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## Testimonies

In learning about the early church it is good to know something of those early members and their backgrounds. It is my plan to get other testimonies from early members, and that will happen as I continue work on this history. At this point I can't even get one from my wife.

## Galen Pumphrey's Testimony

I grew up in Bonner Springs, Kansas, then a small town of 2,000 population 15 miles west of Kansas City, Kansas. We were Methodists, and my parents were involved in the church and church activities, and we never missed a Sunday at church. I still have a Sunday school pin awarded for 13 years of perfect attendance. During that 13 years, I must have absorbed something, probably a loose knowledge of Christianity and the Bible.

It is unusual anymore for anyone to remain in one community through their entire school years. I began kindergarten in 1936 in Bonner Springs, and graduated from high school there in 1948 with many of the same kids I had started in kindergarten with.

In 1950 after my first year of college, the Korean War began and the 5th 105 MM Howitzer Battalion, which I had joined with some friends, was called to active duty. Active duty in the Marines in California was my first experience of being away from home and my home town of Bonner Springs, first by serving in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, at the age of 20. My Marine Corps career ended in 1952 when I was discharged after serving my enlistment.

The experience of being in the Marine Corps and away from home was important in forming my future. Leaving home, whether it is to college or service is important for anyone to become mobile. When a person reaches his or her mid-twenties, they will probably become a lifelong member of a community. This in one sense is good, but I might never have found the Unification Church if I had stayed in my home town.

In the fall of 1952, I went to Kansas State College to study architecture. At college I began to question Christianity, and those things I learned from my earliest memory. When I attended church, the messages seemed shallow, and there were many questions and few answers. What answers there were either without substance or based on church doctrine. You needed to accept the authority of the minister because he was educated in such things and knew much more than you did.

In all those years of church attendance, they had somehow failed to convey, or I was too dense to catch it, the essence of Christianity. They were bathed in theology and church doctrine with only a meager understanding of the heart of Christianity. There was little true connection to Jesus or God, or at least they didn't get that concept across to me. Salvation was something they talked about in those wacky fundamentalist churches. I gradually withdrew from the Methodist Church. When home from college, I began attending a Unitarian Church in Kansas City, much to the distress of my parents.

After a year at Kansas State, I left for the University of Oregon, believing it had one of the best schools for architecture in the country. While attending the University of Oregon, I became a full-fledged Unitarian with a vague and almost nonexistent belief in God and Jesus; this soon turned to agnosticism and finally into atheism. Finally I dumped the Unitarian Church, realizing that church attendance at the Unitarian Church was just a ritual. Many Unitarians were raised in families where they attend church every Sunday. By attending meetings on Sundays--usually totally devoid of religious content--they soothed the conscience.

During this period of transition from Methodist to Unitarian to atheist, religion and Christianity were often on my mind. Not uncommon for those who deny God, many spend the rest of their lives justifying their stand.

I came to several conclusions: One, if Jesus actually returned in the flesh--the hope of many Christians--where could he give his message? No Christian church in the world would open their pulpit to him. What would he have to say to the people would be something most would not want to hear? He would be a revolutionary, bathed in controversy and a threat to orthodox Christianity as he was to the orthodox religion of his day. He would be much different than the glowing blond Jesus radiating peace, and surrounded by children, as pictured by modern Christianity.

If he appeared dressed in a white robe and sandals, and with long hair and a beard, he would be quickly labeled another kook, and maybe sent to the funny farm. If he were to appear in a blue suit with a shave and a haircut he would come off as just another Jew.

Another one of my conclusions was, if Jesus were to in fact come back in the flesh, how would it happen. Based on the first realization that there would be no place in organized Christianity for him, I knew he would come back just as he did before. I could picture him in someone's living room, probably somewhere in California. He would be speaking to and teaching a small group of followers, just as he did during his ministry. It was the only logical way. There were those strange concepts about Jesus arriving on the clouds with a blare of trumpets, and the dead rising up from their graves to meet him in the air. How many Christian souls are land locked, trapped by their disbelief in the spirit world, waiting to rise out of their graves and meet Jesus in the air?

Years earlier, I remember seeing such dynamic moving Christian oriented movies as *Quo Vadis*, *Fabiola* and others. The early Christians endured suffering and even death for their faith and beliefs. I wondered if I had met Jesus or the early Christians, during their lifetimes, would I have been able to recognize and become a part of it? Would I have been able to be a Christian even if it meant death? I don't know what the answer is, it is easy to make vows, but no one knows until called to face a particular situation what they would do or undergo.

Another thing I decided, if there is a God, I could not believe he would damn people to eternal hell for the most insignificant reasons, and spend all his spare time finding and punishing people for their sins. That could not be a just God, and I was sure not interested in following such a poorly conceived unjust God. I was willing to take my chances on going to hell if I were wrong.

While an architectural student at the University of Oregon, I bought a house and 55 acres of land, for \$10,000, \$200 down and \$60 month payment. The house was atop Oak Hill, west of Eugene, Oregon. It was an old farm house, with wood heat and a well. That was my home while attending the University of

Oregon on the GI bill. I wore sandals, and rode a bicycle, one of about four bicycles on the University of Oregon campus at the time. Then there was my beard, one of about a half dozen on campus at the time. Later this would be given as proof that the early followers of the Unification Church were social misfits. Maybe I was just precocious; this was just before the beatniks arrived on the scene.

Some of the writings about the early church enjoy portray me as having a Chevrolet junk yard on Oak Hill. This is a further attempt to portray a negative image of the early members.

In defense of my "Chevrolet junk yard", I liked old cars and still do, and always wanted to restore some. I did have four Chevrolets, a 1941 Chevrolet which I bought soon after being discharged from the Marine Corps in 1952, which brought me to Oregon. The other Chevrolets were a 1939 coupe which I bought for ten dollars while going to college, and a 1950 convertible. The car I used daily was a 1951 Chevrolet which wasn't an old car at the time. That one was later used by our first center in San Francisco, and was stored in a garage in Kansas for over 25 years is presently at my daughter's in Virginia, hopefully to be restored someday.

I had a few other interesting cars, a 1942 Cadillac limousine. There was a 1929 La Salle sedan, and my favorite car, a 1937 Chrysler four door convertible with a white top and leather upholstery. I have never seen or heard of another 1937 Chrysler four door convertible. All the cars were in very restorable condition.

That was my junk yard. I found these cars interesting and hoped that someday I could afford to restore them. I later sold them all for \$140 when we moved to San Francisco. Today I, and many others, would be happy to own any one of those "junk" cars from Oak Hill. We took the 1951 Chevrolet and left for California.

While attending the University of Oregon, my veterans education benefits ran out and I went to work at a nearby newly opened plywood plant, at nearby Vaughn, Oregon. It was there that I met George Norton who introduced me to a logical explanation spirit world that I could accept. This gradually helped prepare me to dump my agnosticism and accept the Divine Principle.

I worked full time at nights and attended the university during the day, by now majoring in art instead of architecture. I became involved in politics in the school of architecture that ultimately resulted in the dean resigning. I finally finished my degree from the University of the State of New York in 1987. I had the hours for a degree, but just needed to find a place to transfer my credits to.

At the plywood plant I was approached by fundamentalist fellow workers, who were convinced everyone was going to hell but them. They were trying to save everyone, but had such a smug attitude about their own salvation, that most people were turned off. My response was, Jesus has been dead for nearly 2000 years and it is about time for someone new. While living on Oak Hill I met my wife Patty, who was divorced with two sons. We finally decided to get married. I moved Patty and her two boys to Oak Hill, and we were married, married in the Unitarian Church, the last time I was ever in their church.

Patty and I were married June 15, 1958, by the Unitarian minister in his church one Sunday afternoon. This minister was not only a liberal but an atheist. My mother never got over the wedding, she complained that he didn't even offer a prayer or mentioned God; however that satisfied me at the time. I had given them a fair chance, and the fundamentalist minister that Patty contacted, wouldn't marry us

because Patty was divorced. They had their chance, I would have been just as happy to be married by a justice of the peace.

We settled down on Oak Hill, with Patty's two sons, Richard and Stephen Parks, were just beginning grade school, then in 1959 our first son Lloyd was born. Faced with the necessity of supporting a family, I temporarily put school on hold, just two quarters short of a degree, and worked at the plywood plant. I hoped to go back and complete the degree, but after meeting Miss Kim it would be many years before I finally received my degree. It would be too late to be of much value, especially where a degree is important for further opportunities. But it looks nice hanging on the wall.

Everything went fine except when Patty and I discussed religion, which really was never a discussion but an argument. Patty's religious background was fundamentalist, the Four Square Church. When the subject of religion came up, I would usually end up going into a rage, storming out of the house, and going into the woods to cool down.

One time at supper, Patty had the boys offer thanks to God for their food. I blew up, and yelled "What do you mean thanking God for your food, God doesn't put that food on the table, I put the food on the table, I work out at that damned plywood plant to put the food on the table", and I probably stormed out to the woods again, marking my children for life.

So, when Patty was invited by Doris to meet Miss Kim, it was done very secretly, Patty brought home the first six chapters of the Divine Principle and hid it from me. She read it that first evening while I was at work and immediately realized what she had been given.

She started attending meetings with Miss Kim always referring to Miss Kim as a Korean Lady with an important message. Patty finally decided to lay it on me, she was afraid of my reaction, however she told me of Reverend Moon and his mission. My reaction was, that sounds reasonable. She then gave me the Divine Principle to read, and what an experience. The questions that Christianity couldn't answer were answered. From that time on, my life was never to be the same.

Looking back at my life, what I went through was a real rebirth experience. From the time I began to question Christianity until the time I dumped it was seven years. All the old beliefs I held about Christianity had been washed away. With few preconceived notions, I was open for something new. The Divine Principle not only answered my questions on religion, it also fulfilled several other rules that I knew were essential for something to be true.

From that point on nothing would ever return to normal, the rest of my life would be tied to Reverend Moon and the Unification Church.

Note: There will be more Testimonies added as I can collect them.