

Finding Father

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Excerpt from *40 Years in America* by Michael Mickler



Praying at Twin Peaks, San Francisco, the first Holy Ground in America

I met the Unification Church through a mimeographed flyer left on my college campus in Los Angeles, California. The flyer said, "Faith is for the blind and ignorant." I first saw it in the hand of a Christian who was trying to convert me to Christianity and the United Church of Christ. When I asked him about the pamphlet, he told me it was some free-love commune, and that he and some other Christians were going to witness to them. I accompanied 12 Christians on their visit to the free love commune, which was called the Unified Family. There were seven members of the commune. They gave a night-club-like musical performance in a dimly lit room. Then there was an introduction to the Unified Family. After the introduction most of the Unified Family members went outside to smoke. Everyone was invited to come back on another night, for more lectures.

Only one Christian came back, and he only came for one other lecture. I was the only person to finish the entire lecture series. Many of the members smoked before joining the Unified Family. They told me that it was bad for spiritual growth to smoke and that they were trying to stop smoking. (All but one succeeded within a year.)

Being Jewish

At the time, Jews were not considered potential members in the Unified Family in Los Angeles. It was believed that Judaism was the Formation Stage religion, Christianity was the Growth Stage religion, and the Unified Family was the Completion Stage religion. The Unified Family, as the Completion Stage religion, had no Jewish members because, before entering the Completion Stage, one had to go through the Growth Stage, i.e., become a Christian. Of course, no one told me this at the time. However, the result of this belief was that I became the object of lecture practice for the members, since no one expected me to join. Every member presented at least one lecture, with me as the audience.

What's His Name?

As I was hearing the conclusion lecture, all the members were praying for me in another room. When I heard that the Marriage of The Lamb had taken place in 1960, I immediately believed it. I asked what the Messiah's name was and was told that "We call him Master or Leader." It was several months after I became a member before I was considered worthy to hear Leader's name, Sun Myung Moon. This was due to something that Father said during his 1965 visit: "It is all right to say Sun Myung Moon has been here, but don't say who he is." ["The Master Speaks on the Lord of the Second Advent," Sun Myung Moon, March and April, 1965]

We later learned that Father meant that we shouldn't be going around saying, "Christ is here, he is a Korean named Sun Myung Moon," without giving a foundation of understanding the Divine Principle first. A few months after learning Leader's name, I was honored with being able to see his picture. It was his 1960 wedding photo. After passing a Divine Principle knowledge test, I received my own copy of this

photo, which I still treasure today. I don't think that I saw a photo of Mother (his wife) before I met her in 1969. Only one Unified Family member in LA the center leader, Jon Schuhart, had ever seen Father, and that was before Jon became a member.

Jon, the oldest member, having been a member for two years, was the center leader. We were led by prayer, the Divine Principle, Rev. Moon's 1965 speeches, and Jon's charisma. (There had been elders leading the Unified Family; however, they left about a year before I joined -- upset that they were not blessed [married] during Father's 1965 visit, disagreeing with Father over who should be the national leader, or due to insurmountable sexual problems.) I joined the Unified Family because I received revelations and the love of my spiritual parents, Jon and Sandy Schuhart.

Life in the Unified Family

We witnessed, studied, sang and prayed a lot. Everyone had a job and contributed their income to the center. After work, in the evenings, we would witness. There was no witnessing literature, so we made our own. There were no Unified Family songs, so we wrote our own. (Mostly, Jon wrote the songs; among them are: "Let's Move America," "There Is a Giant," "Find Your Dream," "Precious Light," "What Is Your Reason," and "Gonna Build a Kingdom.")

We frequently went to Holy Ground. If someone had a problem that no one could help them with, that person went to Holy Ground and received internal guidance spiritually. At 11:00 p.m. on December 31, 1967, we all went to Holy Ground. We prayed until the New Year came. There was a special feeling that we had never felt before. A few months later we learned that God's Day had been declared that same night.

Discovering and Avoiding Other Followers

In January 1968, I and Lisa (Martinez) Take were sent to Berkeley to help with witnessing. The center leader was Edwin Ang. I was very impressed with Edwin. He had spent time with Father in 1965, was humble, and spiritual. His assistant was Farley Jones, who had recently been sent from National Headquarters to help the Berkeley center grow. While witnessing in Berkeley, I met two of Father's followers, who were not members of the Unified Family. One was named Tom (I can't recall his last name). He believed in Father, but would not follow Young Oon Kim (Miss Kim), the national leader. He was also witnessing on the Berkeley campus. Tom had gathered a number of followers, some of whom later became Unification Church members.

I also met Young Soo Lim, who is better known as Young Soo "Onni" Durst. She was a member of the International Re-Education Foundation based in San Francisco. She was also a follower of Father's but not a member of the Unified Family.

While I was in Berkeley, we usually went to the Holy Ground in Oakland. One day it was announced that we were going to go to the Twin Peaks Holy Ground in San Francisco, the first Holy Ground that Father blessed outside Korea. We had to leave very early because Edwin and Farley were afraid of meeting "them." The Twin Peaks Holy Ground was great. Later, I asked about who "they" were, and why we didn't want to meet them. There was a schism between Father's followers. Followers of different groups did not speak to each other, believing that their leader was the only one who was doing what Father wanted. I was told that Miss Kim created the Holy Ground at Lake Merritt in Oakland so that her followers (the Unified Family) would not meet the followers of Sang Ik "Papasan" Choi (International Re-Education Foundation) at the Twin Peaks Holy Ground. (As late as 1970, when members of the International Re-Education Foundation visited us in Los Angeles, they were not allowed in the house.)

Looking back, I can see how shameful this is; however, at the time, it was just the way it was. In 1972 Father began breaking down the barriers between his American followers. In 1975 Rev. Moon married me to one of Papasan's most faithful followers. It is working out well. As far as I can see, things are much better now than they were in the 1960s. The heart of these changes are True Parents. They gave us a clearer understanding of the Divine Principle, brought our ideals to the public, and brought us into unity. They did these things, even though we often opposed them. Many thanks to Father and Mother!