

On the recommendation of Professor Nicholas Kurti FRS of Oxford University, a world expert in cryogenics and a Member of my Editorial Board, I received an invitation to the 'International Conference on the Unity of Science', ICUS, to be held in San Francisco at the end of November 1977. I soon learnt that the organiser was none other than the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the Korean Evangelist who had in 1954 founded the Unification Church. By 1977 he and his church had a somewhat doubtful reputation, as he was accused of indoctrinating children and enticing them away from their parents to his harsh educational camps. Further more his industrial empire was much involved in arms manufacture and the sale of the 'miracle' tea Ginseng.

Was I to accept a free trip to San Francisco, which I had never seen before, and participate in discussions about the 'Unity of Science'—whatever this meant—or be solely guided by rumours about his doubtful reputation and refuse to attend? I decided that Kurti's acceptance and my natural curiosity about the Reverend Moon himself, allowed me to accept. Incidentally in 1984 Moon was imprisoned in the USA for tax evasion.

The Conference was held in two Hotels, the Fairmont and another, with about one thousand people attending, among them Paul Wigner, the Hungarian born nuclear physicist, a Nobel Laureate. All was conceived and arranged in great luxury with lavish evening entertainment by Korean dancers, but of science, let alone its 'unity', there was little to be heard in the many lectures and informal discussions. Nothing reached the high scholarly standard of ISR contributions, and I therefore decided not to invite any articles for publication.

With my invitation by British Petroleum, BP, to come to Alaska in my pocket, I was not sad to leave San Francisco and fly north to Anchorage and then to Fairbanks, where I met an old Australian friend Keith Mathers at the University. He introduced me to his colleagues who had contributed to ISR 2/3. Back to Anchorage and from there, in the good hands of BP, flying in a private plane to Prudhoe Bay, 70° north, to Drill Site Number 1. My watercolour sketches made on the site show it as a totally enclosed grey structure, in grey snow and with a grey sky.

Yet Prudhoe Bay is the beginning of the 1200 km long Trans-Alaska Pipeline, pale blue in its protective covers. A BP car took me from Prudhoe Bay along the service road, often parallel to the Pipeline, to the Valdez end, where it ended in huge storage tanks before being loaded on to tankers taking the oil south. The road was breathtakingly beautiful, as we drove past snow—covered mountains like Mount Sandford, 4952 m, and on, over the Thompson Pass. We stopped occasionally at the pipe's pumping stations, where the oil was heated to reduce its viscosity so that it could easily flow again. But sadly, no article!

See Watercolour Title 276, inside Back Cover