

Loving Heart of Christ - Unification Theological Seminary Orientation in England

Carol Pobanz
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In June 1978, my seminary class was sent to Great Britain. It was meant to be a sort of orientation to seminary life, preparation for future church leadership - but basically, it was pioneering Home Church.

True Father met us at Lancaster Gate, London. We were a ragtag group of recruits.

Some of us had only been out fundraising our entire church life, others were from small centers or from church businesses, but few had ever been out pioneering. As we sat together in an intimate group on the floor with Father he explained, "You are going out like the disciples of Christ; go out and serve. It was a simple instruction. Please try to understand what it is to be Christian." Then he gave us \$100 each and told us not to return for one month.

Up until that time in my church life, I had led a somewhat sheltered existence being housed at Belvedere, working in publications and simply following someone's direction for my daily activity. In England, I was being sent out alone. I felt happy to be on my own, able to test the spiritual truths I had, up until then, simply "believed."

I left Lancaster Gate in anticipation and with great hope to better understand the life of Christ. I created a simple strategy:

I randomly chose St. John's Wood as the area of London I would claim as my home.

I would go door to door to find a place to stay.

I would not eat unless food was given to me.

My money would be used only for others.

And finally, I would pray for the people in my area to know God through me, and for me to experience the heart of Christ. (I had always longed to have the much-celebrated Christian conversion experience when the Holy Spirit descends. I understood that to be the "Christian" experience.)

I had no idea what St. John's Wood would be like. I chose the area only for its saintly name. It turned out to be one of the more affluent areas of London, surrounding Regent's Park. My persistent search for a place to stay resulted in me securing lodging with an Irish nurse who cared for an old man - a millionaire, who was blind and deaf from aging. They lived in a mansion flat off of Regent's Park. Everything was quite different from what I had expected as a missionary, a disciple of Christ. I slept in satin sheets, and had tea served in my room at 5:00am as part of the wake-up routine. I ate fine food with decadent desserts, and I polished silverware as service for my keep. But in the afternoon, after helping nurse Sarah, I went into my chosen pioneer area, praying for my neighboring people and helping anywhere I could. I did voluntary service in St. John's Wood, i.e., cleaned, gardened, painted, and read for old people. I conversed with the local vagrants living by the door of the Anglican Church and kept company with the

children and people in the neighborhood.



The pastor from the Baptist church was the most interesting person I met. I had visited his church and he knew that I was a Unificationist. He lived in my area and I saw him often or, should I say, he saw me. It seemed that every time I started working on one of my service tasks, he was passing by. One day he stopped and said, while slowly shaking his head, "You are an enigma to me. You are the best Christian I have ever met but you are not Christian."

Though he mistrusted my church affiliation, he invited me to attend his services and to join his midweek Bible study as well. I came to deeply love this man and his family. I prayed for him every night before falling asleep and I woke up thinking about him and praying for him each morning. I thought, I was surely coming closer to the powerful Christian experience I longed for, and that perhaps it would be through him and in his church. I wanted so much to feel the heart of Christ that Father had encouraged us to know.



It was a Wednesday evening when I attended his Bible study. The pastor seemed strange that evening, not warm and relaxed as usual. After his Bible study, he invited me into his office. There he explained to me that, that afternoon, he went to Lancaster Gate, where he bought the Divine Principle. He read some of the book, he explained, beginning with the conclusion, and he didn't agree with our teaching. Finally, he told me that I should not return to his church. I was shocked and confused. How could he treat me like this? I had done no harm, I had only done good, he said so himself. As I left his church, tears welled up in my eyes, and God softly whispered to me, "You asked me to allow you to experience the heart of Christ."

That was just one of my many profound experiences in England. Truly it was a summer to remember. As we left for the airport, Father came to the door of our van, sticking his head inside to scan our faces and he said in his husky voice, "Study hard." I snapped a photo of him then, which I posted in my study cubicle. Whenever I sat to study, I could hear his words and feel - the loving heart of Christ.