

Going to Tysons Corner Mall to pass out God Bless America Festival pamphlets

Vicki Patino
June 1976



Cris

With eyes bright and full of expectation, and the innocence which a child naturally possesses, Cristina ran bursting with enthusiasm and love into the Tysons Corner Mall in Virginia to pass out pamphlets for the God Bless America Festival.

"Here," she said as a chubby hand thrust a flyer at a surprised man hurrying through the hall. "Hi," turning to another woman, "I'm Cristina." We all strive to achieve that superb blend of spontaneity, joy and innocence that somehow holds a five-year-old together.

There was an elderly woman sitting alone on a bench, and with her usual spirit, Cris ran up to her and pushed the familiar red, white and blue paper into her aging and wrinkled hands. "I'm sorry, honey, I don't have my glasses with me, so I can't read." Cris lowered her head in defeat and started to walk away. Suddenly she turned, ran back and said, "Why don't you take it home and read it when you put your glasses on?" The woman accepted the pamphlet gratefully and I'm sure that the spark and the determination of that one child remained with her.

"Mommy, I know why people don't like Sun Myung Moon!" "Why?" I asked turning to her.... "Well, when their hearts are open, they like him, and when their hearts are not open they don't like him." I asked her what this meant to her; the response was, "We have to pray to Heavenly Father to open everybody's heart."

If all Americans had this recipe: Take one childlike heart, add faith in God and your brother man, mix in innocence, add spontaneity and sprinkle with joy, we would live in a different nation than we do today.

One day as we walked out to where our car was parked Cris said, "Mommy, can I give a flyer to the three girls standing over there?" I glanced, and noticed three attractive, well-dressed girls standing nearby. "O.K., but run quickly...." Once again the pamphlet was in another hand. The shock was apparent in Cristina's large brown eyes as the girl threw the paper on the ground. "They don't like Rev. Moon," Cris said in a voice that shook and was likely to be followed by tears.

I saw a portion of the youth of America in a different light that day. I understand that we all have freedom of belief, and that their belief doesn't have to coincide with mine; this is the American way. But to what depths will the youth go to try to destroy the faith a child has in her pamphlet and her God?

She gave me a final thought... "Everyone should love everyone else, Mommy," and we watched our nation's bicentennial colors drift across the parking lot on a breeze, with an occasional glimpse of a smiling Oriental man.