

New Zealand's Ginseng Business is the Financial Foundation of our Church

Grant Bracefield
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The Ginseng Tea House in Auckland, New Zealand

The opening of the Ginseng Tea House in Auckland was very successful. It was a very unusual opening. The ribbon was cut by Auckland's Mayor, Sir Dove-Meyer Robinson who has for a long time been drinking Il Hwa Korean Ginseng Tea. Also attending were two Korean men representing KOTRA and about fifty elderly people who had benefitted from drinking courses of Ginseng Tea. Mr. Grant Bracefield, Director of New Zealand Church, prayed and gave the opening address. Sir Dove-Meyer Robinson spoke and our family members sang Korean folk songs.

The shop is very beautiful, the highest standard, designed mainly to sell Ginseng courses, but many people come in to buy bottles and packets of Ginseng Tea and Extract and also specialty honey and dried fruits that we sell. There is a beautiful display in the window with preserved whole roots in bottles, Honeyed Ginseng, Ginseng Extract and Tea, with Korean Dolls. There is the shop and counter and within is the colonial style tea house, where those interested come to discuss courses.

President Grant Bracefield's strong concern has been to establish a strong financial foundation. The closest conspirator in this venture was Rasik Bhula, the Family's business manager. A strong combination of Indian quickness and Kiwi know-how now existed. They put their heads together and came up with the idea of a fruit wagon to be set up in the center of the city. Rasik had worked with his father on a travelling fruit and vegetable cart. Only one week passed between the idea and the opening for business. The heavens opened and out of it showered wagon wheels, canopies, shelves and all manner of materials and tools, and they all rained on my parents back yard where the wagon was constructed. Foreman Frank, the Family Fix-it man, supervised several brothers and after one week of intense sawing, hammering, and painting, the most beautiful "entre Court Wagon" emerged, second only to Joseph's splendid many-colored coat.

The perfect situation for the Wagon was found, a paved enclosed area on the main street directly above the basement complex where the Family's Ginseng Tea Shop is situated. The Wagon expanded to incorporate a flower selling business and the whole paved area took on a new character and developed a very joyous embracing spirit. Lindsey was in charge of flower selling and John Edmonds, under Rasik's skilled eye, quickly learnt how to buy the fruit and flowers from the markets. A cool storage room was built in the basement of the building. Many of the different fruits were made into jam as they became too soft to sell and then the jam was sold on the Wagon. The products sold on the Wagon expanded to include honey, dried fruits and potted plants. Another brother or sister would also work on the Wagon and by rotation nearly all Family members had an opportunity to work in this mission. The people of Auckland City could now receive fruit and service of heavenly standard. Brothers and sisters work very hard on the Wagon, leaving the Center at about six-thirty in the morning and return about eleven at night. The Family has developed such a high spirit and strong unity that the Wagon is a huge financial success. The Family spirit surrounds the Wagon which has become a place of bright colors, perfect fruit and beaming smiles.

The Ginseng business all this time was getting stronger and more firmly established, resulting in the establishment of the Ginseng Society. An evening of talks, films, singing, and testimonies of grateful clients was organized for the public and was a great success.

Around this time the Ginseng business was looked at more deeply and it was decided that a Ginseng shop

would be opened in Wellington. This shop would financially support the Wellington Center. Two weeks after the decision was made the shop opened for business. Heavenly Father does not waste time. All the decorating and fitting was done by brothers and sisters, most of it in the last twenty-four hours -- in fact finishing touches were still being made as the customers wandered in on opening day. The shop has a distinctly eastern spirit, with red carpet and paint work and blond wood paneling. Robin painted a beautiful panel of Korean temple designs for the shop front. Two Dutch sisters work in the shop which is situated in one of the best commercial areas of Wellington.

With the Family's purse in a healthier condition, President Grant then turned his attention to witnessing and an all campaign for new brothers and sisters began. Before this time witnessing had never been really developed in New Zealand so an organized structure had to be built. Both centres developed a witnessing team of all available members. Every day the teams witness in the city for six to nine hours. People are invited to an introductory lecture which is given every night at seven-thirty. For those who wish to hear more of Divine Principle there are weekend workshops. These workshops give a skeleton of the Divine Principle from the Purpose of Creation through History lectures explaining the significance of the World Wars and the times we are living now Also during the weekend is a Saturday night concert. Through these concerts brothers and sisters have developed their abilities to speak, sing and act. On Sundays there is a morning service at ten o'clock involving, prayer, Holy Songs, and a short sermon given by the Church leader. Not only do the people from the workshops come to these services but also other guests, old and young. For new brothers and sisters there is a very joyous embracing two week seminar run by Robin and held in Wellington which is now the training center.

During the month of April many new members joined, making our family truly international, with brothers and sisters from America, Holland, Australia, Samoa, Rarotonga, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Cook Islands, India, plus New Zealand members -- both Maori and European.

A time of experimentation began as an attempt to perfect collective and individual methods of witnessing. A three day street preaching and lecturing condition began which really helped brothers and sisters to make a breakthrough in their witnessing. The lectures were held at the University and would begin with brothers and sisters singing three or four songs, this would gather an audience then with the help of blackboard the lecture would begin lasting approximately fifty-five minutes. Two lectures were given in succession; broken by singing, the first on the Principle of Creation then one on the New Future of Christianity.

The end of this condition was the weekend of Parents' Day. On the Saturday both families took to the road and headed for Rotorua, a midway position between Auckland and Wellington. A very warm reunion of old members occurred. This was the first time the whole Family had been gathered since November 1976. We moved from our meeting place by the lake in convoy to a motor camp and took it over for the night. The next day we all travelled to Auckland to prepare for Parents' Day. Sunday evening became a very special time, for closing prayer the Family went to the Auckland Domain to unite with the area that was to be blessed as a Holy Ground the next morning. So the next day would not only be the celebration of Parents' Day but also the blessing of the second Holy Ground in New Zealand. That night as we stood in a large circle around the chosen tree, brothers and sisters were only distinguishable as dark shapes. President Grant's voice reached us in prayer uniting all hearts. As the next day dawned we stood in our positions around the Holy Tree in gentle waking of the day the beauty and purity of brothers and sisters stirred deep feelings in me, feelings of joy, pride and a gratefulness that I was able to join in giving joy to Heavenly Father. The spirit of the day grew and grew, and the true meaning of happiness became clearer.