World Crusade teams. From 1979 until 1992, Nora was Director of the Blessed Family Department of HSA-UWC. From 1992 until 1999, she served as the first president of the Women's Federation for World Peace in America.

In all of these missions, we have been most grateful to know our True Parents in such a personal and real way. We recall the many conferences where True Father publicly instructed us, especially Nora. Nora says, "When I was an Itinerant Worker traveling from church center to center during the 1970s, I sent a weekly report to our True Parents. I never knew whether they received those reports. Many years later, Colonel Sang Kil Han said to me, "I miss those reports of yours that I used to read to True Father every week." I was moved to know that my humble offering had value.



Nora and Hugh Spurgin in 1970.

Hugh was the state leader for our movement in many different states. On several occasions, he was a coordinator for a five-state region. For more than 30 years, he studied, worked, and served on the board of trustees of the Unification Theological Seminary. For eight years, Hugh worked as the secretary-general in America of the Professors World Peace Academy and of the International Cultural Foundation. In 1996, we became National Messiahs for Nicaragua. For three years, Hugh worked for *The Washington Times*. Of these times, Hugh says: "I was always deeply moved by our True Parents' vision of the kingdom of God and peace on earth — and by their willingness to sacrifice

everything in order to bring the human family to our Heavenly Father. If our True Parents set this example, then we felt that we also must follow in their footsteps.”

In 1996, True Father gave Hugh the mission to start a college preparatory high school in Connecticut that educates students from every religion, race, culture, and nation, as well as the second generation of our movement. Subsequently, Father asked Nora to join Hugh upon completion of her tenure as president of the Women’s Federation for World Peace - USA. Accordingly, we have sought to establish an educational institution that is founded on that universal vision of our True Parents. As a husband-wife team, we have sought to provide a milieu for the precious values of our church to be practiced by outstanding young people in the Unification Church and other world religions.

We are grateful to our True Parents for the example that they have set in living every moment of their lives as an offering to God and in guiding others in a meaningful and full life of faith. May the love of God be with them and the True Family forever.