

Sun Myung Christian Crusade: Celebration of Life's New Hope Singers

Randolph Rimmel
August 1974



When I entered into the Cincinnati Unification Church center in November, Col. Pak began to exuberate over a new idea, a "Celebration of Life" -- a big production. At that time we were simply a Christian choir. His whole idea was within my comprehension, but far beyond what the New Hope Singers were at that time.

Reverend Moon wanted to make something out of the singers -- a snappy opening scene for the program, followed by dances from the Korean Folk Ballet. Then some international songs and closing with "Arirang" together with the dancers. They asked me to make some proposals.



I presented my proposals in December in Chicago. They included small instrumental and vocal ensembles and a fairly extensive program. Reverend Moon announced that he was very pleased. Then the 32-city Day of Hope tour began. It was phenomenal -- certainly the hardest thing we ever did. All through this I was thinking about the Celebration of Life, names of musical pieces, props, and designs, and so forth.

I could make the decisions, but could not act on them. I had decided on the props in Seattle in January, over coffee in a drug store on a Sunday morning. At the end I had a fairly good idea of what was supposed to happen, since I communicated with Col. Pak fairly regularly.

In Anchorage in April, Col. Pak said, "Go to Salt Lake City, get your costumes, raise funds, and put together your music." I read lots and lots of music. Everything in Salt Lake was really providential. We had no idea just how we were going to fundraise, but then we found some really good Finnish chocolate which was on special sale and also found a florist who gave us \$100-\$150 worth of flowers (wholesale) every day for selling.

Costumes were a real problem. We started ordering costumes in Seattle, but how to get them within three weeks was a great question. In Meyer Frank's in Portland, we bought suits for formal occasions. They had just been put on the racks, so we could get all we needed.

Miracle City

In Salt Lake City we stayed with a man named Tony Escobar, who happened to come from the same town in Australia as Robert Ratley, one of the singers. We nicknamed Salt Lake City "Miracle City" -- because of so many incredible events.

After Portland (our final city of the 32-city Day of Hope tour), we returned to Salt Lake City, where we had put a down payment on three apartments. Tony Escobar, the manager of the apartment complex, took a liking to us and said he would give us the complex's recreation hall for a rehearsal room and recording studio.



He gave us all kinds of things, and was really impressed with our people and the way we conducted ourselves. He persuaded the owners of the apartment to give us one apartment rent-free as a donation. We found a tailor shop named Lory Men's Originals. We needed blue shirts with large white polka dots within two weeks. He said "We'll do it." Nobody else would even consider it. He made pink shirts for us later and gave us a nice discount.

Shoes were a problem at first, but towards the deadline we bought shoes from Kinney Shoes and the Hourbox Department Store and received them right away. At 10:00 the night before our first performance, the ladies' spectator pumps, which had to be flown in from Denver, arrived at the airport -- after the shipping office was closed. Only one man could get them for us, and we were told he never did such favors. But soon he drove up, saying, "I don't know what it is, but you all must have something really great going for you. This is really impossible otherwise."

We had bought one truck -- Goliath -- to transport our equipment for the Day of Hope campaign. But we had so many new costumes and stage equipment now. Tony helped us get a second-hand International Harvester truck, which we named Behemoth, from a friend of his for \$3,800 (we had gone shopping for a new one in the \$9,000 range).

The owner got an offer to sell the truck for its full retail price from another man, just after we had agreed to buy it, but Tony persuaded him to live up to his commitment to sell it to the New Hope Singers. Tony was just phenomenal!

The costumes arrive

We also planned special costumes for the ensembles. I wanted salmon colored shirts and burgundy pants of a particular shade. I found just the right color in one store, but when I went to pick them up, the store was not able to get the sizes we needed. But I needed them right away, so I bought the one pair and within a half hour I found the other four we needed at nearby stores.

The shirts for the Kearney Boys had only been cut out by the night before the first performance. We took the material to two other seamstresses, who stayed up all night to finish them, one of them skipping her regular work.

My wife Linda looked and looked for formal gowns for the women. She finally found the ones she wanted at a shop and got them all within a week, for a considerable discount.

While the singers were out fundraising and Linda out shopping, I arranged the music. I had bought sheet music all throughout the 32-city tour. We wanted to sing many international songs, and I decided to arrange three numbers for each of the countries represented: France, Japan, U.S., Germany, Scotland, England, Ireland, Jamaica. I especially adore Jamaican music.

It was a lot of work. Arranging the music was really difficult. We rented a piano in Salt Lake City and I did all the writing there. I would be writing hours on end, grabbing a bite to eat and going back to the piano. Then I would fall asleep at my desk for a little while, wake up, and start again.

The daily program

During those two weeks we all rose at 6:00 a.m. for prayer meeting and breakfast. After seeing the fundraisers off, I would resume writing. At nights after the fundraisers returned, we'd meet and I would have them sing the songs I worked on during the day, to see how they sounded. Everyone worked really hard.

Props were a last-minute problem. There were a couple of other shows in Salt Lake at the time, so all the

set men in town were occupied except for one, who was really tired out from a five week tour. But he built and painted 120 collapsible parallel boxes for us in just a few days. In addition, he built the three crates which carry all our props, and the pigeon-holed shoe boxes.

We discovered to our surprise that the third largest costumer in America is located in Salt Lake City -- Cliff Allen. He mobilized his entire shop to make our international costumes for us, at a cost of \$50 apiece. We had gotten estimates as high as \$800 apiece in California.

Central Junior High School allowed us to use their assembly hall and theatre for rehearsals, providing we gave an assembly program to the whole school at the end. They were so nice to us, allowing us to stay later at night than they usually lock up.



At the Austin, Texas Celebration of Life program, the New Hope Singers introduced their startling International Songs. Dressed in typical costumes of eight different countries, small groups of singers sang representative national songs. After considerable arguing among the countries each trying to out sing the other, they all linked arms (above) in a plea for the brotherhood of man.

A real spiritual stretch

This tour makes us become three-dimensional people. It is a time when people change their personalities a lot. We need to have a much broader understanding of the Divine Principle and how to best make use of it.

A difficulty is the incredible amount of organizing needed to get this show going. We are still working at that. We want to have regular study sessions on the Divine Principle, for instance.



This tour has made us think big. I am very confident that this is the means of conducting a crusade -- it is a gift from heaven. I think we are going to learn a lot. We have now crossed the threshold in becoming a different kind of church.

We also become much more aware of what our real potential is. There are so many things going on in each state, and our movement is learning higher standards.

It is never so obvious anywhere as on stage how vital it is to reach the people's hearts. In order to reach them it is really necessary to sacrifice ourselves. In theatre, people sacrifice their identity every night. We have to do the same.

We will have a lot of trials. So steadfastness is really what we need. It is going to cost us a lot. To really do this effectively, we have to make a much more blatant sacrifice than we have yet realized. We have to come across with verve-make a real spiritual stretch.

There has been considerable amount of growth in our members. The foundation of our movement is certainly much more in evidence here. We are amazed at the experience of becoming world citizens, with people of so many nations working together.