

Conferences for Parents of Unification Church Members Held Across America

Neil A. Salonen
April 1976



Parent raises a question as others listen in Washington, D. C.

Since parents of members of the Unification Church have expressed an increasing interest in meeting leaders of our Church and in finding out more about our ideals and activities, a series of Parents Conferences is being held in nine major cities across the nation. Held on succeeding Saturdays, the first three were held in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, and drew from 25 to 38 parents and other relatives of Church members from the surrounding states. The members themselves were usually present with their parents. Other cities in which conferences were scheduled to be held are: Chicago, Minneapolis, Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Columbus, Ohio.



Guests come from varying ethnic backgrounds. Left rear: Michael Warder

Parents were free to raise any questions they may have regarding Church policies, whether on health insurance, our beliefs, "love and marriage" in the Church, or practical issues. Mr. Neil A. Salonen, president of the Church in America, spoke to the parents at the conclusion of the conferences whenever possible.

The nationwide meetings, coordinated by Mrs. Hillie Edwards, will culminate in a national Parents Conference in New York the weekend before the Bicentennial God Bless America Festival, to include a day's sightseeing in New York City. They may also lead to the formation of a network of Parents Associations whose primary purposes would be, according to Mrs. Edwards, "to enhance the development of unity of heart between Unification Church members and their families, to share with them our perspectives and values, and hopefully to relieve their natural anxiety when their son or daughter is a member of an organization receiving so much criticism in the media."

Those who attended the regional meetings, she said, at least feel they had a chance for frank discussion and had their fears allayed to some degree. "For our part, we are grateful to them for coming and being willing to listen."