

The Hudson River View's interview on publishing Dietrich Seidel's writings

Elisabeth Seidel
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Elisabeth Seidel, a Unificationist from Red Hook, NY was interviewed by a reporter from the local community newspaper Hudson River View who published an article about Elisabeth's efforts to publish her husband's, Dietrich Seidel's, writings and lectures as an accomplished Theologian into four books, as well as their interesting life story.

FAITH AND LOVE

Elisabeth Seidel Continues the Legacy of Husband and Theologian Dietrich Seidel

By Joe Doran

A faith that brought two lives together in a most unusual way, and a love unfolding in a beautiful marriage of 40 years—that's the story of Dietrich and Elisabeth Seidel.

Over the last two years, Elisabeth, a Red Hook resident, has been working with friend and editor

Jennifer Tanabe, publishing four books containing writings and lectures of her husband, an accomplished Theologian. The books also contain stories of their life together. The latest, "Spiritual Guidance for Daily Life: Sermons by Dietrich F. Seidel", has just been released, and is available for purchase at <https://dietrichfseidel.com>.

Working to advance her husband's legacy since his passing in 2016, represents a continuance of the love and shared faith the Seidels experienced over their lives, says Elisabeth. "These sermons were given at the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, when my husband was teaching there. Somehow, I kept all the tapes. And now, Jennifer has transcribed and edited them. I never thought we could do so much."



Elisabeth Seidel (left) holding her book "Beloveds, Forever Together: Letters of Eternal Love" & Jennifer Tanabe (right) with her book "The Catalpa Tree Fairy and Other Stories" at a book signing in Poughkeepsie.

Another more personal volume came about when Elisabeth found something she and Dietrich had kept stashed away since their early time together. The find encapsulated not only a unique chapter of their life, but was something that could inspire others. The result was "Beloveds, Forever Together: Letters of Eternal Love", published in 2017.

"I found these love letters in our garage. I had no idea they would ever be published. But somehow my husband and I both kept the letters we received from each other. Dr. Tanabe liked them, so we decided to put the book together. Because it's kind of historical also. The way we met, and our love for each other. Of course, there were some struggles in our life. Nothing is easy. But at the end,

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I think we could claim victory from 40 years of married life.”

Born in 1943 in war-time Austria, Dietrich Seidel was a man destined throughout his life to contemplate and make sense of important questions that involved not only his personal history, but the nature of God, love, peace and family. “My husband studied for his doctorate in Theology at the University of

Toronto for 10 years. Somehow for him it was born inside his heart to love God. All his life, his focus was on God, and how to live with God. For him, God was someone who was really close, and it was very normal to live with God so close. And this can apply to any religion, because before he was a Unificationist, I think he loved all religions. He loved the whole world.”

Originally a science student

while at the Vienna University of Technology, Dietrich came to question his intended vocation. He considered science limited in being able to provide answers to important life questions. And he felt that science on its own could not adequately answer how technology could be used for good in the world, to the benefit of humanity.

A Christian all his life, he was sparked by an interest in the Unification Church in his twenties. He saw in it a new spiritual movement, dedicated to bringing unity to Christianity, and to advancing interfaith dialogue.

Elisabeth and Dietrich met and married in a way most people might find unusual. They were suggested for each other by the head of their church, the well-known Reverend Sun Myung Moon. “Dietrich never saw me before, and I also never saw him before. And when Reverend Moon suggested us as a couple, it was really something, first of all because we came from enemy nations. Dietrich’s father was German, his mother Austrian. And I’m French. So those two nations, Germany and Austria, had war with France as part of World War Two, of course. A lot of wounds from the past had to be healed.”

For the couple, it was a pairing that carried a significance beyond the personal. “Our relationship, our life, our love was not only to love each other, but also to love our nations, that our nations could be healed of the past,” says Elisabeth. “For example, my parents experienced the war, and when I showed them a picture of my husband, and his father, who worked as a bodyguard of Hitler, they were really shocked. But because they loved my husband so much, we could heal something in our family, and in our ancestry as well. So that’s why I feel our marriage was not just for ourselves, but for the sake of healing our nations and the world.”

Getting married in faith was one thing. Making it work was another. “Dietrich’s love for others is I think what moved me the most in our relationship. And of course, he loved me too and I loved him. It was love at first sight. Over 40 years, we matured a lot. So, our love was a little bit different than at the beginning. During a lifetime, you go through a lot of things that you have to overcome together, or you have to work on your personality and your character, so that finally you can fit with each other.”

Elisabeth says one of the most difficult things for her to deal with were the times she and her husband were apart. “Because Dietrich had to travel sometimes, I felt left out. I felt lonely, sad. My grandmother had been orphaned, and I knew that contributed in some part to my feelings. We all receive different things from our ancestors. Some people may come from a family with drugs or alcohol, some with other different things. But sometimes we have to overcome in our generation. So, for me, because my grandmother was an orphan...if my husband had to go, it was very difficult. But with time, we worked it out.”

Elisabeth notes that their church places a great importance on married and family life being central in creating betterment and peace in the world. Dietrich himself was very focused on the topic. His book “Unification Insights into Marriage and Family: The Writings of Dietrich F. Seidel”, published in 2016, contain his writings on marriage and family enrichment. It offers practical advice on improving spousal relationships, child rearing, and making God central to family life, and even finding true love. It also contains theological meditations on human nature and the love of God.

In a monthly website blog called “Insight Stories”, Elisabeth writes herself with much wisdom about faith and married life. She tackles difficult subjects, including pornography, and a throw-away culture where divorce is often seen as a first option for marriage difficulties. “I guess if one thing was important that I learned in our relationship, it might be how to forgive. In a marriage, we have to learn how to forgive each other. Without that, we cannot go forward. Because there’s always something we don’t like that much. Right? There’s so many divorces, people don’t know how to keep a relationship. A little mistake, and they are gone.”

Keeping God in the equation can make a crucial difference.

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“With Dietrich, because we both loved God, no matter what difficulties or obstacles, we had the desire to hang on. So, I guess the secret is a love for God, and then forgiveness. And also, don't let go. You have to try.”

The Seidels raised their two children, Christopher and Diesa, encouraging them to find their own path in life and faith. Diesa, who currently lives and works as a teacher in San Diego, is well remembered locally as a standout basketball player both at Red Hook High School, and Marist College. She went on to play professionally for several years in France and Italy.

Elisabeth recently wrote about Christopher, meanwhile, in a blog post that reveals the values with which they raised their children. “My beloved son Christopher, while we were finishing dinner together on Valentine's Day, took out his wallet to pay for the family. As I looked at his wallet made of cloth, it was so falling apart, broken, and dirty, I was wondering why he does not buy a

new one. He said this wallet had so much value and meaning because it comes from an orphanage where he bought it, and he wants to send it somewhere for repair, because it is so special to him.”

Elisabeth and Dietrich always strove to give their children a strong moral foundation, while understanding that what anyone does in life is ultimately up to them. “My parents, or Dietrich's parents, it's all different. But I guess I believe true love is possible. For everyone love is possible, and that's how it should be. For then, there will be less tears and less hardship for the heart.”

And one more thing about the faith and love Dietrich and Elisabeth shared—they both always believed it was something that was meant to go on forever. Dietrich, together with Jennifer, wrote about it in “Eternal Life in the Spirit World”, published in 2017. “In the book, it talks about Dietrich giving a class in Rhinebeck about Life After Life. And amazing enough, all these people with a loved one in the afterlife, all of them had

experience with their loved one. And they'd felt that they couldn't talk about it, because many people do not understand. ‘Eternal Life in the Spirit World’ is about that. I believe our love doesn't stop. If we believe there's another world, then we continue loving each other.” For more information, or to purchase books, please visit on the web: <https://dietrichfseidel.com> also <https://JenniferPTanabe.com> Books are also available to purchase from the Enchanted Café in Red Hook.