

Early Days in America and Europe - Part 1

Elke van der Stok

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Father arrives in Frankfurt, Germany July 28, 1965. (from l. to r., front) Elke (Klawiter) v.d. Stok, True Father, Mrs. Choi, an Italian member, Miss Kim, Peter Koch, Christel Werner, Klaus Werner, Ursula Schumann; (back) Barbara Vincenz, Mother Koch, Reiner Vincenz, Elizabeth Werner, Paul Werner, Klaus Wanner, Gerhard Kunkel.

In June 1963 I came to the Holy Spirit Association, which was for me the most natural thing to do. Heavenly Father had prepared me so well for many years. Born in East Germany, my family fled from the Russian army, leaving everything behind, like so many thousands of others. I longed for a country called "peace." After the World Council of Churches helped us to immigrate to America, I truly believed this was the country of peace.

I was very hungry for religious truth and searched in different religions around the Berkeley campus. It was no wonder that after Edwin (Dr. Edwin Ang) asked me if I was interested in "something new," I spontaneously said, "Yes!" Every day I listened to lectures either in Berkeley or in San Francisco where Miss Young-oon Kim gave the lectures in detail. Especially her explanation about spiritual food, spirit man and spiritual world kept our eyes and mouths wide open. I was overwhelmed with such logic, such clarity. The second chapter in particular answered even more of my long-treasured questions.

Berkeley center in 1963

I finally had found the truth and moved into the Berkeley center after only one week, on June 21, 1963. My membership card was number fifteen. Dr. Edwin Ang, then still a student of economics, was living in the Vine Street Center in Berkeley. The others - Pauline Philipps (Verheyen) and Gordon Ross - had just moved to the San Francisco center where Miss Kim, George Norton, Barbara Koch (Vincenz) and Ursula Schumann lived. Miss Kim wanted to teach Gordon to become a lecturer since she had been doing all the teaching herself. Peter Koch had left for Germany just before I came. Doris Walder (Orme) had moved to Los Angeles with Orah Schoon, and Galen and Patty Pumphrey lived in Burlingame. There were some other small centers: in Oakland was Ernie Stewart; Carl Rapkins was in Fresno, and Enid in the Castro Valley.

At that time I always went witnessing with my spiritual parent, mostly to Pentecostal churches. They did not listen; however, we could practice our Bible verses there. Some ministers were very negative, knocking our invitations out of our hands. At that time, we all had jobs. I worked at the University of Berkeley Forestry Department. Then our problem was not how to find people, but how to teach them, since everyone was so enthusiastic and bubbling with energy. There was no negativity from the press as no one had ever heard of Reverend Moon.

We really believed the restoration in its entirety could not take longer than two to three years. The Principle was so clear and simple, everybody had to understand it. Edwin and I went to so many big and small groups of faith to witness to spiritualists, Pentecostal churches, a Vedanta center (where Edwin

found me), Christian Science, Jewish, New Age, and also to the Rosicrucians and the flying saucer conferences! Sometimes it was possible to give our testimony to these groups. Those were the happiest moments, and we learned tolerance, understanding and patience. At the Friday meetings everyone had so many experiences to tell Miss Kim each other and other. The atmosphere was young and very enthusiastic then, and I can still remember Miss Kim saying: "Please, go to all the other groups and see if you can find anything better than the Divine Principle."

After some weeks Pauline started a center in Sacramento where she found two couples, one of which was Paul and Christel Werner with their son. Paul was a very dynamic person, with a strong Christian background.

The center in San Francisco was a house on Masonic Avenue. The living room had about twelve white kitchen chairs, white walls and nothing else. It contained only the bare necessities, but the atmosphere was like heaven, and we were grateful for having found our "Master" so early.

Before and after an inspired lecture by Miss Kim we would sing songs like: "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations," "Bringing in the Sheaves" or "Higher Ground." Miss Kim would teach us Korean songs, only in Korean text, so we could all know them by heart and sing with great enthusiasm. No one wanted to go home even though we had to go to work the next day. After the lecture and discussion Miss Kim would lead us into the kitchen where she'd give us soybeans and kimchi and watch us with a warm smile as we enjoyed "real Korean food." Barbara lived in the San Francisco center and worked closely at Miss Kim's side. George Norton was also a big support for Miss Kim, doing bookkeeping and fixing things in the house or making a little table for her so she could sit on the floor, Korean style, translating and simplifying the Divine Principle so that we could understand it better. If we had questions she always told us to "ask your spiritual parent." If they did not know, then we could ask her. In this way she taught us heavenly hierarchy. Sometimes we would make the same mistake over and over again, only then would she scold us. She did not correct us the first few times but watched us - like a wise mother - as we solved the problems ourselves.

By the time Children's Day came around on November 15, 1963, we were already up to thirty-five people in California. They came from San Francisco, Berkeley, Sacramento, Los Angeles. Doris brought many people from Los Angeles; the Pumphreys brought the Flemings, and others came. It was a wonderful meeting and ceremony and lasted until four in the morning. At the Children's Day ceremony Miss Kim showed us for the first time how to bow before Father. When we were bowing, three coins rolled out from one member's shirt pocket and settled just in front of the altar. In this way Heavenly Father tried to teach us directly to give donations.

On the second day, Miss Kim gave a wonderful talk and in the afternoon there were many testimonies and a slide show about Korea from Philip Burley, who had been there in the Army, and so we could see for the first time the people and scenery of Korea. I remember we were all praying aloud together in unison. Suddenly Doris started to speak in tongues about the things that were to come. While everybody was praying aloud and shedding tears and feeling Heavenly Father's heart, I looked in great surprise at Doris speaking in tongues and at Edwin's lap, which was completely wet with tears. I was so surprised to see such things! I could therefore believe True Father's experiences shedding so many tears that the rug was soaking wet. It was the most precious Children's Day I ever had.

There gathered were the people whom Heavenly Father collected from far away, giving them dreams and visions to find the new light in San Francisco. It was a part of Father's prayers answered, when he looked out over the holy rock in Busan, praying for the preparation of followers in the West. Not one of us knew the long road of suffering Father had already gone.

Looking back, we caused Miss Kim to worry many times. Only staying within the Principle could safeguard us from Satan's attacks - sometimes even physically! This came mostly through other new age trends, pulling some away from the central Divine Principle.