

Jeannie Bannister Young, Berkeley, California, 1970



On August 8, 1969, I drove to the Ashby center in Berkeley to visit a friend who recently had joined the Unified Family, but instead of spending time with her, I was asked to attend a lecture! I was 19, Catholic, and considering the convent. I believed Christians inherited Christ's mission of "living the ideal in the midst of the real" to gradually transform painful reality into a world of goodness. Although I struggled mightily to manifest Christ's ideals, the world was not impacted in the slightest. I felt I had failed as a Christian – the thing I cared about most! When expressing my inner turmoil to a nun at school, she replied, "Your goals are unrealistic! Even Jesus couldn't impact society!"

This was not a good answer for me. So, when Dan Fefferman began the Divine Principle lecture saying, "This lecture is about achieving God's ideal on earth," I knew I was in the right place. The brothers and sisters were exemplary, especially center directors, Edwin and Marie Ang. I participated in center activities, finished my B.A. degree at Holy Names College, and brought my friend, Izilda Lima Withers, to hear Divine Principle. We signed membership together on March 3, 1970.

In June 1973, I attended 100-day Belvedere leadership training. Besides studying Divine Principle and fundraising, we assisted with special events that required extra manpower, including hosting a 40-day International Leadership Seminar for British students. We campaigned for the "Christianity-in-Crisis" tour through New York City, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Atlanta. We worked in Washington, D.C., collecting signatures in support of True Father's "Answer

to Watergate" declaration that encouraged Americans to "Forgive, Love, and Unite" with President Richard Nixon, despite his mistakes. Sandra Singleton Lowen often quipped that we were actually the 100-year trainees, since there was no shortage of providential events needing our support in the foreseeable future!

In February 1974 we helped with the 32-city Day-of-Hope tour. I was banquet coordinator for the event in Princeton, N.J. We went room to room at Princeton Theological Seminary in search of guests, but I was surprised to learn that most of the seminarians there were agnostics, pursuing studies to get jobs with perks and prestige as ministers versus a sense of spiritual calling. I had new appreciation for how incredibly rare Father's desire is to comfort God. I started to grasp that we who strive to follow him are also rare.

Next, we worked on the eight-city tour that began with Madison Square Garden on September 18, 1974, but I was on the advance team working for the following event in Philadelphia. I was appointed New Jersey state representative at the conclusion of the tour.

In August 1975, I attended Rev. Ken Sudo's 120-day training at Barrytown, New York. One day we did a condition on the streets of New York City for eight hours giving lectures about how to defeat Communism. To say I was inadequate to the task is an enormous understatement. People walked by and scoffed at me, which was humiliating. Communists came by and snapped our pictures multiple times, which was scary. I felt mortified, knowing my poor presentation was doing more harm than good. During the final hour, I had an overwhelming impulse to escape. St. Patrick's Cathedral was a block away. Maybe I should go there to pray. But I stayed put to fulfill the condition. When time was up, I was packing up when a voice resonated through me slowly: "It is not what you do that matters. It's who you are to Me." Of course what we do matters; God needs people with excellent skills to hasten the Kingdom of Heaven! But what matters

even more is that we care at all and keep trying to do a good job for Him.

From Barrytown, I was assigned to go out as a “pioneer” to West Virginia to start a center, which I did, but the pioneers were later regrouped in Huntington, West Virginia to fundraise. We also mobilized neighborhood kids in street cleaning on Saturdays to beautify our low-income neighborhood prior to the upcoming Bicentennial. It felt great to serve the community. We ended with a large God Bless-America rally before leaving for New York City to work on the Yankee-Stadium campaign. When we returned weeks later, the kids said, “We miss being good!”



Jack, Joe, Jeannie, and Jaime Young.

Preparations for the Washington Monument rally immediately followed. I was one of four people assigned to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Under the excellent leadership of Andy Compton, the four of us were able to bring 700 people to Washington Monument on 16 buses! We felt grateful that Pittsburgh responded so favorably and could participate in that important condition for America.

In July 1977, I was assigned to work as administrative assistant to Dean Therese Stewart at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS),

a job I held for seven years and enjoyed greatly because I had skills to do it! It was one of the happiest chapters of my life working with Dean Stewart, a gracious, wise, and warm elder sister who has lived a life of devotion to God for many decades.

I was blessed to Jack Young at the 2075-couples marriage blessing in New York in 1982, and in 1983 we moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to do home church. We taught our neighbors Divine Principle using Kevin McCarthy's excellent videotapes. I attended the 21- and 40-day blessed-wives workshops at Cheong Pyeong Lake Training Center in Korea and helped with a campaign there. We liberated four lines of ancestors back 120 generations and attended a couple of Original Divine Principle workshops, and we felt these conditions helped us a lot.

Our children, Joe and Jaime, are the crown jewels of our lives. They represent the best of us. Our son, Joe, plays guitar and is musical director for the Lovin' Life Band, and our daughter, Jaime, is in college and was blessed on October 10, 2010 (10-10-10) to a devout, loving young man from Nepal, Ganesh Tamrakar. Our children are our best friends. They inspire us to be better and to do more.

It was only True Parents who could finally explain and model how to transform the "real" world into God's ideal through God-centered families. Thank you so much, True Parents, for allowing me to participate in this work.