

## I spent many, many hours praying and fasting at the Holy Ground in rain or shine, trying to understand what God needed from me: A testimony of the Delaware Holy Ground

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*David Byer, the first Unificationist in Delaware, recently reflected on his experience with True Parents, his early days in the Unification Church, and the importance of the Delaware Holy Ground, in honor of the "God's Hope for America" pilgrimage.*

As the first Unificationist to join in Delaware, which is the first state to ratify the Constitution, my heart and prayer is with you and all of our extended family of brothers and sisters, as you continue to follow True Father's path throughout America. I had hoped to participate on the Atlantic portion of the journey from Baltimore to New York, but I will be in Israel for a few months longer.

Delaware Holy Ground, located off 18th Street in Wilmington in Brandywine Park, is just down the street from the synagogue where I practically grew up. The cobblestone road which borders the Holy Ground is known as Monkey Hill, so-named because of the Monkey House exhibit belonging to the adjoining Brandywine Zoo. I would have been in school, serving my sentence in the ninth grade at Pierre S. DuPont Jr./Sr High School, not far from the site when True Father blessed the Holy Ground.

It's interesting to me that True Father would have picked this particular spot, less than 50 yards from the monkey exhibits where I spent so many moments escaping most Saturdays from the boring sermons of our Rabbi. It is also the very spot where I learned to drive a stick shift in 1968, while holding up traffic for 40 minutes in a friend's 4-speed Corvair Monza. I mention these incidents because I believe somehow the spirit(s) of the Holy Ground may have had an effect, contributing at least in pushing me toward my eventual destiny of meeting True Parents during their lifetime a few years later.

As a new Unificationist, I spent many, many hours praying and fasting at the Holy Ground in rain or shine, trying to understand what God needed from me. In the beginning, I was sometimes joined by Peter Mullen, who witnessed to me and then by Betsy Jones, who came as an Itinerary Worker, soon after I had joined; but most of the time I was alone with God and any ancestors and angels who were there. Within a few weeks after joining, David S.C. Kim came along with his Southern Route Bus Team and created a revival spirit which attracted some guests and I was able to find a spiritual son almost immediately. In those times we didn't even call True Father, by the name "Father," but usually referred to him as "Leader" or "Master."

By the time True Parents arrived for the first International Conference for the Unity of Science, at Thanksgiving, we were calling them "Father" and "Mother," and of course, "True Parents." At the year's end, we had a training session in Washington with True Parents and Young Whi Kim and soon after I was off on one of the first 10 One World Crusade bus teams. I didn't return to Delaware to live until our family moved back from Korea at the end of the last century. True Father said that Delaware could become a model state because it was so small and accessible. (The then governor and later Senator Carper, regularly attended our childrens' parent-teacher meetings!)

As I think back through those times, so much of what we learned was really with such small steps, as though being spoon-fed, like babies. And as I remember those early days, I can more and more feel the investment of our True Parents to give us substantial birth and to nurture us as any good parents would. Preparing the Holy Grounds was certainly a big part of that.

And of course, they are still parenting us, though we should perhaps have matured much more by now; as in many families it sometimes takes longer for some to find themselves. Even for those brothers and sisters who are estranged or disengaged, I believe they are just going down their current paths until the right moment clicks in again for them. No one can very long forget the original nature that True Parents have awakened in all of us. I pray that this will truly be such a time to revive all of our spirits so that we can fulfill our potentials as mature children of our True Parents.

Many Blessings and Godspeed to all as you continue your journey across America!