

Golden Age Newsletter December 2024

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
December 6, 2024



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Hello Goldies, We hope you enjoy!

This month features a couples' experience meeting other members from other countries, bonding with nature, a near-death-experience, an experience with True Parents in Ukraine and a Middle Eastern chicken recipe using Baharat!

This Month's Message



All Photos credit: Ray Lipowcan

Finding Home Away From Home

By Ray and Mie Lipowcan

Who would have thought 40–50 years ago that we would now be living in and experiencing our Golden Years together and reading about each other’s journeys in the Golden Age Newsletter.

Following True Parents has certainly been a roller coaster adventure ride for all of us. One of the constants that we all experienced early was a transient lifestyle, moving from state to state or even country to country. My family would comment that they couldn’t keep up with all my addresses and never knew where to send my mail.

In the 1990s True Parents spoke about “Hometown Providence,” moving back to your hometown, suggesting that whoever could, should. Mie and I discussed this and decided to relocate from Southern California to my hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This has been our home for the past 31 years. I’m sure, like for most of you, life has been a juggling act of balancing family, career, and public life.

With the last one of our seven children now finishing high school this year, we have recently begun to have the time to travel more, one of the benefits of the golden years. When travelling and visiting our Unification families and communities within the United States, I’m sure we have all experienced the sensation of family, whether in a church center or someone’s home; the feeling of being welcomed and belonging was present.

This past year Mie and I both had the opportunity to travel internationally and experience this sensation of being home away from home. In June, Mie visited Zambia for three weeks with a group from the United States. She was warmly welcomed by the members into their homes and explained that wherever she went, brothers and sisters, young and old, have the same goals in alignment with True Parents’ visions. They have active communities, building through outreach programs, elementary schools, creating a health care center and coming together in prayer in their Cheon Shim Won.





In October, I had the opportunity to visit Poland for eight days. The trip was twofold. I had never been to Poland, my ancestors' homeland where my grandparents emigrated from in the early 1900's, and I was planning to travel there this Fall. Coincidentally, at the time I was planning to go, there was a Human Rights Conference in Warsaw, sponsored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, of which the Universal Peace Federation is a member. I attended several sessions of the conference and had plenty of time to tour Warsaw, submerging myself in Polish history and culture. Perhaps the highlight of my trip was visiting the "Peace Embassy" (as they call our church property in Warsaw) and meeting the members. I experienced the same heart and spirit in being welcomed as Mie

experienced in Zambia. I learned of the history of our Polish Church, including meeting one of the “Butterfly Missionaries” who pioneered Poland behind the Iron Curtain in the 1970s. The walls are filled with pictures and posters of True Parents’ activities both within and outside of Poland. Just as in America, the Polish members are out witnessing, reaching out to Christianity, and offering their efforts to heaven in their Cheon Shim Won.





Mie and I hope that others can have the opportunity at this time in our lives to travel more, whether domestically or internationally, and experience and enjoy the wonderful international families and communities that True Parents have created. If you are passing through Pittsburgh, please stop by our home and say hello. Just look for the “Peace Starts With Me” sign.



Spiritual Reality

An Intimate Encounter with Nature

By Vera Tsumagari



All Photos credit: Vera Tsumagari

During my time at Cheong Pyeong in May of 2023, I had the opportunity to engage in an intimate encounter with nature that would forever leave a lasting impact on me. The setting for this encounter was the 21-Day workshop, where participants were encouraged to embark on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth.

As we climbed the stairway leading to the Tree of Blessing, each step brought us closer to a breathtaking sight. From the top of the stairway, one can overlook the entirety of Cheong Pyeong . . .

[To read more, please click here!](#)



I Left My Body

By Jeff Schmidt



A fascinating video podcast by brother Jeff Schmidt:

13,080 views · Oct 29, 2024 · Near-Death Experiences – NDE

Near-death experience guest 1301 is Jeff Schmidt who had a meeting with people on the other side during his NDE experience.

As a teenager, prior to joining the church, I had an experience in which I was driving a vehicle at a high rate of speed, coming up to a few cars in the right lane, and suddenly one of those cars decided to pull in front of me causing an immediate potentially violent accident. Without any ability to react, I found myself

out of my body, in a room surrounded by several "advisors". Time stopped and we calmly conversed about what to do regarding this soon-to-be possibly fatal situation. After several immeasurable minutes, I told them I wanted to take maneuvers to avoid hitting this and all other cars in an effort to take responsibility, and the others and I came up with a plan that would take me off the road and hopefully not hurt anyone. We all agreed, and I proclaimed as such. I then immediately fell back into my body, cut the car to the right, missing the others completely but sailing me off the road partially flying. With no real damage, I headed home after sliding a few hundred feet on wet grass. I believe I should have died that day . . .

[To read more, please click here!](#)

Preview [YouTube video Roundtable DISCUSSION With Ancestors During His NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE](#)



Dawning of a New Age

Simply A Seat

By Christine Libon



Photo credit: Christine Libon

Our perspectives and our ambitions change over the course of our lives, at least some of them. As a young lady, the idea of living my life in the same neighborhood where I grew up was repulsive, stifling, limiting. I wanted to travel the wide world, expand my horizons, see everything that was “out there.”

Later on, it was extremely satisfying to find an endeavor in which I could invest all my energy and effort for many years, leaving my mark or a legacy of sorts. It was indeed a grounding and fulfilling experience.

Looking at this photo of a simple chair on the edge of a humble, sunlit garden, my senior perspective is: “That’s all I need, a quiet place in nature to sit, rest, to enjoy the lovely sound of chirping birds and feel the calming breeze.” Yet, how “*BORING*” this would have seemed to me as a twenty-year-old.

Testimonies & Tributes



All Photos credit: Robert Beebe

True Parents in Ukraine: A Personal Account

by Robert Beebe

The following comes from the entry in my diary on November 16, 1995. At the time I was the church leader of the St. Petersburg region of Russia.

I had just returned from Kyiv, Ukraine where True Parents visited and True Father was meant to speak on Nov. 14. However, the speech was cancelled and True Parents could not even have a hall in which to meet the 800–900 members who came from around the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Baltics to see them. In the end, True Parents were able to meet with just 40 or so native members and 20 missionaries in their hotel living room.

Of course, the members were very disappointed at not being able to see True Parents even from a distance. When the speech was cancelled, there was hope that True Parents could at least come out on their balcony so members could see them, but even this became impossible, as many militia and even OMON security forces were around and could have used their appearance as an excuse to arrest everyone or even True Parents themselves . . .

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Members waiting outside the hotel where True Parents stayed



True Father speaks to members in Kiev, November 14, 1995

Health & Recipes



Photo credit: Christine Libon

Baharat

Submitted by Christine Libon and husband JC (John Carlo)

Baharat, a Middle Eastern spice blend, also known as Daah, or 7 spices, is a must-try. Often used to season whole baked chicken, thighs alone (cooked with bone and skin) turned out to be dee-licious!

First, I poked holes in the thighs, especially close to the bone. Then I squeezed $\frac{3}{4}$ of a lime over them and rubbed them generously and thoroughly with the Baharat, both under and over the skin. Next, I rubbed good quality olive oil on the thighs and let them rest for 30 minutes before cooking them on moderately high heat in a covered skillet. I didn't need any extra salt or additional spices.

The chicken will have a darker but appetizing color. No need to eat the skin; just discard it. The overall taste is mildly savory, nothing aggressively forward. Try it served with steamed broccoli and green beans and a side of rice; or chop some of the thigh meat and sprinkle it with thinly sliced scallions. Even my discerning husband gives his approval. Yet he offered two suggestions to take the flavor up a notch – add more garlic and a little fresh rosemary. I followed his advice – the kitchen smelled like heaven and indeed the flavor was improved.

Bulletin Board

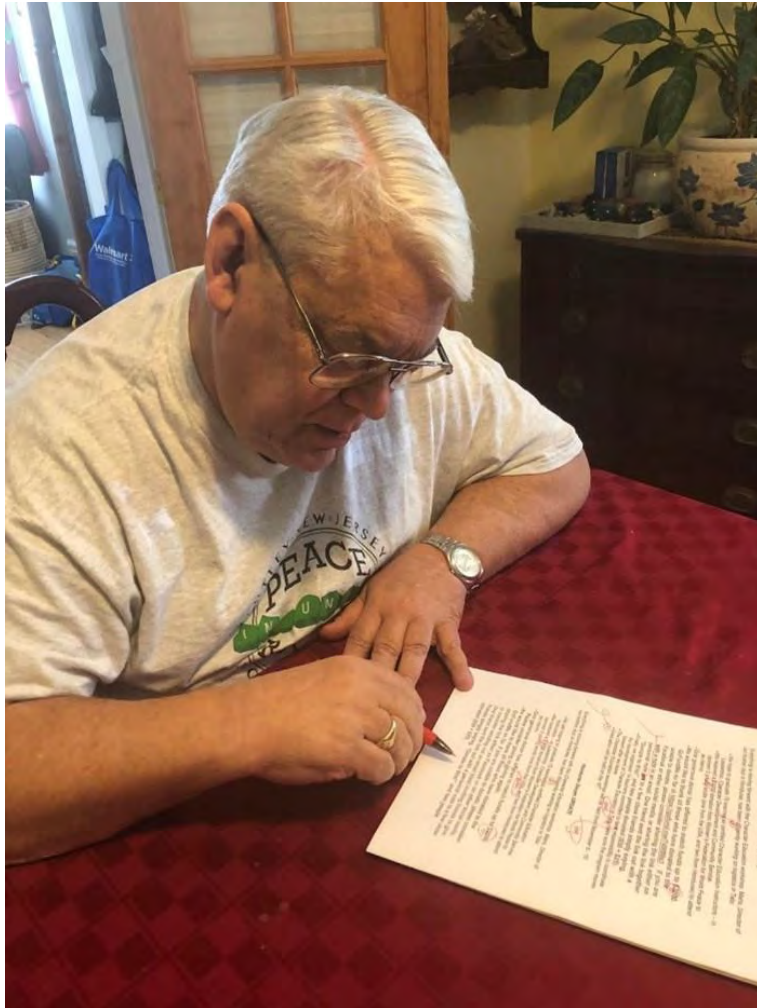


Photo credit: Carol Pobanz

The Golden Age Newsletter began as a small Clifton Senior newsletter about 3 years ago.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Purpose: The Golden Age newsletter has been created as a means to keep our elder community connected to one another. Articles are not in any way meant to proselytize or push a point of view.

It is a place to share God's Love – what is positive in our life as a result of finding our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Motto: “This is the Dawning of our New Age” – We are always in the process of redefining ourselves as we grow older and as we add experiences to our lives. Therefore, we must consider how God can use us even when we may be decreasing in our physical capabilities.

The e-newsletter is broken down into eight sections:

1. A Featured Message of Inspiration – Helping others to feel hope and inspiration for the establishment of CIG.
2. “Unification Thoughts” – any educational article on the "Fifth Realm of Heart" – Grandparents' heart
3. History Byte – A short article on a positive memory, a funny or affectionate story about experiences in the church with True Parents or with brothers and sisters or an article about the development/experience of helping to develop one of True Parents' providential projects or events.
4. Arts and Culture – A sharing about one's talents, hobbies or interests and

how this relates to sharing God's love (to family, community, nation or world).

5. Tributes and Testimonies– a personal testimony of one or more life learning experiences or a Tribute to a spouse, friend, or leader
6. Health – An article that relates to health (physical or mental), possibly providing a link to an article you think might be interesting or important to other seniors.
7. I Love being a Grandparent – stories about grandparenting or about things to do with grandchildren
8. Recipe – Preferably a healthy recipe along with 2–3 paragraphs about what makes it a good or memorable recipe.
9. Book Review – report on a book that inspires thoughts toward a world of peace
10. Bulletin board – reports on personal activities, or request help on a project

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An Intimate Encounter with Nature!

By Vera Tsumagari

21-Day WS at Cheong Pyeong in May, 2023

During my time at Cheong Pyeong in May of 2023, I had the opportunity to engage in an intimate encounter with nature that would forever leave a lasting impact on me. The setting for this encounter was the 21-Day workshop, where participants were encouraged to embark on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth.

As we climbed the stairway leading to the Tree of Blessing, each step brought us closer to a breathtaking sight. From the top of the stairway, one can overlook the entirety of Cheong Pyeong, a vast expanse of pristine beauty. It is a sight that words cannot truly capture, as the sight of all the beautiful white buildings that sprung up over the years is nothing short of mesmerizing.



One day during my break, I did not have sufficient time to reach the top and decided to sit on a bench by the pond, close to where the water of life springs forth from the rocks. It was there that I had noticed the presence of two koi in the pond, a small one and a much larger one. Initially, both koi were swimming around, but lately, I had only observed the small one. As I sat down, I found myself communicating with the koi, expressing my concern and hope that nothing had happened to the other koi. I did not want the little koi to be alone. The koi seemed to sense my concern, and it swam closer as if to acknowledge my thoughts. It was in that moment that I realized the connection between us – two beings from different worlds, separated by space and time. We may not have understood each other's words, but our thoughts and emotions seemed to connect on a deeper level.





Simultaneously, my attention was drawn to the exquisite blue Irises, which immediately evoked memories of Vincent Van Gogh, the renowned Dutch painter. As I observed the irises more closely, my attention was drawn to one particular blossom that appeared to be on the verge of bursting into full bloom. I had never experienced this phenomenon before, and I marveled at the anticipation that hung in the air. Assessing the time available, I informed the irises that I had exactly 15 minutes. If they could captivate me by demonstrating how an ethereal flower could emerge from such a tightly-sealed bud within that timeframe, I would be deeply honored to witness the process. In response, I set my alarm for precisely 15 minutes.

As I sat there, meditating and praying with my eyes opened, my attention was drawn to the pond in front of me. To my surprise, I witnessed a fascinating event unfold before my eyes. The smaller fish in the pond suddenly swam towards a specific area, as if guided by an invisible force. I watched intently, and a few seconds later, a larger fish followed closely behind, as if escorting its companion. It was as if they were sending a message: "Don't worry, I am not alone, my friend is here." Intrigued by this unusual sight, I glanced out of the corner of my eye, and that's when I witnessed an incredible spectacle. Three petals, resembling orchids, one right after the other unfolded, leaning backwards like a ballerina throwing her body backwards with remarkable grace and precision. Just as the final petal began to unfold, I noticed a distinct color within. It was a vibrant shade of blue, radiating beauty and captivating my attention. In mere seconds, the inner three petals sprang open, revealing a stunning blue iris in full bloom.



The sheer beauty of this iris left me speechless. Its intricate patterns and vibrant colors seemed to radiate an aura of serenity and tranquility. It was as if the iris had responded to my deepest desires, granting me a moment of pure enchantment. Just as I was starting to lose myself in the beauty and wonder of that moment, my alarm suddenly went off, jarring me back to reality – it was time to leave. As I walked away from the pond, I couldn't help but reflect on the extraordinary experience I had just witnessed. Was this a mere coincidence, or was there something more to it? I couldn't help but believe that that iris had somehow responded to my wish, confirming the power of prayer and the beauty of nature. This is Cheong Pyong for you, a beautiful place created by our beloved True Parents where heaven comes alive.





I Left My Body

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Jeff Schmidt:

As a teenager, prior to joining the church, I had an experience in which I was driving a vehicle at a high rate of speed, coming up to a few cars in the right lane, and suddenly one of those cars decided to pull in front of me causing an immediate potentially violent accident. Without any ability to react, I found myself out of my body, in a room surrounded by several "advisors". Time stopped and we calmly conversed about what to do regarding this soon-to-be possibly fatal situation. After several immeasurable minutes, I told them I wanted to take maneuvers to avoid hitting this and all other cars in an effort to take responsibility, and the others and I came up with a plan that would take me off the road and hopefully not hurt anyone. We all agreed, and I proclaimed as such. I then immediately fell back into my body, cut the car to the right, missing the others completely but sailing me off the road partially flying. With no real damage, I headed home after sliding a few hundred feet on wet grass. I believe I should have died that day, and now, I am living in grace on borrowed time. Since then I have never felt as though my life was my own.

Shortly after that time, I found a place nearby and began praying, telling God how lonely I was since moving and having no new real friends. To my shock, God answered me saying that he too was so lonely! For the next few months, I spent most of my days there, in which I was treated as if I was the original Adam. Walking and talking in the garden, the flowers spoke to me, and so did the trees. Then the battle began. As high of a level I could reach during the day, immense waves of destructive evil spirits attacked at night – it was a fight of life and death daily. I survived by using the dark attacks as motivation to try to reach higher peaks the next day.

These experiences continued, until one day God was absent. Maybe three days went by with no response, and it was then when I turned rebellious and angry. All the love and grace I was receiving just shut down. Three days later, God came back, and I was shown clearly my fallen nature as someone who turned his back when things didn't go his way. Then I was shocked again when Heavenly Parent told me how much I hurt him! The pain I caused was unbearable, the tears shed day and night from that moment until today were my attempts to try and comfort that aching heart, committing my life to finding a way to rectify the pain I caused. But these tears were also purifying.

After committing to that cause, God told me that if I continued on this course to purify myself alone, I would be destroyed by evil forces before I reached twenty-one.

We cannot take on powerful evil forces all by ourselves. When I had the opportunity to hear the Divine Principle, I realized that True Parents and our family members were my (and Heavenly Parent's) lifesavers and together we can liberate that historical sorrow. One cannot fight alone.

Blessed at that age of twenty-one, somehow instead of dying, I was shocked to have made it beyond what was predicted of me. Now, since the coronation of God and the upcoming settlement into the Chun Il sanctum, all of True Parents' enormous efforts combined with all of ours will finally turn those tears into joy and complete freedom for our most beloved and gracious Creator! Hallelujah forever!

[Preview YouTube video Roundtable DISCUSSION With Ancestors During His NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE](#)





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*Blessed Family
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[@Fukuya.Sano](#)*



True Parents in Ukraine: A Personal Account

By Robert Beebe

The following comes from the entry in my diary on November 16, 1995. At the time I was the church leader of the St. Petersburg region of Russia.

I had just returned from Kyiv, Ukraine where True Parents visited and True Father was meant to speak on Nov. 14. However, the speech was cancelled and True Parents could not even have a hall in which to meet the 800-900 members who came from around the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Baltics to see them. In the end, True Parents were able to meet with just 40 or so native members and 20 missionaries in their hotel living room.

Of course, the members were very disappointed at not being able to see True Parents even from a distance. When the speech was cancelled, there was hope that True Parents could at least come out on their balcony so members could see them, but even this became impossible, as many militia and even OMON security forces were around and could have used their appearance as an excuse to arrest everyone or even True Parents themselves. So, in this sense it was very disappointing.

True Parents themselves, however, were very upbeat despite the situation. When they were finally able to have a gathering in their room, Father was very energetic and inspiring. I arrived late as I had taken some St. Petersburg members out for dinner when we were told there would be no meeting and that those who didn't have a room at the hotel would not be allowed to go in.

The meeting had started somewhere around 9-10pm. I arrived back around 11:30 to meet Jacques Marion for the purpose of going together to the flat we were staying at. I was late, as I was supposed to be there at 11. When I didn't see Jacques, I walked right into the hotel (no security) and took the elevator up to the 10th floor where I discovered the meeting in progress. According to True Parents' security, it was supposed to finish soon. I slipped into the back of the room through True Parents' small dining room.

Of course, the meeting didn't end soon but would go on another four hours, not finishing until 4am. Unfortunately, only four St. Petersburg members were there, but they were right in the front. Father made good use of one of the brother's heads and I got some good pictures from my vantage point in the back.

For most of the meeting, Father was very light, even cracking jokes, just wanting to love and uplift the members. It was Father's first chance to meet and speak to CIS members directly and he wanted to make the most of the situation. Father just really controlled the atmosphere, bringing God's spirit, and even though it was late, even the middle of the night and no one had slept much, nobody was tired.

Father was so animated, beyond time and space. He was jumping up and down from his chair. At one point he knocked over a glass of water sitting on the table in front of him and stepped on the wet carpet. So, he took his socks off, of which one our members got one as a treasure. Father was just so free and casual.

As always, Father spoke about many things, the main topic being why God created Adam and Eve. Around 2 or 3am, Dr. Seuk started trying to get Father to stop so he could rest before leaving, but to no avail. At one point, Father suddenly left the room to use the toilet. Dr. Seuk got up and told people that Father should rest, but then Father bounded back into the room full of energy. So, there was no way to get Father to stop. Dr. Seuk said something to Father, but Father responded in English, "No sleeping tonight. This is war."

Although I was not there, I heard that at the beginning of the meeting Father talked about leadership and asked if, under these circumstances (not being able to speak), you were the leader, what would you do? Could you just think, "Well, nothing can be done," and just go to bed? Rather, he said that a leader must take responsibility and set some indemnity condition. So, although Father was using this chance to meet with members as much as possible, he was also paying indemnity for the event's failure by not sleeping and speaking

all night.

Finally, at 4am Father stopped in order to give himself and his party (True Mother, Rev. Kwak, and Peter Kim) time to prepare to leave. For the next two hours, we waited, trying to stay awake, until True Parents came out around 6am. Rev. Kwak came out around 5:30. He told us we should not be discouraged about what had happened but have confidence that, if Satan attacks in this way, only blessing will come. Satan must somehow pay the price. Rev. Kwak also spoke about how the spirit world is very active now and that we should be prepared for such phenomena in the CIS.

At 6am True Parents came out and we saw them off. Some leaders went with them to the airport, but I went to a nearby flat to rest as I was to meet St. Petersburg members at 11am to do something together before departing Kyiv. I met them at the metro and shared with them about the meeting. Then, we went to visit a monastery followed by a stop for ice cream before I had to quickly leave to catch the 5:10pm train for Moscow.

The morning of the 14th I had the opportunity to have breakfast together with True Parents along with Rev. Kwak, Peter Kim, Dr. Seuk, Jack Corley, and Tom Phillips. Several other leaders came in later and sat on the floor. The dining room was very, very small, so only eight of us could sit around the table. I sat at the opposite end, directly across from Father.

At the beginning, everyone was quiet, and I felt a little uncomfortable. Although I had been at small gatherings before, even one meal at East Garden, I had never been at this small of a setting with True Parents—and to be sitting directly across from Father! Dr. Seuk broke the ice by giving some kind of report in Korean and then introduced me to Father. This was the first time I had ever been introduced by name to Father. Dr. Seuk asked me to give a report, but Mother said to let me finish my breakfast first (a real mother's heart!). About 20 minutes later I gave my report about the members in St. Petersburg and their activities in witnessing and about our social service project "Elder Brother/Elder Sister" in which members paid visits to orphanages. I spoke about our forming a Parents Association and how active some parents have become, even becoming members themselves. I also spoke about the IEF work, our presentations on AIDS, and one missionary's work in the Komi Republic. Somehow, I was able to be more composed and coherent than I had expected in such a circumstance. Then, Jack Corley gave a report about public relations, Mr. Mogushi about MFT, and Mr. Oba about Japanese sisters working in the CIS.

After each report Father gave some guidance. He emphasized several times the importance of working with the Orthodox Church. We must be able to use their foundation. Otherwise, we will not be successful. We must not make them our enemies but offer to serve them, regarding them as our elder brothers. The Russian Orthodox Church's problem is that it doesn't have an ideology with which to inspire young people and spiritually lead Russia. We have such an ideology. If we can work side-by-side with the Orthodox Church, then we can really change the country.

Also, Father said we must emphasize the importance of God's existence to people, not just speaking about ethics and morality as IEF does. People need to have a living relationship with God. God's truth is unchanging, whereas human ideas are always changing.

Father said that with economic development will also come other problems, like drugs and immorality. The CIS should not repeat the West's mistakes. Therefore, we must work with the Orthodox Church to develop a strong, effective religious system which can deal with these problems.

The breakfast lasted over two hours. Then, Rev. Kwak left to meet with the head of the Ukrainian Presidential Council. Although True Parents were welcomed by the federal government, it seems that the city government were the ones that had opposed True Parents' visit. It was people in the city government who stopped Father from speaking and pressured the hotel to not even allow Father to use its hall to meet with members. So, 800-900 members ended up standing outside the hotel for about three hours while we negotiated with the militia, finally to no avail. Rev. Kwak came out and conveyed True Parents' greetings. At the end, Dr. Seuk also spoke for about 15 minutes, even risking arrest himself.





Members waiting outside the hotel where True Parents stayed



True Father speaks to members in Kiev, November 14, 1995

[I Left My Body](#)

[Art In The 21st Century](#)

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