

*Linda Lee Marchant Perry,
Washington, D.C., 1968*



My parents, Joseph and Marie Marchant, are from Virginia, and I was born in Alexandria, Virginia on August 25, 1942. We were a young Nazarene family, very musical and devoted. When my dad was a new member of the Church of the Nazarene, he had his right hand saved after a terrible boat explosion by an “anointing of oil and laying on of hands” by the church elders and members praying all night. The morning after the accident, the surgeon said it was a miracle; the essential tissue had regenerated, and he could fix the rest with grafting. So, I was raised with a sense of miracles and how God could work.

As a teenager, I remember our family was adrift. A great controversy over money that had been stolen from the building fund sparked a church war. People judged each other, and great harm was done, and our family left the church. My mom then joined a Baptist Church, as did my brother, but dad didn't. I got involved with the civil-rights movement and fine arts, mainly theater.

After a rough and rocky 10 years or so I met The Unified Family. I had been witnessed to three years before, but I didn't realize that the Korean man who spoke to me, Jhoon Rhee, was speaking of something new.

I'd had a dream the night before that I was at a crossroads, so I went to The Church of the Savior for a sign. I thought he was speaking of Christianity, and I told him that I envied him his faith, but I had experienced that, and for me it didn't last. I needed more than a spiritual experience to build my life on. So we parted. The next day I met Nanette Doroski (then Semha) in a work-related situation. She

has proven to be a great friend. She was on a serious spiritual quest relating to her work in new media.

Then came three years of pain and suffering at the end of which in 1968, Nanette was witnessed to by Neil and Rebecca Salonen (at that time, Rebecca Boyd) of the Upshur House Center directed by Miss Young Oon Kim. Nanette went first and later brought me. I was deeply moved by the lecture. I realized that God loved me. As Nanette said, "I've been trying to tell you that for years!" And I responded, "Yes, but it's really true and that's really different." We joined in September 1968.

I moved in, and Nan became a home member for awhile as her mother needed her to help with the finances at home. I was studying theater at The American University in Washington, D.C., but changed my major finally to rhetoric and public address. While there, I began The New Age Club and the Freedom Leadership Foundation Club. With this, we were free to witness and to hold regular meetings where we could teach Divine Principle. For me, the essential point was that I now had a philosophical construct on which I could hang my religious upbringing and experiences and also my liberal university education. Everything fit...for the first time.

Shortly after that time, True Parents came to Washington, D.C. They had come once before, and Father's prayer had sent a laser beam and opened my cynical old heart. I had cried for hours and knew I would never be the same. This time, Father said he wanted to do a public-speaking tour. I asked Farley Jones, the U.S. President of HSA-UWC then, if I could do the press when True Father did the tour; he said, "Yes." I spent another conditional period praying about Messiahship. Then Jesus and Father appeared in spirit and walked toward me with their arms outstretched, side-by-side, merging until they were one. The smile was the same. Jesus said, "I'm always with him and if I'm ever not, I'll let you know." That was enough for me. We went to work on the tours.

These years went by in a blur as I followed the True Parents as an original pioneer. We did many tours, and I was the Media Coordinator. For 18 months in between tours I pioneered Las Vegas, and Mr. David S.C. Kim's bus team came through. Later, I went to Barrytown, New York, for training and on to the 1800-Couple Blessing, then back to Barrytown with my husband, Paul Juarez Perry, a Brazilian native, American citizen and then missionary to Brazil. We completed the first 100-day-training for missionaries and in May of 1975 went out. He went back to Brazil, and I went with him to meet his lovely family. Then I went on to Colombia to meet the German and Japanese missionaries and to begin the church in Colombia.

Two years and nine months later, True Father approved Paul's request for us to begin our family life, I was 35 at the time. I went to live with him in Rio de Janeiro and we conceived our first child, a girl, Limi Marie. This was also a struggling time, and after about nine months True Father directed us to come back to the States — Paul to go to the newly opened Unification Theological Seminary and me to go to my mother's for the birth of our baby. We did.

As time went by, we had two other daughters, Maio Lily and Camia Rose, lovely healthy girls who brought a lot of life and joy to our family. Paul worked more and more with Unification Thought. He is a very gifted translator and had been trained in religion and philosophy by the Catholic Church for many years in graduate study. He also traveled a great deal with CAUSA, our anti-communist effort.

I worked for Frontier '78, *The World & I*, a magazine, the New York Symphony, the Women's Federation for World Peace-USA, Women's Federation for World Peace, International United Nations Liaison Office and attended the Long Island Unification Church. We were in Virginia for hometown work, but, at True Father's request, relocated to New York when the seminary graduates were asked to "circle the cities." While we were in the New Yorker Hotel, I worked in the kitchen under Greg Hobell, the Blessed Family Department

under Nora Spurgin, and started a nursery in the News World suite with two other sisters. I had a home church area in Hell's Kitchen of Manhattan.

When the women's video-van teams went out in 1982, I had a team of 50 women. We "circled the cities" witnessing, fundraising, and holding public lectures. Jacob House had opened to help with childcare and all three of the girls were there at one time or another. They formed lasting friendships there that still enrich their lives. I did, too.

Paul left us a few years ago for a more comfortable life. He remarried and is working on a health book. The girls are all blessed to wonderful brothers, and there are now four lovely grandchildren, two boys and two girls. They heal a lot. After many years of just trying to heal our family, I have begun traveling to where they are and supporting them in their missions by helping with housework, childcare, and whatever needs doing, so that they can be free to function more publicly. Recently, in Pasadena, our daughter, Camia Rose, and her husband, Jatoma Patrick Gavin, were officiators at the local Blessing. My grandson, Jadon (3), and I were upstairs, because he is so joyful and loud. He leaned close to my face and asked in a whisper, "Can I go be with True Father and True Mother?" So, we snuck into the back, and he was absolutely silent. It felt so deeply right.

In closing, I just want to say that when Parents say, "True Parents are always with you," it really is true. In the most recent dream I had of them, True Mother was teaching me how to clean the stove, really clean.

I drew Croatia for a mission country a couple of years ago, and now I'm in Austria with a visit planned to Croatia very soon. Miracles never cease. It's a very broad life...as big as the cosmos and as deep as God's heart.

There is one spiritual experience I want to include, only because in it I was told to tell everyone what I saw. I was praying in this

meditation, and we'd been talking about Koreans carrying children on their backs. So, I said to our Heavenly Parent, "I'd like to carry you on my back." And I proceeded to bow down and hoist him up. But soon I realized the weight was much too light. So, I slowly eased the weight down off of my back and onto the rug and was sadly surprised at what I saw. The gown was very light and torn, and the body was skin and bone. When I touched his skin it left an indent and blood came into the hollow of the indentation.

I said, "We have to get you to a hospital right away." But he replied, "It wouldn't do any good." I didn't know what to do, so I thought, "Okay, well, I'll just be with you," and I cradled his head in my lap. We sat there for a long time, and I realized that my tears were slowly flowing down onto him, and that, where they touched, the skin was slightly better. I asked, "How do you continue?" And he answered, "My son." Then he said in a stronger voice, "Tell everyone what you saw!"

A few weeks later, I was on the train going home, eating some peanuts. Half-way through the bag, I stopped and put it away, thinking: "I'll save this for the children." Then there was a flash of this scene again, only a close-up of the skin, which at that moment got a little better.

I realized that we are God's body. When we help ourselves be healthier and help each other have enough, we also heal him. It also happens when we just want to be with him and share feelings together.

I am deeply grateful for the spiritual experiences from heaven and True Parents who trained and loved us so much that we could endure all things eventually with joy. Thank you, True Parents, for the guidance you gave our couple! Thank you, In Jin Nim, for really being your parents' daughter and helping me so much to bring in all of our children. I hope that the whole world can realize soon that we are one family of peace.