



Some people in the photos in this publication are no longer followers of the True Parents. We mean no offense, these are historical only.

"We were there" is a magazine dedicated to record our experiences on the front line and attending True Parents. We encourage all brothers and sisters to write your own special stories, testimonies, or memories to share with the world and to leave these treasures for the future generations.

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Writing an Engaging Testimony

There was a testimony contest a few years ago, and the winning story went like this:

"The Manhattan Center facility had just been purchased and the members of the Performing Arts department were asked to help restore the building. I was working on the 6th Floor Mezzanine trying to scrape decades of dirt and gum buildup off the floor, tile by tile with just a hand held scraper.

As I was toiling away, a pair of shoes appeared on my right. Without looking up, I told the person to just grab a scraper and they can start to scrape a nearby section of flooring. Next thing I heard is True Father's voice saying, "Well, if you say so." He then knelt down and began to scrape the floor.

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This could be the last time

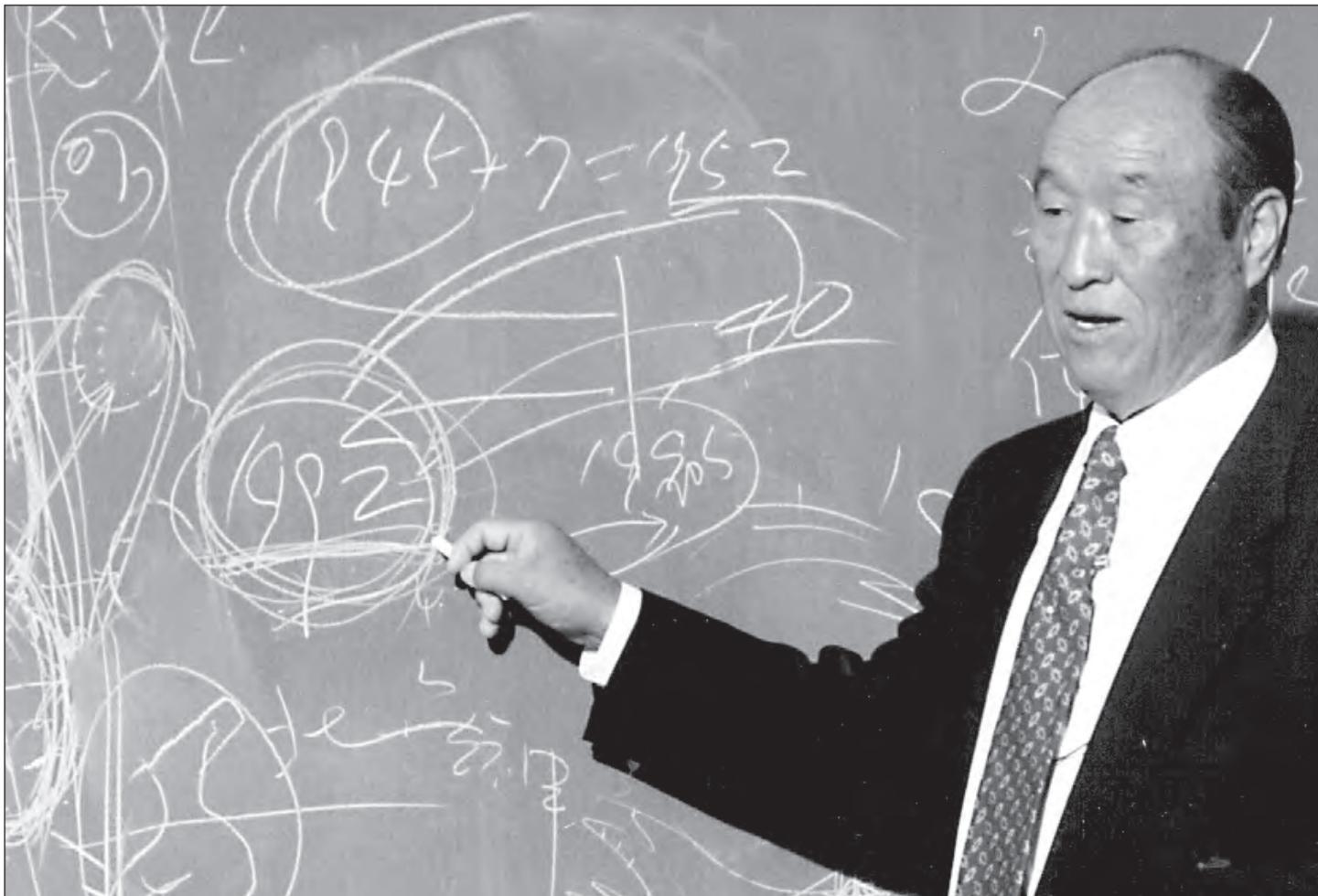
by Sam Harley

This is my testimony about going to hear True Father speak, at a point where I knew I wouldn't be able to continue if he didn't speak directly to my situation.

Have you had an experience where True Father spoke directly to you?

It was the winter of 1984. I had been in the church for nearly six years, long enough to do five years of MFT, get matched and

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blessed, then go to IOWC. I received a call from my fiancée saying she was struggling and leaving the church. I went to New York, where she was, to see what I could do.

I was living in 43rd street, sleeping on the floor and helping cook in the kitchen. My dreams of the blessing were crumbling; my fiancée was leaving the church step by step and I didn't know what to do. Also True Father was on trial and maybe going to prison. At that time every sermon or meeting was concluded with "Let us march bravely forward..."

I was feeling very disheartened. I had joined a family, not an army. I was feeling worn out from years of fundraising and wondering what the future might hold. Very clear spiritual experiences had led me to

the church family, but when I woke up that January morning, I knew that I couldn't hold on any more. I didn't want to leave, but I didn't know how to stay.

It was a Sunday, and as usual, the wakeup call came at 3:30 am. I rolled out of my sleeping bag and went to shower, as usual. But this time, I knew I could not bear to hear "Let us march bravely forward..." one more time. I had always been able to push myself for things I believed in, but not any more. I knew that if today's sermon at Belvedere was another marching order, I wouldn't be able to stay.

This was scary to me. Up until then, and still now, there was no question that this is where I was supposed to be, no matter how hard it got. But this morning, I simply knew I was at a crisis point. What

I heard today would determine whether I stayed or left.

So it was with a trembling heart that I put on my white shirt and tie, my best pants, combed my wet hair and got in the van with the rest of the brothers and sisters from 43rd street. I had made the bumpy, dark ride to Belvedere several times before, but this one could be the last.

We sat on the carpet over the hard floor, praying silently. A brother led us in pledge, then we waited, in the silence, in a bright room surrounded by darkness outside, for True Father to arrive.

My heart felt like it was quivering in the palm of my hand. Was this just a soulless, marching army of ideologues? Was Rev Moon just a dictator? Was this really just a political movement, not a religion? Was this just spiritually empty, had we all been fooled? I was about to find out.

After the songs had been sung, and a prayer had been offered, we waited in silence as Father picked up a piece of yellow chalk and wrote in Korean on the board. Here it was...

When he spoke, his voice was soft and gentle. His voice could thunder, make you laugh or push you without mercy. Today it was calm and loving.

"The title of our sermon today is "Love Forever", his translator said.

As True Father spoke, I felt a surge of relief.

True Father was speaking exactly to my situation. All his talks recently had been pushing hard, exhorting us strongly. This was quite different. He continued to talk about how love was the most important thing of all, but to get that love we had to go a public course. We had to ask God what He needs from us. That it was from a heart of love that we were pushed, sometimes relentlessly, so that we could enter the realm of God's love, forever. But Father emphasized

the love that was underneath all of it.

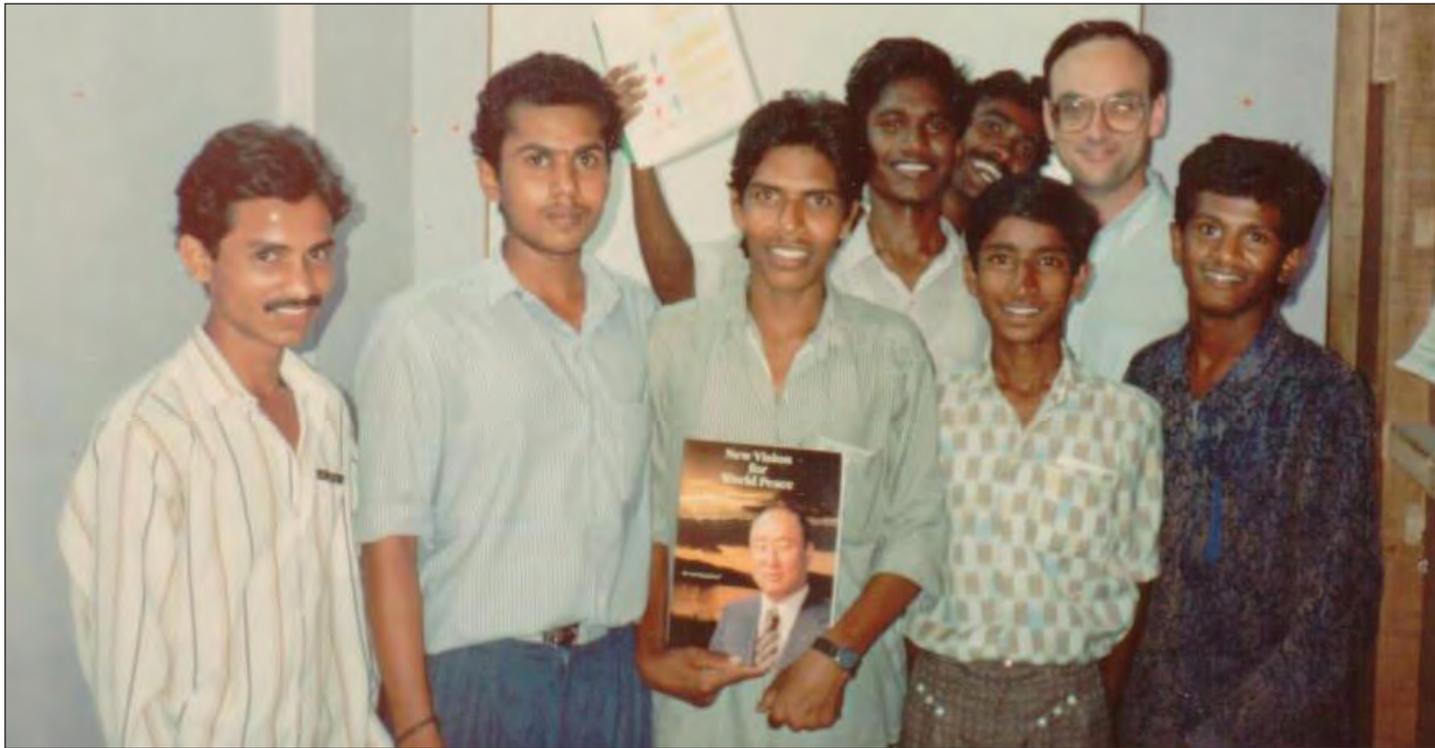
The content was deep, but the most important thing I came away with that day was that he knew my situation. Or more accurately, God knew my situation and True Father was deeply in touch with God. I had shared my feelings with no-one except God that morning. So this was not some faceless army of zombies here.

I do not know if I was the only person there that day who was on the point of giving up. Whose life course was going to go up or down, depending on what True Father said that morning. I have heard True Father say that when preparing for a sermon, he speaks as if someone's life could be saved if he could just say the one thing they needed to hear. On that day in January, 1984 it was true for me.

Today I find myself at a point similar to this one so many years ago. I have lost my spouse again, through situations that I must bear some of the responsibility for. I am trying to start again, even though that seems at times to be impossible. I cannot foresee the future. Once again, I found myself wondering if I could take even one more step. Once again, I had just enough left to get myself to church on Sunday morning.

And standing there, singing and in tears, not knowing if this was a beginning or an end, I sat down and heard a sermon that restored me to life, that spoke to my situation directly and reminded me of God's great love for us. A sermon that reminded me that God still spoke directly to us, to me. And that such direct touch was possible when I was empty, open and raw enough to take a chance on God. And as long as there are brothers and sisters following Father's example of pouring their hearts out in prayer, song, and speaking, this can still happen.

Have you had an experience of True Father speaking directly to your situation?



Chosen for India

by Robert Brown

In 1990 the church held a computer generated placement of where members should go for 40 days. These were larger cities all over the world. I was selected to go to Coimbatore, India, deep down in the southern part of India. I was excited to go and quickly made my preparations. At that time my wife, Penny, and I were co-commanders of the New York Church MFT under Rev. Sudo. Penny had given birth to our daughter, Mira, about a month before this on September 18, 1990. My family would be well taken care of in the MFT center surrounded by our young brothers and sisters.

The church was not paying for this mission, but rather it was a world level offering from brothers and sisters. I did not use the MFT money, but rather went out with puppets to make the money for the trip. Many brothers and sisters went to places where there was already a church center or missionaries working there. They would go and help them in their witnessing and activities. There was no church presence or any missionaries near Coimbatore, which was fine. There was one other

brother assigned to Coimbatore, Michael Collucio, who was working in the New Jersey fish business. I went to New Jersey to meet Mike before I left so we could arrange to meet each other in Coimbatore. I was going a week before Mike so it was crucial that we coordinated our plans. There would be no way to reach him by phone or any other way if he missed his flight or if I wasn't there to greet him. I would only be going for 30 days as I had to be back by mid-November to plan the Thanksgiving campaign for the MFT so Mike would be there two weeks after I left.

This was during the first Iraq war and I had to fly through the Middle East to get to India. I flew from New York to Saudi Arabia, then to Arab Emirates and then to Bombay, India (now called Mumbai). At each airport everyone had to get off the plane whether or not they were continuing on in the same plane to a new destination. I could have also taken a plane from Bombay to Coimbatore but chose instead to take a train so I could see the country.

One of the first persons I met in Bombay was a man who had no hands but was holding a bucket by his arms to beg for money. I gave him a dollar, but one man scolded



Robert and Michael with Shanta Kumar and Rajendren and their family home

me, saying his mom probably cut off his hands so he could beg better. I still would have given him the dollar, but he was the only beggar I gave to during the trip.

Our church travel agency, Go World Travels, that worked in the New Yorker had planned which hotels I would stay in, in both Bombay and Coimbatore. In India the taxis are small three wheeled vehicles called auto-rickshaws. So I took one to my hotel, a small place that had a sign on the outside that said air conditioning, which would be welcomed. I saw some restaurants on the way and decided to walk there. That could have been a problem as I passed many very poor people some sleeping under trucks even though it had recently rained. I walked fast in the darkening evening and didn't talk to anyone. I felt many people watching me. When I got where the restaurants were I walked around looking at the choices. A small girl came and grabbed my hand and walked around with me. I felt that she was working for someone and that if I went with her I could end up mugged in some alley. So I said nothing to her and gave her nothing.

Later in the hotel I found the air conditioning was a very noisy fan so I had a choice, try to sleep with that racket or turn it off and swelter. I turned it off.

In the morning I walked to the Victoria train station



and asked about the trip to Coimbatore. They asked if I was paying in American dollars or Indian Rupees. I said dollars and they said it would be \$10 for the 35 hour trip in a third-class sleeper car. Wow! Only \$10 dollars. I would travel with regular Indian citizens, which I much preferred rather than first class. I saw American tourists who treated the Indians like they were their servants making them carry their golf bags and being very rude. No wonder many people around the world have problems with Americans. They meet the rich and arrogant, or people working for multi-national corporations or they see our movies. They rarely meet regular Americans, the not-rich.

I made friends with several families on the train trip down. They told me no Indians could just walk into the train station and buy a ticket to leave right away. They had to reserve a month in advance. In the bathroom you had a choice, use the hole in the ground like the Indians do or use the western style toilet, that didn't happen to be bolted down so it kind of floated around the room while you were on it. The train stopped at many small towns along the way. At each stop villagers would come on to train to sell tea or Nescafé or fruit, or some women came on holding their baby while begging. They would take the train to the next stop and then come back on a train going the opposite way. They were not charged and this is how they made their living.

My friends woke me up about 4 in the morning and told me this was my stop, Coimbatore. I found an auto-rickshaw to go to my new hotel. He didn't speak English but showed the name of the hotel I had on a paper to others until they told him which one it was.

Coimbatore is much safer than Bombay with a population of about a million and not at all a tourist destination. The hotel was not large but had marble floors and arched doorways. It cost \$10 a night. Again, only \$10! A Coke-cola plant was across the street and they supplied the bottled water to the hotel that I bought each day. You never, of course, drink the water or buy these

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Robert and Michael speak to an elementary school

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“soft drinks” people sell on the street that they make in their homes.

In Coimbatore I went to a local university and in the library researched Hinduism so I could write up an approach sheet. I found the sayings of one ancient Vedic saint and wrote down his words, then along with True Father’s words made up a pamphlet. As I was coming out of the University a young man of 16, Shanta Kumar, asked me if I had any foreign coins. So I gave him whatever I had and asked if I could meet his family. We went down a dirt road behind the University and came to a small village. His home was a one room home with a cement floor. Built into the floor were two looms that the parents made saris on. Although I am not a tall American when I am with the average Indians I stand above them all. His parents did not speak any English. His father had given away his oldest son, Rajendren, to his elder brother who did not have any sons. I met Rajendren and he had a group of boys he was teaching karate too in a park. I went with Rajendren and met his class.

One evening while at my hotel I heard a procession outside and asked the hotel clerk what was happening. They said it was a wedding procession. So I joined the procession. The group went to a home where the

groom was sitting under a banyan tree “contemplating whether to go the way of a Hindu monk or the way of the world and get married.” He decided to go with the group and they held an umbrella over his head as they made their way to a hall. In the hall the bride and her family were waiting. This is the first time the husband and wife met each other. The Hindu priest brought the couple together and burned some incense and performed the engagement ceremony. The next day would be the wedding which I also attended. People crowded around me because I was the only other person who had a camera, besides the official photographer. With this group I made my second group of contacts, young college educated, the new India as they called themselves.

This group of young men had a computer horoscope company where they gave a customer a detailed astrological printout of their horoscope based on the day and time they were born. They had a shop on the second floor of a small office building. Murali, a young Hindu man, was my main contact, plus there were two other Hindus. Sam was a Christian and there was a Muslim man also. These young men were all in their twenties. With their computers and printers they helped me make and print the pamphlet that talked about True Parents with the Hindu saints words to enhance the approach.

By the time Michael Colucio joined me, there were 19 young men who were eager to hear the Principle. On the day he was to arrive, Murali and one of his friends drove two small motorcycles with me on the back of one to the airport. So Michael and I were given rides on the motorcycles to our hotel. We began giving lectures on Sundays, as that was the day the young men were off work or school. They had a white board in the Astro Computer shop so Mike and I began giving Divine Principle lectures to Murali, his friends, Shanta Kumar and Rajendren and some of his karate students over also.

Michael and I went to another University to witness and first met with the Vice President to get permission. He



We started two new churches, one in Coimbatore and one in Manjoor

had seen Father at Yankee Stadium and so we were welcomed to meet students. One student we met, Kumar, came from a mountain village, Manjoor, and he invited us to come with him to the village. His father was the village chief. It took us four and a half hours on several buses to get to the village. This village at an elevation over a mile high was isolated from the rest of India and had its own religion worshipping the sun, moon and the water buffalo. Word got around that these two Americans were visiting their village so in the evening the house was crowded with people coming to meet us. We were invited to come to two different schools the next day, one all girls elementary school and one mixed boys and girls. So when we arrived they had all the students sit on the grass and we talked about Father as a modern day saint who had a vision to unite all religions. After each talk the kids crowded around us pushing scraps of paper at us to get our autographs. The teachers would push them back and whack them with rulers. In Manjoor we were both given a lungi (the loose pants that workers roll up to make shorts when working) in the mountain village.

Back in Coimbatore after teaching all the Divine Principle we made up membership forms for the church on Murali’s computers and 19 young men signed membership. So Michael and I went to a sign shop and had them make up a Unification Church sign, founded in 1990 and pre-



sented this sign to the group. They were uncomfortable with it being a church as they were wary of Hindu fanaticism so we changed the sign to Unification Center. After I left India, Michael went back to the mountain village and spoke in four more schools. He had another sign made up for one building in the village, as another Unification Center.

I saw a lot of extreme poverty in India, beggars who had leprosy or polio, some severely deformed. In Bombay I saw miles of black tarps where untouchable families lived under these tarps. But we met some very good people. The food in southern India is very spicy and that got to me after a while, so I went to a

clinic and had the doctor write up a note that I could give to cooks at restaurants to limit the spices. But we never got sick the whole time. We went on the back of motorcycles and visited these thousand year old Hindu temples. Michael and I were blessed with the tikka (the dot made with cow dung) on our forehead by a Hindu priest.

On the way back to the U.S. I was flying through London so I changed my plans to allow one day in London. While there I went to the Lancaster Gate Church. It turned out to be Children’s Day so a lot of people were there and they asked me to give testimony about my experience in India. The IW for Asia happened to be in the audience and asked for all our contact information for our new friends in India. India had always been a most difficult place to witness so he was excited that we made such a break through. He later flew down to Coimbatore and met our young men. Murali and two others later were flown up to Delhi and they attended a 40 day workshop.

This experience is definite proof of spirit world and spiritual assistance. I wish the church had continued with giving us a new country to go to each year as they had originally announced would happen. Nothing makes you feel like a world citizen better than these experiences in other countries.

When I saw Father for the first time

By Caro Cecile
Lancaster Gate, London, May 26, 1978

They were coming from all over Europe, brothers and sisters we were all, having joined in our own country the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity; in short, the Unification Church, headed by our True Parents, the Reverend Sun Myung and Mrs Hak Ja Han Moon. However among each other, we considered ourselves the Unified Family, because that is how we felt; this was, is and always will be the true spirit of the Unification movement. If we meet another member for the first time, and tell them when we joined the church, we would simply say; “Hi, I am Caroline from Belgium. I joined ‘the Family,’ May 1st, 1977 ...”

I can easily recall the noise and bustle inside the large church headquarters at Lancaster Gate, London, which is situated on the North side of Hyde Park. I recall eating for the first time the famous breakfast dish called porridge, which I actually enjoyed. We got organized by teams, each team would be assigned to go to a city or town in England. We would have a center, which would have of course, a center leader. These were brothers who came from the United States who had experiences with campaigning for rallies, witnessing and teaching the Divine Principle. And of course there were many teams assigned also in the different areas of London itself.

We were part of a new providence initiated by True Father, called the IOWC, which means, the International One World Crusade. We were missionaries, not just for the purpose of witnessing, and educating people in the Divine Principle but also to develop what was called a home church where we would also serve the community. Wherever we would be sent, we would be assigned an area of the town or city to create there a homechurch. Three days later, it was announced to us that True Parents were in town, and that Father would be speaking to



us all in the Grand Ballroom.

We were all in the room half an hour before Father entered it, preparing ourselves internally by singing holy songs. What we call the holy songs are songs that were written by Father and early members in Korea. They had been translated in English and we sang them in English. The most traditional one we sang before True Parents were to speak to us was, “Song of the Garden”

The Lord into His garden comes
The spices yield a rich perfume
The lilies grow and thrive (repeat)
Refreshing showers of grace divine
From the Father flows to every vine
And make the dead revive (repeat)
Oh, oh, that this dry and barren ground
In Springs of water may abound
A fruitful soil become (repeat)
The desert blossoms at the rose
When the Saviour conquers all His foes
And makes His people one (repeat)
Come Brethren you that love the Lord
And taste the sweetness of His words
In Father’s ways go on (repeat)
Our troubles and our trials here
Will only make us richer there
When we arrive at home (repeat)

Then the double doors of the Grand Ballroom opened, and in entered True Father, A smile. A twinkle in the eye. A man in his 50s, looking younger, medium height, With the purposeful step of his feet, dressed casually, light grey pants, with a short sleeve printed shirt. My eyes and heart saw a simple man. It is also the way I saw Jesus, a simple man. Father’s gaze was direct, and warmth emanated from Him.

To his every word I was glued, his vision so grand, his faith deep, his trust in us complete, his expectations, high. A task for each of us to take full charge of working as a team, supporting each other.

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I was so embarrassed. I apologized over and over again to True Father and stammered, “I am sorry True Father, I didn’t know it was you.”

He then looked at me and chuckled as he saw my embarrassment and the look of utter shock on my face. He then started talking and he compared us with the floor. He told me that just like the floor has all this buildup of dirt, so too our original nature becomes hidden under the many layers of dirt and build up from our life. He said that everything we take in and everything we do that doesn’t come from or reflect God is like dirt and gum that sticks to our spiritual heart and mind. His conversation was peppered with “Don’t you think so?”

He then stopped and looked at me and simply said that if I studied the Divine Principle and worked hard like I was doing at that moment, then in time, my original nature would be revealed, just like the true floor was being revealed. He pointed to an area of the floor that had been cleaned and an area not yet cleaned. He looked at me and asked me, “Which do you want to be?” He put the scraper down, got up and simply walked on to inspect the other parts of the building. Though it lasted just a few minutes, I have spent a lifetime trying to follow True Father’s timeless guidance.”

-Kathy Winings

This is an effective testimony because the writer stayed

One of His first words to us that evening, which made a big change for me was, “ You must write to your parents once a week ...”

Since I had estranged myself from my parents after they helped plan my kidnapping in Belgium six months prior, I was moved to tears, and made a determination to follow this direction. I felt its importance. And so I did. I can still see clearly today, the moment I saw Father for the first time, entering the grand ballroom of Lancaster Gate, London.

right in the story and told it as it happened, with details, and gave only a very short conclusion at the end. The details let you see a picture of what happened, and you want to know what comes next. And the writer leaves it up to the reader to make their own conclusions.

We tend to want to sum up experiences by saying things like “I felt True Father’s heart”, “We struggled a lot.” or, “I really broke through”. While these are acceptable phrases we all recognize, they don’t really tell us what happened, and too often when we use these terms in a testimony the reader has no idea what happened. You should know, dear family, that your stories have incredible power to move people, if you simply tell them as they happened, in detail.

When you give a testimony, give us all the details, even the ugly ones. Make us feel as if we are there. And you’ll find the most effective testimony is not the one where we say ‘victory, unity, parents’ love, god’s heart’. It’s the one where we simply tell the story and the listeners think “Ah! God’s heart.”

People are starving for spiritual food. The jargon words are the menu. The details of the story are the food itself.

Keep writing! We are looking forward to reading and hearing your stories.



IOWC Missionaries in South Carolina

by Jose Fragosa

It was a time when I was working at Washington Times. We had a big meeting at Capitol gardens in Washington, DC. Bo Hi Pak asked us “Does anybody want to back to the main mission, to witness and fundraise?” IOWC was a good condition, we’d just come back from the Blessing. I decided to go, and my mission started in Rhode Island with Peter Brown, IOWC 41.

We stopped in Columbia, South Carolina, and David, one of the New Hope Singers, was my central figure. Reverend Lee wanted to break the IOWC into groups of three, to go out to different cities. We were supposed to go and not rent an apartment, or a house. We were supposed to stay with churches, and only after we broke through, stayed at churches three times for at least 15 days each, could we think of renting our own apartment.

We had a beatup Ford van. Me and two Japanese sisters, Yoko and Akemi. Akemi was Nisei, Japanese American. Yoko was 100% Japanese. So we were sent to South Carolina, which has deep roots of Christianity. Very strong.

We went to this place, and the first night we witnessed at different churches. When night came, we didn’t know what to do, because we didn’t find any church to accept us to stay there. So we decided, about 10 o’clock, to go to this huge shopping center parking lot. We went all the way to the end, and I let the sisters sleep in the van. I walked out.

We had these huge flower signs, for fundraising. I took two of them and leaned them together like a tent to sleep under. I was just about to go to sleep when the police came.

“This is not a place for camping! What are you doing here?”

“We’re not camping, we’re missionaries.”

“What do you mean you are missionaries?”

His partner said “Wait a minute. Are you guys the Moonies?”

“Yeah”

“You guys are in the wrong spot. You guys have 5 minutes to pack up your things and leave.”

“Who’s inside of the van?”

“My sisters.” He was on his way to knock on the van.

“No, no, no.” I said. “Don’t do that. They’re so tired, they worked all day.”

“Who are you to tell me what to do!?”

So the sisters woke up, very tired and they kicked us out. We left, and we went out by some farm fields. We stayed there, sitting in the van, waiting for the day to come up. When the sun came up, we went into the city and fundraised until about 1 o’clock. After that, we went to the library, and addressed envelopes to all the different churches. We sent out so many letters, to all the churches around our area.

So for five days, we lived like this. I slept outside, found a way to sleep outside the van. Finally, we found a church out in the middle of nowhere. We went to McDonalds, and filled our plastic buckets with hot and cold water, put them in the back of the van.

Behind the church there was this parking lot, the church was closed, nobody there. We just set up flower signs to make a shower area. I went to the front of the church

to make sure nobody came back there while the sisters took a shower. After they finished, I took a shower.

My big experience there, was after we took showers. It had been a difficult day, really struggling, and I lost spirit. Struggling with my life of faith, what I was doing. I was so tired. Father was in jail at that time.

We parked the van on one side of the church. In the front of the church was an old cemetery, old fashioned crosses. After I showered, the sisters prepared some dinner, and we ate and prayed. I said good night, I set my signs up and rolled out my sleeping bag underneath. I got in my sleeping bag and stretched my arms out to the side, fell asleep.

When the full moon rose, it came up behind a cross in the cemetery, and the shadow of the cross fell on me and outlined me as I lay there with my arms stretched out, exactly. I woke up and there was the whole shadow of the cross on me. If I moved my hand, moonlight. Moved it back, shadow. I was lying in the center of the cross. “Am I dead or am I alive?” I wondered. I rolled my head, saw the big moon. Rolled in back into shadow. “Oh, Jesus, this is how you feel?”

Anyway, I stayed there for about 15 minutes, just reflecting upon it. Seeing the light if I moved, right in the shadow of the cross. After that I got up, I couldn’t sleep anymore. I was just in prayer, with my eyes closed.

My eyes were closed for quite a while, but when I opened them I saw the shadow of the cross had moved and was touching part of the van. I came out, and stood in front of the van, just watching the moonlight in the cemetery.

Then Yoko woke up.

“Jose-san! Jose-san! What are you doing?”

“I’m following the cross.”

“What do you mean you’re following the cross?”

“It was inside where I was sleeping, but now it moved to you guys. So I’m following the cross.”

“You’re crazy! Go to sleep.”

Finally Yoko found a church that allowed the sisters to stay there, but not me. I slept in the van outside the

church and the sisters stayed inside. We became very famous, had a very big success in South Carolina. I think we had about 15 ministers from South Carolina come to one of our ministers’ rallies in New York.

I feel these are some of the big experiences we had, to stand up when Father was in jail. There are so many details and emotions that we went through. Sometimes the spirit world really nailed us down to see what we’re made of, to realize if we’re for real or not. To really stand up for what I believe, not because somebody told me, but because this is what I believe.

Without this, if you don’t understand, it’s easy to lose your vision, to feel frustrated and then you feel like someone’s pushing you to do this or that, and strong Cain-type feelings come up. Reject this and reject that. So easy to reach a category where people think you have spiritual problems.

For me this time was the most important, symbolically being reborn, and stand for rebuilding my faith. Since that time, I am so grateful to this Korean leader. At the time, I thought it made no sense. “Why is he doing that? Sending me to the middle of nowhere with these two sisters? We’re not supposed to rent an apartment?? Where are we supposed to live?” I felt responsible for these two sisters. I was the man, and I had to watch out them.

By the end, we were so focused on the mission, so united with each other, that we didn’t have to watch out for anything. This was one of the biggest experiences for me. I feel that I earned this connection with Heavenly Father and True Parents, this is very personal, defending my family when it really mattered. Defending is not physical confrontation or argument, but to really put your heart on the line where there’s life and death. If you can survive death, there is such an incredible blessing that can come to you.

I don’t feel like I earned much, but Father multiplied it incredibly, with the kind of family I got. So if you can persevere through those times, when it doesn’t seem to make any sense, these kind of blessings can come to you.

God, if he's really the messiah, then...

by Susana Ginze

My name is Susana Ginze and I joined the church in October 3, 1975. I fundraised, I witnessed for one month and then for another month on the third month I met Father. I was in Kentucky, I was a fundraiser and I was in Kentucky. I was struggling so I didn't join the church for three months. I joined because I was going to study the church to see if this was true, see if these were true members and really doing God's will so I was going to check them out and see if it is true.

While I was in Kentucky and True Father wanted members from different states to come to serve him and help him at Pasadena House. He came to Pasadena House for some scientist meetings and also soon it was going to be Childrens' Day. I took advantage because my first matching was in Los Angeles and I wanted to visit him and get to know him a little bit. He was security for True Father. Before Father came I told my fiancé that I wanted to visit my parents with him because they were living close to Pasadena. So I brought him over and he met my parents.

We went back to Pasadena the day we visited my parents and when we arrived he opened the door for me and there was this light coming out of the door of Pasadena House. It was a light like a rainbow. And I was wondering, where is this light coming from? I couldn't see any electric lights on anywhere. It was a light, like a rainbow up the stairs. I said "Oh, that's interesting." So we went upstairs, we had a room upstairs. At this time I hadn't seen Father because he was in his room at Pasadena House. Then the next day they fed True Father breakfast. He later came back from the science conference in the evening and I was doing dishes. He really scolded the Korean sisters because they had all these pots on the floor with vegetables and food in them. Father spoke to them angrily. And I thought "Oh wow!" I didn't know what he was saying because he was speaking Korean and I asked a sister to translate what he said. She said

Father said "You have to be like Americans. You don't have all those pots on the floor. Get a table and put everything on the table. This is not good."

The next morning, it was the morning of True Childrens' Day and the Korean sisters had made a beautiful table offering, all kinds of fruit and other food. All the members who came, who had been invited to serve Father, all came and prayed with Father. He prayed to God to offer the food. At this time, I was there and I thought, "OK, Heavenly Father, I am here to see if he really is the Messiah. So you are going to let me know: if he is really the Messiah, then he will give me my favorite food." He was giving food to the members, so I thought if he really is the Messiah he has to give me my favorite food. When it was my turn he looked me straight in the eye and he gave me a honeydew melon. My favorite. When he gave it to me my eyes really opened then I said, "Well, Heavenly Father, he is the Messiah because he gave me my favorite food."

So then I said, thank you Heavenly Father that means I am staying as a missionary for Rev. Sun Myung Moon. So that is how I met True Father and after that they sent me back to Kentucky and I stayed in the church.

MFT short stories

Stapled trousers

by Gregory Davis

Sometimes in "Mansei menswear" we could get some article of clothing that we could use, but occasionally it needed slight alterations.

I had a pair of pants that believe it or not were too long. (I'm 6'3") must've been Perry Cordill's (I think he was 6'6" or 7") so I turned up the cuffs and having no access to needle and thread at the time ("mobile" fundraising team), I stapled the cuffs with a small pocket stapler. It seemed to work just fine.

So, one day I was arrested for, you guessed it, fundraising without a permit or because they didn't like the

color of my coat or whatever reason they chose, for convenience.

Here I was in this court room ready to testify in my own defense (I would argue 1st amendment rights) and I looked over at the arresting officer, who was a big burly bulldog of a chief (you know the type) and he was winking at me.

Then he showed me the cuff of his trousers, I thought he was gonna show me a gun in an ankle holster, just to intimidate me, but no, that wasn't it.

He pulled up his pant leg and showed me the inside of his cuffs. Damned if he didn't have the cuff of his trousers stapled, just like mine!

I thought, this is very weird. How did he know?! What was the meaning of it all? Would I get off? Was he trying to show me a "softer side" (as if to say, "well if you staple the cuffs of your pants, you can't be all bad"). I caught his eye and managed a feeble smile. The spirit world was pretty bizarre sometimes in those days. ?

Well, needless to say, I was let go, with a stern admonishment from the judge, something about, next time be sure and register your name with the PD. I don't really remember. But do remember that experience.

Right hand sneaks \$10

by Jonathan Diamond

The man invited me into his foyer and asked me who was I selling my product for. I said, "The Unification Church." He began screaming at me that he would under **NO** circumstances EVER support Rev. Moon. As he continued to scream and carry on in a most animated fashion, with his right hand he reached into his pocket and removed a 10 dollar bill. He held it out to me down low where he couldn't see his own hand giving it to me. I put it in my pocket and when he was done yelling I said "God Bless you," and left. As I walked away I thought, "Wow, that man was possessed with negativity but at least his good ancestors could control his right arm and hand."

Testing...testing.....

by Sam Harley

At the end of my MFT career, somewhere in Minnesota, in the middle of winter...I was experiencing what for me were routine fundraising issues, getting overloaded (emotionally constipated, as one team mother put it) and knowing that no matter how hard I tried to push myself, on certain days I was going to space out and not fundraise. Feeling a lot of stress pretty much every day. There were plenty of trials built into the average fundraising day as it was.

Some days, you just knew you were being tested. Everything got to you, from the captain's cheery hand-clapping to the itchy long underwear, the jostling and bouncing as you tried to eat your breakfast from a cup. Knowing that you were going to talk to total strangers and ask them for money purely on trust. Never really understanding how that actually worked, or why it ever did.

It was at the end of such a day, when I'd pushed myself through exhaustion and frustration, that we said our closing prayer and rolled out our sleeping bags. Finally, I could rest for a few hours. What a day.

As I was thinking this, the brother next to me rolled over onto his back and his arm flopped onto me. I sighed, and moved his arm onto his chest. Heavenly Father, you're not finished testing me yet? I lay back and began to drift off. Then he began to snore. Ok, Heavenly Father. Still testing, I see. I reached over and gently rolled him onto his side. Quiet. Lay back, drifting off.....

Then the brother on the other side of me rolled over, and kicked me. I patiently nudged his foot away. Not bad, Sam, I thought to myself. You're getting the hang of this. Well done. Started to drift off again. Someone else started to snore.

I have sometimes cried or sulked myself to sleep. This was one of the rare times when I fell asleep laughing. Really, what next? You might as well laugh. It's either that or explode in self-righteous fury or pity. And I slept well.

Collecting First Generation Stories



For those who don't know me, I am Samuel Harley. I joined the Unification Church in Oakland in 1978, the one founded by Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

I joined in Oakland in 1978, was on MFT for 5 years, IOWC, NY church, seminary, state leader, lecturer, Manhattan Center, etc. Blessed but single, 3 kids. I have been teaching English and giving the odd sermon in Los Angeles church. It has been on me for some time to record our stories, and it keeps coming back to me every time I see another In Memoriam message from HQ. There are so many stories to be told, to our families, to our friends, to future generations.

We were in a war, but one that didn't make headlines. The battles were invisible, but the victories could be very visible. Many of us feel moved to write our stories, record them somehow. Yet many of us get stuck on the way to doing that, find it hard to continue or can't get started.

Our children need to hear these. I also believe that they are an excellent way for people to understand who we are and what we stand for. But here's the key: we have to tell what happened in detail, the good and the bad. We can't rely on words like "breakthrough", "inspiration" or "God's heart" to tell the story. Too many times our testimonies are so full

of these that we can't tell what actually happened.

Our stories are fascinating without buzzwords. We need a culture of telling stories as they happened.

In Los Angeles, we already have a writers' group that meets twice a month to tell stories. We write them out and post them. But this needs more. We need to visit people's homes, and not just those who come to church. I have started to write about the context of MFT, so that someone unfamiliar with it could understand an MFT story.

We are going to fill a website with stories, in video and in writing. Ultimately, a series of books. I say series, because I can't imagine one, or even ten books, can hold all the stories we have. And I want everyone's story, the humble, the leaders, the victorious, the struggling, the defeats. I want people to know what life was like in those days. Ultimately, I want to honor everyone who came, even those who only stayed a week or a month. I want to get stories from those who are still here and those who can't be around any more.

I have no axe grind or point to make. I have no group I want to promote over another. I simply want the world to know what we did and what we experienced. How, for example, standing outside in ankle deep in slush on Christmas Day being stared at could become a profound spiritual experience.

We Were There

Founder: Sam Harley

Facebook Site: Caroline Cecile

Magazine: Robert Brown

Got a memory? Send us your story and photos. Click on this gray box which is linked to our We Were There Facebook group. Please join our site and tell your story.

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