

## Unified Family Is Launched in Honduras - Divine Principle taught the First Time

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August 31, 1975



*Tegucigalpa, Honduras*

### **May 1975:**

We are staying temporarily in the outskirts of Tegucigalpa (the capital city of Honduras located high among the country's central mountains) in an area called Miraflores. The name means "look at the flowers" and is very appropriate because there are flowers everywhere. The country is very beautiful, with many hills and pastel colored houses.

We are staying with two Catholic nuns. I didn't realize it at first, but one of them is one of the most important women in Honduras. Her name is Sor Maria Rosa, and she runs several large orphanages and is responsible for the care and education of more than 700 children.

Honduras has been prepared to receive the Divine Principle revelation in two major ways: one is the prevalence of Catholicism and the people's deep faith in God; the other is the basic good-naturedness of the people.

### **June 11, 1975:**

The people here are always willing to help us. I have never seen anything like it. I have been here now for 2 1/2 weeks and have never once paid for food or rent. The Catholic sisters we stayed with direct an organization called 108 "Amigos de los Ninos-Aldeas S.O.S." (Friends of the Children). They supervise the care and education of children who were for the most part abandoned by their families because the families were too poor to care for them. Their organization also rebuilt homes that were destroyed by Hurricane Fifi on September 18, 1974, the same day that Reverend Moon spoke at Madison Square Garden in New York. The hurricane took 10,000 lives, left 100,000 people homeless and ruined crops.

### **June 12, 1975:**

The other day I was walking home when a taxi stopped and a man asked me if I needed a ride. I said no, but he insisted, so I got in. He then introduced me to his friend, who turned out to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Honduras. I explained why I was here and he said he hoped I'd be here for a long time.

Almost every day is like that!

### **July 4, 1975:**

I want to write just a few words about the political situation here in Honduras. During the last month there have been problems in the district of Olancho concerning the "campesinos" or peasants.

First, a number of poor farmers seized some private property, and then there was a march of these campesinos from Olancho towards Tegucigalpa, which was stopped by the military who then searched the campesinos' residences and found some pistols and Marxist literature. The campesinos are asking for speedy "agrarian reform," and although there is a lot of poverty here and there is a need for reforms, it seems that the instigation for recent events is communist.

One of the biggest areas of communist infiltration here is the university. I heard from a Baha'i friend that some of the professors are believed to receive money from Russia. Many of the student organizations are leftist, and the student activities office looks like the headquarters of a revolution. The government here, which is a military one, is strongly anticommunist and announced in yesterday's paper that it would strongly clamp down on any "anarchy."

Some people here feel there is a possibility of civil war.

We will, of course, be very cautious. It is sometimes difficult to know the meaning of events in the news because the newspapers sometimes seem unreliable.

Sometimes they print rumors in order to have more colorful stories. Also, everyone has different views on what is true or what is right. So my assessment is based on what I read and hear, to the best of my ability - but I still have much to learn about Honduras.

### **July 5, 1975:**

I wanted to write in more depth about some of our experiences here and what we have learned about Honduras. Since the day I arrived the unusual always seems to happen. Every place we have lived in seems to have been prepared for us long before we arrived.

Everywhere people have served and taken care of us. Our search for a house to live in was a long one, but ended in victory. At first we had found a wonderful furnished apartment, very beautiful and in a good neighborhood, but then upon visiting our prospective landlord we noticed two pictures of Che Guevara on his wall and he told us he was taking a trip to Russia this summer, so we had our doubts.

But the place was so beautiful. What to do? Well, we went back to him and told him we wanted to use the house for Christian meetings and wanted to put a big sign out front. At first he said we could do anything we wanted as long as we didn't "burn the house down." Then one week before we were to move in I met him on the street and he said the current tenants were not moving out, so we couldn't have the place. I suspected he was lying, and later that day I met the tenants of the apartment and my suspicion was confirmed.

But it seems Heavenly Father had other things in mind for us. Several days later, just when we'd almost given up on a house, we found the most beautiful one we've seen here -- and completely furnished, so we save money. (In an unfurnished house here you have to buy a refrigerator, stove, and everything.) This house is up on a high hill in an area called La Leona and very centrally located, and has beautiful gardens. When people come to visit us they can really feel they are stepping into another world -- a new world.

We have witnessed several times at the University of Tegucigalpa and I was surprised at how leftist the students are. The students and the military government are said to hate each other, and most of the student movements seem to be quite leftist.

There are many very serious social problems in Honduras, so idealistic students who are not sure if they believe in God or not are very attracted to Communism.

The basic social problems seem to be poverty, illiteracy, and a lack of family planning. Seventy five percent of the people are farmers. As I said before, right now there is a big clamor for "agrarian reform," and the organizations of the campesinos claim that a few rich property-owners own much land that is not being cultivated. They are demanding that it be split up into smaller parcels and given to poor farmers who have nothing.

It is almost impossible to tell whether or not the campesinos are communist-inspired, as the newspapers are quite slanted pro-government and people you ask always have their own point of view on things. It's easy to get a distorted view. For example, when I first got here I was told that it is impossible to travel between Honduras and El Salvador, but I later learned that buses actually go between the two nations every day for about \$10.00. For the first time the heads of state of the two nations are meeting together, but at the same time there are sensationalistic stories in the paper about border trouble. Even the Honduran people don't know what's really going on.

Our spiritual work is going quite well. The first barrier was the language, but after a month I could get along all right, and I can now teach the Principle in Spanish. The first time I taught was a really wonderful experience. It was also the first time the Divine Principle was ever taught in Honduras.

I felt such an overwhelming feeling of joy, and I think Heavenly Father was very happy, too. Right now I am teaching two people, and we have many other friends and acquaintances. We have attended meetings of several Christian and one Baha'i group to make friends.

We have decided to do volunteer social service work several mornings a week with Sor Maria Rosa's Children's Villages.

**July 29, 1975:**

Every day we get up early and pray at 5:00 a.m. in a nearby park, which is very beautiful. Because of this prayer condition we met a young law student, a strong Christian who has now heard the entire Divine Principle and studies with us two hours every day. He goes to the park early in the morning to exercise.

You might be interested to know that the furnished house we rent costs \$125.00 a month rent, plus electricity. Gas is about \$5.00 more a month. We try to eat simply and to eat what Hondurans eat: many bananas, rice, beans, fruit -- but it is not that cheap, approximately \$1.00 a day per person.

Before when we were living in a boarding house each person only needed to spend \$50.00 a month for everything, but it was not such a good place to invite people over to or to teach people. Also, we felt it was important to have a center here so we can create a heavenly environment. Our house is surrounded by gardens and trees very tranquil. It is quite different from the usual houses here.

We have all adopted the Spanish equivalent of our names so people can relate to us better. The economic situation here is not so good. Three-fourths of the people are farmers, but last September when Hurricane Fifi destroyed many crops the prices went up, and this year although it is the rainy season there has not been enough rain, so crops are not doing very well.

**August 31, 1975:**

I met a man on the bus who was the first director of the Peace Corps here in Honduras. He worked 35 years for the U.S. State Department of Agriculture, specializing in aid to developing nations. His work has taken him to 48 of the 50 U.S. states and to many other nations including Korea. He is officially retired from work for the U.S. but is director of the C.I.S.E. -- International Executive Service Corps. This organization is helping to develop businesses in Honduras with the assistance of retired executives from the U.S.

He helped to start the handicrafts industry here, which is now flourishing, by starting a school where people can learn to carve wood, do leatherwork, etc. Here in Honduras there is only one university which has about 10,000 students and is located in Tegucigalpa. More than half the students work full-time and study at night. In addition to the university there are various smaller colleges. Wherever there are students we've found it excellent for witnessing. Most young people are Catholic (90 percent) but are open-minded and do not hold fast to dogmas.

Communist influence is quite strong in the schools. Many professors are Marxists and quite openly teach their doctrine in the classrooms, using communist-slanted textbooks. Many students who are Christian fall for dialectical materialism without understanding that it goes counter to their beliefs. It is quite "in" to be revolutionary. However, despite the fact that the communists make a lot of noise, most students are Christian.

At the present time there is a rising tide of nationalism in Honduras. Hondurans are staunchly proud of their country, but along with this goes a sort of inferiority complex: they are very aware that Honduras is the least developed nation in Central America, and are anxious for it to progress. They are surprised and flattered to hear that we love Honduras and want to live here.

Today we had our first meeting of our Unified Family, an international lunch with about 10 people. We sang songs and invited them to attend a one-day workshop next Sunday where we will teach the first part of the Principle. Almost all of our guests had heard some of the Principle before, and we were very happy with the results.

The people here have a good foundation in Christianity and most young people have strong faith in God. I have met many people who seem very pure, a child-like quality - very beautiful people.