

Spiritual Guidance for Daily Life



Sermons by Dietrich F. Seidel

Edited by Jennifer P. Tanabe

Spiritual Guidance for Daily Life:

Sermons by Dietrich F. Seidel

Edited by Jennifer P. Tanabe

Copyright © 2018 Dietrich F. Seidel

All rights reserved.

Bible quotations from the New International Version (NIV).

ISBN 978-1-387-88727-9

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Autobiography	7
Public Sermons.....	19
Unlocking the Mysteries of Christian Theology.....	21
God and Friendship.....	32
The Significance of the Holy Marriage Blessing.....	42
Marriage as the Foundation for World Peace	50
Communication in Marriage	55
America and the World: Understanding September 11	67
Sermons at Unification Theological Seminary.....	69
Interview with Dietrich Seidel about UTS.....	73
Reflections on Discipleship I.....	78
Reflections on Discipleship II.....	84
The Power of Living for the Sake of Others.....	94
What Moves Us the Most?.....	103
The Ideal World of Adam.....	113
Repentance and Change of Heart.....	125
Love is a Decision.....	134
The Starting Point of Healing	143
I Believe in Order to Understand	152
Communicating with God.....	162

Oneness with God through the Holy Marriage Blessing 171
Mobilizing the Spirit of Victory..... 180
All Things are Possible for Him who Believes 190
Recommended Readings 203

Introduction

I am honored to introduce this volume of sermons by Dr. Dietrich Seidel. He was my long-time colleague at Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) and it has been my pleasure to continue working with his wife, Elisabeth, to publish his work. In fact, it is due to Elisabeth's care in keeping the tape recordings of these sermons safe that they could be transcribed and published in this volume.

The spiritual guidance contained here is not limited to a particular religion. For Dr. Seidel, the most important point is to bring God into our lives. As the reader will discover from his autobiography, Dr. Seidel's theological studies well qualifies him academically to deliver profound sermons. However, his interests and his research were based not just on intellectual curiosity but more importantly on his sincere love for God.

Raised Catholic, Dietrich Seidel considered becoming a priest. He experienced a conflict, though, between the celibacy requirement of the priesthood and his strong desire for the joy experienced through loving and being loved by a spouse and a family. Meeting the Unification Church, where the spiritual leaders are couples, solved this dilemma. In the Unification teachings he learned that love for God is not diminished by loving a spouse and children but rather is fulfilled through the establishment of a family with God at its center.

Since the audiences for many of these sermons consisted primarily, if not entirely, of Unificationists, a brief introduction to Unification teachings and important terms is presented here.

The Unification Church, properly the the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC), was founded by Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Unification theology is based on the

revelations he received over a period of years following a spiritual encounter with Jesus on Easter morning when he was a teenager. These revelations were formalized into teachings known as the Divine Principle, or the Principle.

In essence, the Divine Principle teaches that the divine Creator originally intended humankind to live as one family under God. Our first human ancestors, Adam and Eve, failed to fulfill this ideal; instead, human beings multiplied a world of sin and suffering. Therefore, human salvation requires conditions of restitution (payment of indemnity) for the mistake, and the establishment of a true family, the original ideal of creation. Unificationists believe that Reverend Moon inherited this messianic mission from Jesus, and together with his wife, Hak Ja Han, they stand victorious in the position of the first true parents of humankind.

Unification Church members regard Reverend and Mrs. Moon with great reverence, referring to them as True Parents, individually as Father Moon and Mother Moon, True Father and True Mother, or simply as Father and Mother.

Since marriage and family are essential to God's ideal and are key to salvation, marriage is regarded as much more than a wedding ceremony. It is a sacred, holy union, and a sacrament, an instrument of salvation and healing whereby the foundation for God's original love, life and lineage is reestablished. Through the Holy Marriage Blessing, or the Blessing, a couple is restored to God's lineage and can establish a Blessed family with children born directly into God's lineage (Blessed children).

Before participating in the Holy Marriage Blessing ceremony, in which large numbers of couples receive a holy blessing on their marriage, the couples drink sacramental holy wine to cleanse their lineage. The Blessing ceremony itself includes sprinkling of holy water, the

recitation of vows, and the exchange of rings. This is followed by a short period of continued celibacy, a purification time to offer the marriage to God.

During his lifetime, Reverend Moon acted as a matchmaker, often bringing together representatives of different nations to hasten the process of creating a one-world family of peace. In later years, couples from all faiths were encouraged to rededicate their marriages, receiving the holy wine and a blessing on their marriage from Unificationist Blessed couples.

Dr. Seidel's personal interest was the field of marriage and family, not just from a theological perspective but especially in terms of the application of theological understanding of God and God's ideal for humankind. He taught classes on marriage and family and together with his wife conducted marriage enrichment seminars. Like Reverend Moon, Dietrich Seidel made it his life's work to embody his teachings, especially with regard to creating an eternal loving marriage.

Many of these sermons are from the 1990s, which might at first glance make them appear to be dated. However, they contain gems of eternal truth. The reader will find here valuable spiritual guidance that can inform, inspire, and enlighten us all as to how to make our daily lives more meaningful, more successful, more loving, and closer to God's original ideal for humankind.

Jennifer P. Tanabe, Ph.D.

Red Hook, New York

August, 2018

Autobiography

My origins go back to a small town, Pernitz, in the Piestingtal (Piesting Valley), about 40 miles south of Vienna, Austria, where I was born in 1943. It was still in the middle of World War II and a time of much suffering. My Viennese mother, Margaretha, and my German father, Friedmar, divorced shortly after the end of the war, a painful event that reflected the confusion and hardships of the post war era. Pernitz, especially the home for mothers in Feuchtenbach, was known for the misguided attempt to create a “new beginning” for humanity by raising babies that came from selected parents. My German father, educated as a civil engineer, was part of the security forces protecting the life of the then “Fuehrer” (Adolf Hitler) and together with my mother apparently fulfilled the needed conditions for making a “new” human race. Later on, in 1951, my mother remarried my step-father, Dr. Cyril Vesely, who did his best to raise my older sister Gisela and myself. He was, in my opinion, a very conscientious step-father who shared child-rearing tasks and instilled good traditional values in my sister and myself.

Among my early childhood memories, I recall the sound of sirens warning the inhabitants of Vienna of bombing raids and huddling in shelters hoping to survive the explosions. Also, I remember seeing a soldier pointing a gun at my mother, my sister and me, in an open field in the middle of the night, and with the voice of a three-year-old shouting “Please do not shoot!” These experiences may have been the roots of my yearning to do something for the sake of bringing about more understanding between different ideologies, and also reconciliation between opposing groups that would eventually lead to a world free of weapons.

One memory that stayed with me from my elementary school time was when my best friend, Herbert Vogel, told me he wanted to become

a Roman Catholic priest. I remember that in my heart I wanted to apply his future plan to my own life, as close friends often do. Based on my belief in God, I respected the commitment of his family to the Catholic faith but hesitated to share his plans for the future. On the one hand, as an eight-year old, I understood dedicating my life to God in response to the gratitude I felt for being alive. On the other hand, all my hope and joy about life was rooted in the experience of a loving family, and I knew already as a youngster that priests were not permitted to marry. From that time on, I repeatedly asked myself questions about God and His providence. I especially had questions about why Jesus could not marry and have his own family, and in this way be an example for his followers.

In my later childhood and teenage years, I struggled with my life of faith and wanted my parents to be more connected with our Creator. They seemed to have their own reasons not to stand more with God and simply lived conscientious lives. My sister, Gisela, would still go with me to church, but later on when we were teenagers she would stop going with me on a regular basis. In my struggles, I reached the point of affirming the existence of God and found myself many times going to church alone to attend mass. Something inside told me it was important to support our Creator and to show gratitude to Him.

Within my Roman Catholic upbringing, I experienced God's presence increasingly through the wonders of nature. All created beings and nature itself were for me simply a second Bible. My interests as a teenager then turned to science, especially telecommunication. I studied at the *Technologische Gewerbemuseum* (Technological Museum of Trade and Economy) for five years and qualified to continue my studies in electrical engineering (*Nachrichtentechnik* or Telecommunication) at the University of Technology (*Technische Hochschule*). In all my science courses, however, I missed one thing, namely, the answer to the question "Why do the phenomena of science exist?" When I was a

student, there was no philosophy of science course that would have discussed, for example, the theory of evolution as opposed to the theory of intelligent design, which could at least have tried to provide some answers.

During these formative years as a student, I soon realized that science has its limitations in answering the important questions of life, such as: “Why am I here?” or “Is there a life after I die?” In addition, even if I would be lucky and make a great scientific discovery, how could I be sure that it would be used for the benefit of humanity? I realized that we all as human beings need first to develop our character, in order to attain the goal of becoming loving and responsible persons. I also understood that we need God’s guidance in order to accomplish this task.

During my mid-twenties, I was guided toward opening my heart to a spiritual vocation. I vividly remember a conversation I had with a Roman Catholic priest who served at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. At a 5 a.m. mass I showed him an invitation I had received to learn about a new spiritual movement that was dedicated to bringing unity to Christianity and to advancing interfaith dialogue. “Find out for yourself,” he said. “If you find something good, take it. If it is not good stay away from it.” The invitation I gave to the priest was from my spiritual father, who handed it to me in the Vienna city park near the Johann Strauss monument. This is how my study of the Divine Principle began in September 1968. This was also the time of a special political situation, when we in Austria felt the threat of communism, following the invasion of what was then Czechoslovakia by the military forces of the East bloc, especially the Soviet Union as it was called at that time.

I remember that I needed to study for an upcoming exam, but I put time aside to study the Divine Principle.¹ I did it with an expectant heart, filled with gratitude that I could know God's providence. Even if there was pressure to prepare well for the exam, what was more important, I thought, was the study of the Divine Principle and to put down in writing any possible questions I had.

It became evident that I was personally responsible for my spiritual life and that prayer and self-examination were needed to advance in my spiritual quest. At that time, my studies focused on one question: "How is God working today?" It might be possible, I thought, with all the confusion and uncertainties of our worldwide situation, that we were experiencing what the Bible calls "the Last Days," thus entering a new era in which God's original ideal becomes substantially realized in this physical world. The whole idea of the transition of an evil world into a world of goodness under God's sovereignty was very appealing to me.

As a practicing Catholic, I had a deep experience of God's calling and the heart of Jesus. If God wanted to work through Jesus 2,000 years ago to build His kingdom and Jesus was rejected, it was obvious to me that in our time the True Parents as God's champions would also be initially rejected. They would also receive bad press and be accused of heresy just like Jesus was. I realized through the Divine Principle that Father Moon fulfilled the mission of Jesus. As I see it, he became the Second Coming of Christ who gives his best effort to build God's kingdom on this earth.

¹ The translation available at that time was Sun Myung Moon, *Divine Principle*. Washington DC: The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of Christianity, 1973. A new translation was produced in 1996, entitled *Exposition of the Divine Principle*.

My Catholic faith and the Divine Principle seemed to work together well, like two parts that together create a whole sphere. If there was a Catholic theological mystery, the Divine Principle would give a clear answer toward fulfilling the original purpose of Creation. After four weeks of studying God's word for our time and a few sleepless nights in which the heart of Jesus became clearer to me, I dedicated my life to the True Parents on September 21, 1968, against the wishes of my parents.

Back then, toward the end of 1968, there were several centers in Vienna under the leadership of Reverend Paul Werner and his wife, Christel. Reverend Werner was the first pioneer in Austria, who started his mission in 1965. We moved from the apartment we had with all the brothers from the Zirkusgasse, located in Vienna's 2nd district, to the Schluesselgasse, a street in the 4th district. This was an important move, because most parents associated the Zirkusgasse with one of Vienna's red-light districts. Also, the Sunday Service was moved from the Oelzeltgasse in the 3rd district to the Schluesselgasse, where we as brothers and sisters had a lively spiritual life, with much fasting and praying for new members.

I vividly remember one time, after a day of hard work, when I lay down on the bottom bunk bed in a small room reserved for students next to the kitchen in the Schluesselgasse apartment. As I fell asleep, all of a sudden the small room was filled with deep and intense love and joy, with a pleasant feeling of being cared for. The message was uncomplicated: "Whatever you do, I will be with you." I was simply speechless.

A few months later, I was called by Reverend Werner to present Divine Principle lectures at the University of Vienna, together with a few students who were also in their last year of study. We all formed the New Center (*Neue Mitte*), a movement aiming to show the way

toward building God's kingdom, and which later became CARP (Collegiate Association for the Research of the Principle).

In February 1969, the whole Austrian movement, about 30 of us, drove with three VW buses to Essen, Germany, to attend the "Blessing" of 43 Couples worldwide, with our True Parents as the officiators. This was an important event, because it signified the Blessing outside of Korea and opened the whole world toward God's original ideal of creation. In Essen, there were nine couples, representing all of Europe; in Japan there were 21 couples; and in the United States there were 13 couples. I still remember that we used the rooms dedicated to the Socialist Party in Germany. After we prepared everything for the Blessing, the caretaker said to us, "It looks just like the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." We not only symbolically restored the Socialists' rooms but also received internal acknowledgment through the words of the caretaker.

It was also a lasting experience for me to meet True Parents in person at the Essen airport. Intentionally and strongly, True Father shook hands with all of us from the European movement and together with True Mother tremendously encouraged us to remain faithful and to continue God's providence. Not only from the study of the Divine Principle but also through my physical experience, I realized that our True Father and True Mother resembled our Heavenly Parent's heart. In every way, they acted very parental when they had to make new and delicate decisions.

New national leaders needed to be assigned to existing nations and no matter how strong headed some of these national leaders were, our True Parents always found a way, full of heart, to solve any kind of problems. At this Blessing in Essen, and during the time we spent together, True Father switched around the national leaders of Germany and Austria. Reverend Paul Werner together with his wife Christel became the leaders in Germany, while Reverend Peter Koch together with his wife, Gertrud, took over the leadership positions in Austria.

Later in 1969, there was a new center in the Salztorgasse district where for a few months I was the center leader. Besides our somewhat intense life of faith, we experienced an actual earthquake in our newly established center. The whole apartment seemed to be twisted and there were cracks in the walls. We looked for shelter. Fortunately, after a few minutes everything stopped shaking and became calm again. This episode was a reminder that we were placed on the fault line, a volcanic area that stretched from Vienna south, and that we were called to overcome any kind of obstacle in our new mission.

Another center was located in the Marrokanergasse in the 3rd district. This was for the new leaders in Austria, Peter and Gertrud Koch, besides a few brothers and sisters who also lived there. After a few months, our True Parents visited this center and I remember that Goon Koch, the baby son of Peter and Gertrud, was held by our True Parents posing for a historic photo.

After my graduation from the Vienna University of Technology in the summer of 1970, I worked for more than two years as a research assistant for Professor Weinmann at the newly founded Institute for Remote Control Engineering. This was the time when Peter Koch purchased the farm in Gfoehl, about an hour and a half drive from Vienna. We renovated that farmhouse, and I remember that, together with Richard Heinrich, we reinstalled all the electricity in the building including the water pump. After much restoration work, the old farmhouse was turned into a beautiful weekend seminar building where many Divine Principle lectures were given to interested guests. Some of the renovated buildings served as a candle factory, which turned out to be important for our fund raising efforts.

At the beginning of 1973, I decided to move to the United States, pursuing missionary work and studies in theology. We were about 120 members from Europe, a modern version of the *Mayflower*, who arrived in the USA and were welcomed by True Father at the airport. We

spent about two weeks at the Belvedere training center, hearing many lectures and preparing for our mission. After witnessing on the West Coast under Dr. Sheftick, I became the “Mobile Unit Commander” in Utah for nearly two years, 1973 and 1974. I recall meeting the major apostle of the Mormon Church, Spencer W. Kimball, in Salt Lake City to explain to him the goals of our movement. He wished us well in our efforts to lay a lasting foundation in Utah.

In the summer of 1975, I became the pioneer for teaching the Divine Principle in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, after I attended the 100-day workshop with Reverend Sudo in Barrytown, New York. We were equipped with a white board, a bicycle, and lots of tapes explaining about the Divine Principle and related topics. We also had Holy Songs and inspirational music, together with a fair amount of literature to invite guests to workshops held in Barrytown. It was a very intense time in which I also coached Reverend Philip Burley for about two weeks, teaching the Divine Principle in the commons park in Worcester. Reverend Kevin McCarthy was our itinerary worker, and I remember that his major concern was the right internal attitude to be full of energy in our efforts to witness to True Parents.

The Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) was founded in the fall of 1975, and I was invited to attend the first class, together with about 50 other students from all over the world. It was very inspiring to see so many different countries symbolically united together through our brothers and sisters. There were the nations of Korea, Japan, the United States, India, and most of the Western European nations.

Many of the students who had English as their second language needed to study very hard to catch up with the Seminary coursework. In order to qualify for the master’s degree in religious education, we were supposed to have another degree from our previous studies. It was quite a challenge for me to study theological subjects after having studied natural science. The professors were from different religious

traditions and through their teaching at UTS they all contributed to the unification of religions, knowingly or unknowingly.



Dietrich and Elisabeth in 1977

In February 1977, I met my wife Elisabeth in Tarrytown, New York, through the matching of Father Moon. It was a very spirit-filled day when we attended the matching ceremony in the library of the Belvedere estate. I was asked by Father Moon if I wanted to have theological discussions with my future wife or if she should just have a good heart. My answer was that a good heart is more important than intellectual education, and this was the way I met Elisabeth.

A few months after our Blessing in marriage and at the end of my two-year education at UTS, being a graduate of the first class in 1977,

we moved to Toronto, Canada, where I continued my graduate studies in theology. I was accepted into the Toronto School of Theology where different faiths pooled their faculty members. My school was the Institute of Christian Thought, which at that time was part of the University of St. Michael's College. One faculty member was Professor Herbert Richardson, who helped me in my academic work and who later became my thesis advisor.

Both of our children, Christopher and Diesa, were born at the Toronto Western Hospital in 1978 and 1980, respectively. Our children taught us a lot about God's heart and how to be good parents despite our own limitations. Our time in Canada brings back good memories of experiencing God's guidance while establishing our family and preparing for my teaching mission.

The first president of UTS, Dr. David S.C. Kim, sent us a VHS video player so we could show the professors of St. Michael's College and other interested people the latest video-tapes about our movement. We had many evenings in our small apartment on Charles Street where we invited professors and students of St. Michael's College, introducing them to the teachings of our True Parents. One professor commented that the time would come when our teaching would show its power by uniting all religions.

Building my marriage with Elisabeth and raising our children became for me the path of discovering the heart of God. I soon realized that beyond all my theological studies and intellectual pursuits, it is through the experience of loving human relationships, and in particular family life, that God wants to be present among us. No matter how much I might be attracted to the external world with all its excitement, what really counted was the internal transformation of heart according to God's original ideal. What we have to learn in this physical world is the love of parents toward their children, which is the same kind of love our Heavenly Parent has toward all of us as human beings. Just as

children reciprocate the love of their parents through filial piety, we ourselves need to show our love toward our Creator by living according to His will.



Seidel family (from left: Dietrich, Elisabeth, Diesa, Christopher)

My son Christopher finished his studies in computer science at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, and developed additional interests in spirituality and natural healing. He now lives in San Francisco and uses his knowledge of information technology (IT) for his professional life. Diesa, who is two years younger than her brother, studied psychology and graduated from Marist College, also in the town of Poughkeepsie. She had a career playing professional basketball in Europe and is now interested in advancing the education of young girls worldwide. Currently she is living in San Diego, California, and

has a job as a physical education teacher at a private French/American school.

During my graduate studies in Canada, I developed a keen interest in topics related to marriage and family, not just from a theological viewpoint but also in terms of the practical skills of relationship building. Here were the roots for developing courses on marriage and family and the marriage enrichment seminars I conducted together with Elisabeth. We founded a home business, Life Enrichment Enterprises, helping couples with their marriage relationship and child rearing.

In the summer of 1987, after finishing my doctorate in theology, together with my family I moved back to Barrytown, where I started a full time-teaching position at UTS and taught theology and related subjects for 12 years. While teaching theology, I also developed an interest in philosophy and the emerging field of science and religion. John Templeton, a skilled American-born investor, made it his personal goal to promote the establishment of courses on science and religion in American universities by providing prize money for new courses in this area. In 1996, I won the Templeton Prize for developing a syllabus for the course “Science and Religion.” I also taught courses related to psychology, philosophy, and science at such places as Marist College (Poughkeepsie), Webster University (Vienna, Austria), and the International University (Vienna, Austria), as well as mathematics at Bridgeport International Academy (Bridgeport, Connecticut).

Through my teaching career I found that our True Parents, in their capacity as the Second Coming of Christ, see us helping each other to realize our unique, original potential. We are called to use our original gifts not only on the individual and family levels, but also on the level of our common higher purpose to build a peaceful global society in which we will all experience the abundance of divine love.

Dietrich Seidel, 2014

Public Sermons

Dr. Seidel was asked to share spiritual guidance with the public at a number of venues. They include educational institutions where he taught, such as Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, and New Eden Academy (now called Bridgeport International Academy) in Bridgeport, Connecticut, as well as on local radio and television programs. Several of these sermons are included in this first part of this collection.

These sermons cover a variety of topics. Several relate to the issues of marriage and family, Dr. Seidel's research interest. They include preparation for marriage, improving communication in marriage, and establishing a God-centered family. Also included are a discussion of the mysteries of Christian theology and a short reflection following the tragic attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

The audiences to whom he gave these sermons are also varied. The first was broadcast on a local television network in California. This address to a diverse but spiritually aware audience reveals Dr. Seidel's training as a theologian and his life-long quest to understand God and God's will for human beings.

The second sermon, on "God and Friendship," is to young people, high school students at the New Eden Academy. This college preparatory high school began by serving Unificationist families, offering a safe boarding school environment for "Blessed Children," second generation Unificationists. Dr. Seidel addresses them as young people well versed in Divine Principle and discusses how we are to grow and mature with the goal of fulfilling God's ideal of true love.

The next sermon was given to another group of young people, this time somewhat older Unificationists who were attending a marriage

preparation workshop. Specifically, the workshop was designed to prepare them for the Holy Marriage Blessing. Again, Dr. Seidel's studies of theology as well as marriage and family provide a unique perspective on this momentous task.

Dr. Seidel was invited to speak on local radio stations, and two sermons are included from these. The first was in Kingston, New York, which is a small town in the Mid-Hudson Valley close to the UTS campus in Barrytown. The second was on a radio station in the Caribbean island of Aruba, which he and his wife visited. Both talks include sincere guidance on how to improve the marriage relationship, bringing God into its center.

Following the tragic terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, several local religious leaders were asked to speak at Marist College in Poughkeepsie. Dr. Seidel, as a professor at the college, was included. Those who gathered for spiritual guidance at that time were naturally in shock, many of them knowing people who worked in or near the World Trade Center in New York City. They sought comfort and understanding and spiritual guidance at this difficult time. Dr. Seidel's unique understanding of God's love for humankind despite the evil perpetrated by human beings, and the origin and solution to that evil, is enlightening.

Unlocking the Mysteries of Christian Theology

“The Defining Moment” television show in California

I would like to begin with a defining moment in my life that took place in my earliest childhood. I always feel moved to share this experience which I remember like it was a week ago. It concerns the time after World War II. In 1946 my mother went with my sister and myself over the border from Austria to Germany. We had to do it in the middle of the night, not to be seen. All of a sudden, the lights came on and a soldier was there with a machine gun and stopped us! And here I was, a little tot, three years old, screaming at the top of my voice “*Bitte nicht schiessen!*” which means “Please don’t shoot!” It transformed something in my own spirit to be concerned about overcoming fear, overcoming enmity, and working for peace and wholeness in this world. In a way it is a direction I received for my later life when I eventually studied theology, seeking to do God’s will for our time.

When I was 25 years of age I came in contact with the Divine Principle, which is a revelation given to Reverend Sun Myung Moon. I studied it and I found enormous insight and applied it to my theological studies. Ever since I have found a deepening of my understanding of biblical truth and also contemporary theological debate.

To begin today’s topic of unlocking mysteries of Christian theology, I will begin with the mystery which has to do with God’s omnipotence. If God is all-powerful and perfect just as He is, what difference does it make if we love God or not? It’s a very good question. The first answer which comes to my mind is that traditional Christian theology understands the creation as the result of the outpouring of God’s love. Out of this infinite love of God then creation is sort of a by-product. God in Himself is always perfect and self-sufficient, and

all-powerful. Within that framework of understanding God, God is not in any need of human response.

Still, we have the commandments to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves, the two great commandments. The question then is what difference does our response to God make? The answer to that is that we need to revise the whole notion of perfection and omnipotence.

Perfection and omnipotence can only be understood in the view of perfecting the ideal of love between God and human beings; that this is a relationship, a partnership. If God created us for an ultimate experience of His love as His partners, then God gave to us all the qualities which are in His character and in His heart. That means that we are created in His image and we reflect in every possible way God's character. I am speaking about the original intention, how God intended us to be. We may have gone astray and may not have fulfilled that, but in terms of a potential, who we are in our original being, we should be fully the image of God and live in this partnership of love with God.

Obviously, if we have a partnership of love then God endows us also with the freedom to respond to His love. As much as there was freedom in God to create or not to create, to create as He likes and as He did, He passed on that quality of freedom to us so that our response to Him could be genuine; there could be a genuine loving response. We see that God's omnipotence includes a self-limitation, because if He gives full freedom to human beings He passes on that quality of a free response to love to human beings. Then, human beings are free to respond to God's love or not, as we see in our society. We see God's omnipotence is qualified by the gift of human freedom. This is part of the nature of love. Otherwise love wouldn't be genuine in its response.

Also, God's perfection has to be understood in the view that God seeks perfection in His relationship with human beings. Only once the

loving relationship between God and human beings is in place, and is fulfilled, then God's own perfection is accomplished. In other words, God is perfecting His own being through the perfection of human beings, for the sake of accomplishing the ideal of love. That is hard to fathom. But at least we understand that the mystery of God in relationship to human beings is connected with the mystery of love. The more serious we are to discover the mystery of love, then the more profound answer of our intended relationship with God is revealed.

The next issue I want to talk about concerns the trinity of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Many believers struggle with how they can ever hope to overcome their own human limitations and frailties. How can we be perfect like Jesus, given that we as human beings are not part of that Holy Trinity as Jesus is?

The Holy Trinity doctrine is the result of about five centuries of council decisions, the seven ecumenical councils, starting with the Council of Nicea. The struggle was to define the person of Jesus in relationship to God, and to have an understanding of the Holy Spirit as he came to inspire the apostles to be there at the moment when the Christian church was born, the advent of Pentecost. All this is recorded in the Bible. The question was how to understand God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Those ecumenical councils came up with the final definition of the trinity, which in a nutshell says Jesus is the son of God, the only begotten son of God, one essence, of the same essence as the Father. Actually, the Greek word is *ousia*, which means substance, the same divine substance. What it means is Jesus and God are within the Trinity. Therefore, no matter how human Jesus is, obviously he lived as a human being, he still is something special, distinguishing himself from the rest of humanity by being the son of God and having the divine substance. The Holy Spirit, in the same manner, is of the divine substance. Therefore, there is this Holy Trinity—three beings,

one divine substance. That is a constant mystery, it's a mystery of the Christian faith.

Now, as I said before, if we use the ideal of love which God intended to accomplish as the reason for creation as a whole, then it is possible, at least in my view, to unlock that mystery of the trinity. What is God's intention in creating, and how does the whole concept of the trinity answer this question of our ultimate purpose? To make a long story short, first we have to understand that the trinity expresses a partnership, a relationship. It is God the Father relating to the Son. And it is a relationship of love; it's the loving relationship between father and son. Now Jesus comes as this supreme manifestation of God's person, and is that partner in love toward God.

For us as human beings, we are in the position of being alienated from God because of the Human Fall. We are in a sinful condition, so we look up to Jesus and God as being in that supernatural realm, the divine realm. The difficulty is how to connect, how to understand the ideal of creation in terms of our being; what we should accomplish as human beings.

The trinity in a nutshell reflects the relationship between God the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus and the Holy Spirit reflect a polarity in God; the two aspects of God are manifested here within the trinity. If I go back to the beginning of creation, the polarity of God is reflected in Adam and Eve, the first human beings. They should have been the expression of God's being, as man and woman, perfect masculinity and perfect femininity. Adam and Eve in their loving relationship would have represented and reflected God's love in perfection. That was the ideal, the intention of God, that He would live with human beings in that trinity, in a trinitarian relationship. The two in oneness of Adam and Eve would have expanded, or would have been fulfilled, through the three in oneness between God and human beings.

Now we have Jesus come to fulfill the Adamic mission, as the Second Adam. He would then fulfill the masculine aspect of God. The Holy Spirit you could say, by way of analogy, is some counterpart on the feminine side, the expression of God's femininity. The Christian mystics especially interpret the being of the Holy Spirit as feminine. Now we get a glimpse that the trinity reflects, or is an answer to, the original ideal of creation, what God intended us to be. The oneness between God and humankind, in terms of God being the center of the loving relationship between husband and wife in a God-centered marriage where God's love can be fully expressed, that is the unfolding of the mystery of the trinity. It takes time and effort to fathom that mystery. But we are living in the time when that revelation, that opening up of our understanding about the trinity, comes to fruition.

Returning to the Genesis account, Christian theology emphasizes the act of disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as the origin of evil. How are we to understand the symbolism in the story of the Human Fall and what does it reveal about the nature of Original Sin? If we would have a more profound answer to the issue of the Human Fall it would teach us where we have to correct our character, change our conduct, to love as sons and daughters of God and to overcome that original alienation.

In the Biblical record about the Human Fall in Genesis 2 and 3, first we read about God's commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We read about the two trees, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And we read about the serpent who is speaking. Obviously, there are symbols here which have a very distinct meaning. Very briefly, I would say the tree of life is a symbol for perfected Adam, the goal we should achieve, total oneness with God, being an instrument of God's love. Then the tree of knowledge of good and evil is a symbol for Eve. There are two trees in the garden, there are two human beings in the garden, so there is this

parallel. Eve, in her state of growth, would she bear the fruit of goodness or the fruit of evil? There were still two possibilities. Eve in her growth stage was the other symbolic tree.

The fruit of the tree is Eve's love. What is the fruit of human beings? It is to reflect God's love. We are created for that purpose. The fruit of the tree is the purpose of the tree, to bear that fruit. The fruit of human beings ultimately is to bear the fruit of love. Eve's love in this case is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The serpent, as we read in the Bible, is a speaking animal. It is a symbol for an angelic being, in this case the archangel Lucifer, who then tempts Eve. What did God say? Do not eat of the fruit? He turns that around, twists the word of God, and tempts Eve to eat of the fruit.

Here we have a temptation, which is more than leading to a disobedience, it's indicating that the whole Human Fall has to do with the misuse of love, abusive love. In consequence, as the Fall unfolds it is abusive sexual love. The archangel tempted Eve into an illicit sexual relationship. Then Adam and Eve, also in an illicit way, prematurely, united sexually. From there the fallen condition of human beings came about.

You could say, this is not really written exactly like that in the Bible, this is just symbolically prepared. But if you look right after the Fall, what is the reaction of Adam and Eve? If they had eaten a literal fruit, maybe an apple or banana or orange, doesn't matter which fruit, what would they have done? If I do something wrong I want to hide what is wrong. Adam and Eve should have hidden their mouths, right, very simple. But what were they hiding? They hid their private parts, their sexual parts. So, here's the question. Was the transgression the literal eating of a fruit or was it an abuse of their sexual powers, their sexual drive? The answer is that Adam and Eve transgressed against God's word by eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil at an

inopportune moment, in an immature state, and that caused a fallen condition, alienation.

God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. This means that we are alienated. We cannot connect with God as we were supposed to, and we are suffering in this turmoil of feeling guilt, shame, and sin. That was not intended by God. It is the reaction to our disobedience of course. But it's disobedience in the realm of accomplishing God's ideal in a thwarted way, an abusive way. It was an attempt to accomplish love, not love centered on God but love centered on the fallen archangel, which then became Satan. The whole doctrine of Satan and evil has to do with abusive love, abusive sexuality.

God originally gave us the gift of sexuality to be consummated in a God-centered marriage as husband and wife, and then propagate children of goodness. That original plan was not fulfilled and humankind has suffered from that point on. The next question is how to be redeemed from this suffering condition, from this alienated condition from God?

The teaching which we find in traditional Christianity on salvation says that Jesus' crucifixion was pre-ordained. But if this was the will of God that Jesus die, that he be crucified, that this was the way to redeem humankind, then why was Judas Iscariot considered a traitor instead of a hero? And why did Jesus ask his father, God, in the Garden of Gethsemane, if it be possible let this cup pass from me? Why did he ask that question if it was God's will?

Some theologians say, he showed his human nature. Here he showed he was fully human by expressing the desire that the cup of the cross, the suffering, would be taken from him. But it is also said that it was already in God's counsel that the crucifixion had to happen in order to find salvation. Now, if I am the Messiah and I know that the only way to save all humankind for all eternity is by going to the cross and

making that offering, it's unimaginable that I would then doubt that divine plan and utter a plea for an alternate path around that suffering.

We cannot imply that the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was out of human weakness, to show the humanity of Jesus. Rather, it was a desperate plea by Jesus to find an alternate way to build the Kingdom of God in his own time, and not to prolong the path of restoration for another 2,000 years, as it turned out. That is the first point. Jesus was definitely totally determined to fulfill God's will. If it would have brought ultimate full salvation to humankind he would have gladly gone on the cross. But he hesitated because he knew there would be another period of long suffering. As it turned out, there was enormous suffering for the Christians, enormous suffering for the Jews, and for humankind as a whole trapped in our fallen condition.

To go a step further, if we seek an alternative, we see that God intended Jesus to build the Kingdom of God. Jesus' first announcement when he started his mission was, repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. His whole intention was to build that original creation as it should have been before the Human Fall. He wanted to bring back that original purity and goodness that God wanted to express in relationship to human beings.

Jesus hoped to fulfill that original purpose and he needed the cooperation of his people. He could not do it all by himself. The next step was to find the cooperation of his contemporaries. But that cooperation of his contemporaries dwindled away and ended up in rejection of Jesus, even to the point that his disciples rejected him. You can read that in the New Testament: Jesus was all by himself in understanding God's plan. The only way that he could do something in this desperate situation was to go the way of suffering, and go the way of the cross in order to lay a condition for the spiritual salvation of humankind. Physical salvation has to be accomplished in a future time. Therefore, he spoke about the Second Coming. The doctrine of the Second Coming, I would

say, for all theologians, systematic theologians, that should mean that Jesus wanted to do more in his lifetime. If he had accomplished everything already, why speak about the Second Coming?

Today we say we achieve salvation by accepting the Messiah, by loving him, by serving him. What we hear today is, you want to be saved? Then love Jesus, follow him, be his disciples. This is a truth which is true today and so it has to have been true 2,000 years ago. We cannot say, today it's true but 2,000 years ago was an exception: Then we should have rejected him, we should have despised him, because that's how God wanted salvation to happen. That is totally inconsistent. It cannot be the case. Salvation is accomplished by accepting the Messiah, by uniting with him and loving him. That's what Jesus' contemporaries should have done. Then the Kingdom of God could have happened in his lifetime. Because of the rejection, God had to provide the alternative path of the suffering of Jesus, which then eventually brought spiritual salvation with the hope of full redemption on the physical plane through the Second Coming.

Now, let's look at the Second Coming. Are Christians mistaken to expect that Jesus of Nazareth will return himself by coming on the clouds in the sky? Is there another interpretation? There is one precedent to the question of the fulfillment of the mission of a central person, like the Messiah. That is John the Baptist who came in the power and glory of Elijah. The second coming of Elijah was accomplished through John the Baptist. Jesus himself confirmed that. John the Baptist was obviously a different person from Elijah, but both were one in the mission to prepare the way for the Lord. That is a pattern in the Bible. If some mission cannot be fulfilled, someone else comes. In terms of mission it is the same mission, but it's a new person.

In terms of Jesus' mission, Jesus will cooperate with one person at the Second Coming and confer his mission to that person. The understanding that a new person, who has a new name, would come at the

end time to actually build the Kingdom of God, that understanding is very consistent with biblical theology. Revelation 2:17 says: “I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.” Revelation is the last book of the New Testament. It speaks about apocalyptic events, the end times, and the Second Coming. The notion of a new name and a new revelation, a new understanding of God’s will, all that comes together here.

Jesus will cooperate with someone who works in that messianic mission, in that Adamic mission, to set up the original ideal. This is not just limited to individuals, that the individual person gains salvation, but it is now expanded to the couple. It was Adam and Eve who fell, so Adam and Eve need to be restored. Christ comes as the second Adam, Jesus, but because of his rejection the full salvation was prolonged another 2,000 years. We have the resurrected Jesus and the Holy Spirit as spiritual parents for Christians for the rebirth. Then the substantial accomplishment of the ideal of God in the physical plane is ushered in through the Second Coming. Here we have True Parents as the model for rebirth and salvation; a man and a woman accomplishing the original mission of the first ancestors.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that while God is almighty, omnipotent, just as traditional theology tells us, our response to God is also important. The all-loving God created us, human beings, as an outpouring of His love in the expectation of a loving relationship with us. The ideal of that loving relationship is expressed in the great commandments to love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. God is to be our first love, so, no matter what, we are to be in a loving relationship with God. Adam and Eve should have become loving husband and wife, with God’s love at the center of their relationship. Then they would have given birth to children who would expand that love, God’s love, and create the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The source of evil in this world

is none other than the abuse of love by Adam and Eve, led into temptation by Lucifer.

We need to love God, and to love each other with the pure love of God. Our responsibility as human beings, created in God's image, is to respond to God with love, and create loving relationships, and a world of peace and true love will follow. This is how we apply theology to our daily life.

God and Friendship

To teenage students at New Eden Academy in Bridgeport, Connecticut
October 17, 1998

Let me start with Father Moon's words:

You know the tale of the ant and the grasshopper, don't you? Which do you respect? Do you expect to live just dancing and covered with dew and singing while looking at the morning sun like a grasshopper, or to work morning and evening without resting even in the hot weather like the ants? They are black from working so hard in the sunshine. When you see the ants which became black and thin, with a thin waist because of hard working, do you want to become the ants or the grasshopper? The ants became black because they worked very hard. Do you understand? The grasshoppers became big only in their mouths.

Then when you educate your children do you tell them to live like the ant or the grasshopper? Which do you say they should live up to? Why is that? Then is it correct thinking that because our youth is the grasshopper age we should play now, and afterwards when we become old then we should become like the ant? Or is it right that when we are young we should live our life like the ant and later we should live like the grasshopper? Which is right? Is it right that we should live like the ant when we are young? Is that true? After you become old do we have energy to sing and play? You must know that even if you are only able to smile after having worked hard it is still better than singing and relaxing all day.

These are Father's words on our general upbringing, and that in many ways determines how we think about our lives. Can we invest ourselves, can we have a joyful attitude about studying, about growing, forming our character, or are we constantly preoccupied with the

entertainment part of life? Of course, it's good, but as we see in this little parable, to start out being grasshoppers is not right.

In relation to the topic of friendship, we ask ourselves, what is important in friendship, which direction do we go, how do we build it? If we bring that willingness to work hard in our young life, to train ourselves, to reach our goal in life, then obviously friendship is shaped by that desire.

My topic today is God and friendship—how our friendships are related to our relationship with God. The first question is: How do I identify God's presence in my friendship? Do I ever think about that? You could say to be friends with someone is to feel love, to feel compassion, to feel a sense of togetherness. In that relationship with our friends there is something more we want to accomplish. We want not just to run after pleasure and entertainment, but friendships become deep and meaningful if we help each other to reach our common goal. Many times, especially in school, if you have a good friend who is helping you out, you work together, you study together. If there is a meaningful component in your relationship then the friendship grows and becomes deeper. Especially in school life, every day we are challenged, we have a heavy schedule, so many homework assignments and all that, but if you have the sense of solidarity, you are together with your friends and you work on your common goal then you feel joy, you feel fulfillment, you feel a deeper sense of your own identity.

In that sense, friendship in relationship to God means God wants us to achieve our common goal, to fulfill the Three Blessings.² As we know from the Divine Principle, the First Blessing is to become mature as individuals, and that is exactly the phase of friendship.

² In Genesis 1:28 God gives Adam and Eve the Three Blessings: to be fruitful, to multiply, and to have dominion over all living things.

Loving brothers and sisters is the first step in training ourselves to experience friendship. Our closest friends are our brothers and sisters. Now on what basis do brothers and sisters love one another? They can love one another because their parents love them. If we love our brothers and sisters then we know we make our parents happy. We want to give joy to our parents so we extend that love and care to our brothers and sisters.

The second step is that as we grow up we see that our physical parents are not our ultimate parents. Ultimately, we have God as our vertical parent. If we feel close to God then our sense of friendship can expand, can embrace more people. We don't just love those who are next to us, our own brothers and sisters, or those who are exactly like us. If we feel God's heart, His love for all humankind, we can train ourselves to love people who are very different from us, from different countries and cultures, speaking different languages, but we can love them as God's children. Because of God's love for us, and because of the experience of our own parents' love, we can develop our hearts to embrace people from all over the world, to be open to friendships with other people.

As we grow up, our friendships should become more meaningful. We should help one another to reach our common goal. The First Blessing speaks about accomplishing our individual perfection, being one with God, feeling the heart of God, having total unity between our mind and body, having self-discipline, doing sports, being strong in our body so that our mind can grow well. We have to be healthy and strong, so we train ourselves to be good heavenly sons and daughters for God. That is our goal as individuals. As friends, we should always have in mind we want to help each other in accomplishing that. We don't want to be the grasshoppers. We want to be like ants, working in that persistent way to grow and accept God's direction for our lives.

Then, as we grow older, we realize that we are moving on to fulfill the Second Blessing—to multiply, which means marriage and establishing a family. In that adolescent stage, that is the time where we prepare for our future spouse. We should have that in mind. Our friendships help us to relate to people with different personalities and characteristics. We develop these skills to relate to people who are different from us, and who are different from our immediate brothers and sisters. Our hearts become bigger, and in that way, we prepare for our future spouse. We also keep our own integrity, our honesty, our purity of heart. That is the precious gift we prepare for our future spouse. In that sense, friendship is preparation for marriage, for the Holy Marriage Blessing we all want to receive.

What is so important in our time and age is that we keep in mind that friendship should be primarily between boys with boys and girls with girls. Boys and girls interact of course, they talk to each other, but it should be always in a group setting. A boy should not single out just one girl and spend time alone with her. That is an overall important rule to observe. It's for our own protection and it's how we can grow. That's how we can have the right feelings toward the opposite sex.

If we are really friends with someone we respect them. We know they also have to accomplish God's goal, they also have to grow as individuals and form their character, and we want to help each other to accomplish that. Therefore, we are respectful, boys to girls and girls to boys. That mutual respect prepares us for our future spouse. Therefore, be very careful in the relationship between boys and girls, be very respectful. When you talk to each other always make sure it is in a group setting. Don't walk off alone just one boy and one girl. That is a precaution and that should be kept in mind. You do that because you are really friends with the other person. That is the internal respect we should develop. That is the best preparation for fulfilling the Second Blessing.

What is important is exactly the restoration of love. That is really the core. In friendship that should also be the constant goal. How can I turn around the abusive love of the fallen world which surrounds us and move on to accomplishing the ideal of God's love? In doing that, if we grow into that understanding, that awareness of what is God's will for my life, then what we become is the salt of the earth, what the Bible speaks about. We become like salt, we can penetrate even the fallen culture around us. We can uphold that heavenly standard of love.

We should be the salt of the earth. What is the salt doing? The salt can penetrate all other tastes in the food. It's strong, it's giving that new direction, it makes us enthusiastic about God's will and how to apply it in our lives. Keep in mind that God's ideal wants to be accomplished. We want to grow and become the salt of the earth.

If that is always in the depths of our heart as the guiding force then we can do well. Then we discover the true meaning of friendship: It means I help my friend to achieve that standard of true love. Whatever I do, all the activities, all the conversations, I have to be careful to say something uplifting and encouraging that helps my friend to grow. And we all can grow in that awareness of accomplishing God's ideal.

Here are ten points, ten thoughts on this topic. First, how to identify God's presence in my friendship. That is dependent on your personal experience. You may feel guided to someone, feel someone can be a good friend, someone who is teaching you more about God through his example, inspiring you, and you want to be like him because he's a good example. There could be that dimension in your friendship.

The second point is, what can I do on a daily basis to develop my friendship with God? If God is my best friend, how will this influence my friendship with other people? That's again something which would teach us some good habits of faith. God is not just my creator, He wants

to live with me, He wants to be my best friend. He wants to share His heart and His love with every one of us. He wants to embrace us as His sons and daughters. What can I possibly do? For example, the other day I thought if God is my best friend, how do I treat Him? One thing would be, in the morning when you wake up your first thought is to Heavenly Father. Say, thank you Heavenly Father for another day. Just a little sentence like that, a little prayer like that, and ask God to be right there in your heart and to guide you throughout the whole day. If I miss my little morning prayer I feel my whole day starts on the wrong foot, it doesn't feel right. So, to make God your best friend that would be one way to start, to have that first thought, first offering: God, thank you for this beautiful day, this chance to develop as your son or daughter, and please be with me throughout this day.

Number three: As God is our vertical parent we should conduct our personal friendship with the consciousness or awareness to bring joy to God. Our ultimate goal is always how to make God joyful. Our love for God then becomes the reason for understanding that all human beings can be our friends. That means we expand our heart, we embrace people from different cultures and backgrounds. How do I develop my heart to accept people from different backgrounds as my friends? That could mean that I make an extra effort to be friends with someone I feel not attracted to, he's not kind, or he's different from me. But instead I ask the person how are you feeling, can we share a meal together? That makes you grow, that expands your heart. All of a sudden you can embrace someone who you thought initially is not so much your friend because he is so different. But then you may discover precious aspects of this other person's personality. That is another step to take, and only in that way can we hope to have all humankind united as brothers and sisters with God as our parent. We develop that higher consciousness, higher awareness, that we all as human beings are one big family under

God as our Heavenly Parent. It has to start small. It has to start with the give and take in our daily interaction as friends, as human beings.

The fourth point: How does the biblical imagery of the twelve pearl gates representing twelve types of human personality relate to my understanding of friendship? That is connected to the previous question. The pearl gates are from Revelation 21:21, “The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl.” It’s a biblical metaphor, that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven there are twelve gates and these twelve gates represent different personality types. People have different characters. Some are more boisterous, outgoing, initiators; others are more reflective and quiet. We have all kinds of personalities, and we want to embrace these various personalities. The twelve pearl gates is a biblical metaphor to explain that. So, points three and four somewhat go together.

Number five: Friendship has its roots in the fraternal or siblings’ realm of heart. Because we love our parents we learn to love our brothers and sisters. At the same time, we are trained to overcome jealousy or sibling rivalry. Do I find some connections between my love for my family and my friendships with my peers? The point here is what we learn in our family, to be tolerant, to be encouraging toward brothers and sisters, that experience is transferred to our friendships. Overcoming jealousy, that’s important. I am jealous if my brother gets more than I do. We need to overcome that and to develop the pious and loving heart toward our parents. That will help us in our friendships not to feel jealous, not to see other as rivals, but always see each other as friends, as partners on the common journey to accomplish God’s will. Your own experience in your family, that experience you have as brothers and sisters, then relates to your friendships.

Number six: Love between brothers and sisters expands into friendship, and ultimately into the social virtues of tolerance and

cooperation. It's not just between two of you, whoever is your closest friend, or three or four of you who form a group of friends. What we learn from a heavenly standard of friendship is all the values for good citizenship as we relate to other people in the same way. We have to train ourselves; it doesn't come by itself. We have to see it as a precious opportunity to develop these qualities, to become good citizens by being able to relate to our friends in a heavenly way. Develop the virtues of tolerance and cooperation, seeing what is important is to achieve the higher common goal. It's not just my own desires, and my immediate likes and dislikes, or wanting to be entertained and have all kinds of fun, which is okay, but we need to direct all of these wishes to accomplishing our common higher goal. That's happening all the time in life. If we want to have good career, we need to have that kind of discipline to relate well to our future boss. These social skills are already developed in our friendships here in school.

Number seven: In what ways do the contrasting biblical stories of Cain and Abel on the one hand and Jacob and Esau on the other hand illustrate the task for restoring human relationships? And what are the lessons I can learn for building my friendships? Now that addresses directly the reality of our fallen nature. We are struggling with our fallen nature; we don't easily feel that close to God. We have to make a strong decision to love God and to walk the path of truth. We see that Cain and Abel, the ones who should have been best friends as brothers, the first brothers in human history, should have worked out their relationship. But, Cain killed Abel and the providence was prolonged because of that. The ideal of friendship, cooperation, and true love was not realized in that relationship. Later on, with Jacob and Esau, what did they do differently? Jacob got the birthright, he took it away from Esau, and Esau had all the reasons in the world to be mad at his brother. But Jacob made many conditions, he suffered, step by step. He wanted to make unity with his brother Esau. We read a very moving story about

how Jacob could win the heart of his brother, by serving him unconditionally, by loving him, stimulating his original mind, love for God, love for the higher purpose. Based on that the two of them could embrace and forgive each other and love each other. That was a reversal of the situation of Cain and Abel. Therefore, Jacob and Esau is such an important story in the Bible. It tells us how we can overcome the most difficult situations caused by our fallen nature. We have to face the reality of our fallen nature. It is not that easy to make good friends because we are always motivated by selfish ideas and selfish feelings. My friendship should be genuine and heavenly, so I will contain myself, overcome these selfish thoughts and feelings and I will constantly strive to uplift my friend to walk that path of restoration and to find God. That would be the true standard of friendship. Keep in mind these two stories, read up on them again, reflect on them. That will help to find some input for personal experience of friendship.

Number eight: How would I define the purpose of friendship? Whatever we do in life if there is not a clear purpose we are missing out on the real joy of it, the deeper meaning of it. The purpose of friendship is to help one another to fulfill the Three Blessings, to do the will of God. True friendship expresses God-centeredness. Then our relationship is meaningful and totally fulfilling. Keep that purpose in mind. This needs to be done on a daily basis, we need to make it our own.

Number nine: Can I develop a deep friendship with someone who is in a position of authority toward me? That is a very interesting point. Can I be best friends with my parents? At least initially we may feel they are not my best friends. Then on second thought, we see they raised me up, they gave so much to me, they invested so much, maybe I could turn around and I could be more friendly with them. I could try to be their best friend. Think about that. Maybe it's easy with some teachers to be good friends, you get along, and others you don't. The challenge is to make friends with teachers who are very tough, and to

see the reason he or she is tough with me is that they want me to learn something. Then you can be grateful. If you feel gratitude toward someone, that is a foundation for being good friends. You can develop friendships with parents, teachers, or leaders in the community. That takes some soul searching, how to make friends with someone in a position of authority. That is all connected with your own growth of character. If you accomplish that, if you can really understand that precious aspect in your own life and develop your relationships, that would allow you to grow beyond where you are right now.

The last point, number ten, is a very important point: What would it mean for me to create heavenly peer pressure through my relationship with my friends? As we make friends, we form little groups, we have certain common interests and a way of living, and that creates a certain pressure to conform to these ideals and goals. That is known as peer pressure. But how to develop a heavenly peer pressure? How to help others to accomplish God's will and to move on in the development of our character? In doing that we are setting a new tradition. Usually peer pressure is in the wrong direction. People abuse their health, they smoke, take drugs, and there is peer pressure to do that. To restore that bad fallen peer pressure, we need to find our heavenly goal and encourage each other to live the Principle and help each other and be friends in the genuine sense. Heavenly peer pressure is something to think about. What in our daily lives can help my friend to develop as God's son or daughter?

These are just ten thoughts to guide you. Filter out a few of these thoughts and digest the topic and make it your own. Patiently search your heart with that topic in mind and come up with some very good insights. That's really what helps you. Because you come up with these ideas yourself and this is where God can speak to you.

The Significance of the Holy Marriage Blessing

To young adult Unificationists preparing for Holy Marriage Blessing

January 31, 1999

Before I start, I want to introduce myself. My wife Elisabeth and I received the Holy Marriage Blessing in 1977, so we have 21 years behind us and it's the next 21 years coming up! My wife is from France and I am from Austria, so we represent united Europe on American soil! We have two children, Christopher who is now 20 and Diesa who is 18. They are both college age and we are facing the phenomenon of the "empty nest." What that means is we fill the nest by loving each other more deeply, having more time to love.

In my studies I always had a passion for the topic of marriage and family. I wrote my doctoral thesis on marriage and family, more from a theological point of view. Ever since, I had my eye on this field with the help of my wife. We see how much is needed to inspire couples, to guide them, to provide workshops. With a little bit of effort any difficult relationship can be improved, and any happy relationship can be made much happier.

I am teaching Theology, Unification Theology and Christian Theology, at the Unification Theological Seminary, that's a part-time job. The other half of my time I spend in Bridgeport at the New Eden Academy. I have been teaching there about a year now and what I discovered is the need for teenagers to receive support in their spiritual lives. Have in mind that our children are the most precious investment. I see now firsthand, being at the high school, how important it is to always care about the next generation.

The topic I want to cover is very simple: It is to understand the Blessing more deeply, to have an experience of the Blessing through

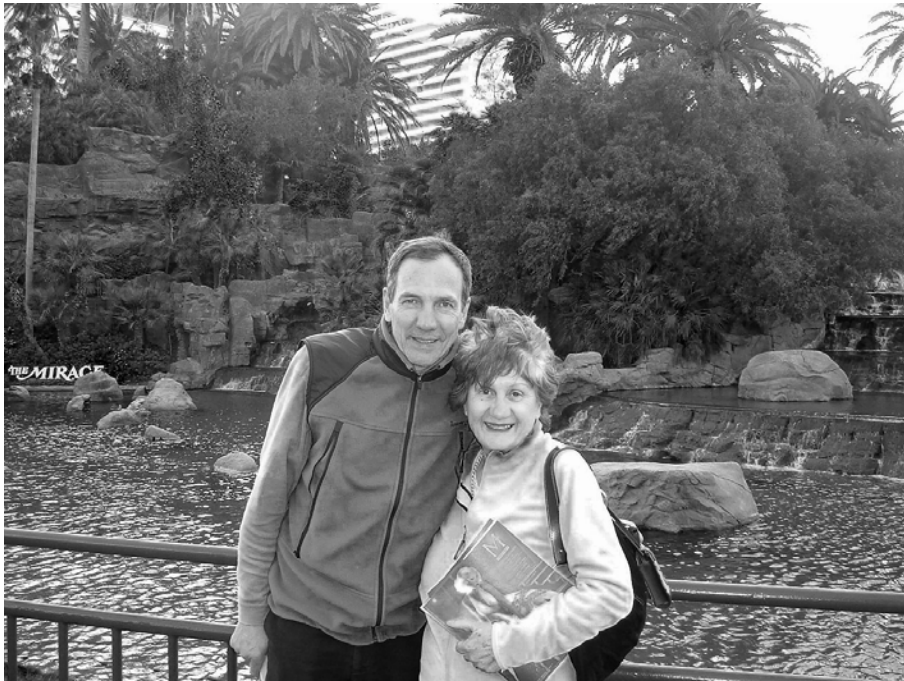
our life of faith, and then to see that experience as our immediate foundation for daily life. Through the activities of our daily life we strengthen our relationship, we become committed, we are faithful, and so all of these aspects work together.

You all studied the Divine Principle, some of you more deeply and more often than others but you have the basics. Then the question is, how do I apply that knowledge of the Principle to my daily life, and especially in my life as a Blessed Couple? The first step is to appreciate the Holy Marriage Blessing itself, to see what is so unique about this Blessing we receive. Why did it not happen earlier? Why is our age the one where we can receive the Blessing?

We know from reading Divine Principle that we are created to fulfill the Three Blessings given to Adam and Eve as recorded in Genesis 1:28. What that means in relationship to God is that we are created as precious object partners for God to accomplish the ideal of true love. How should that work? We as individuals, as man or as woman, cannot fulfill God's ideal. That in itself is already a blow against the present culture which praises individualism. We understand the Principle view of our purpose, that we are created to live as the object partners of God, as man and woman married under the blessing of God, and that only in that unity as husband and wife we can bring happiness and true love and joy to God.

That simple statement, which sums up all the faiths of the earth, and sums up the past history of searching and theologizing and philosophizing, in that one sentence the preciousness of the ideal of God is summarized. That needs to be unpacked in our lives. We need to understand every day anew what it is to live with God as a couple and not just as an individual. Do I do things with the intention of making my spouse happy? Do I care for him or her? In doing that am I aware that I make God happy?

After studying theology for ten years and another twelve years teaching it, twenty-two years of theologizing and philosophizing, I have to say that I think that the highest worship we can offer to God is to love our spouse. That is how we worship God, by loving our spouse.



Dietrich and Elisabeth Seidel, eternal loving couple

You may think this is commonplace, but it's not. It is very profound. Obviously, sometimes it is not that easy to love our spouse. We are part of a certain tradition, culture, lineage; we are carrying something with us, whatever it may be, some transgressions from our own ancestors, our own wrongdoings. Our spouse also carries such things. Our different pasts meet in our marriage. Marriage is an opening up of past wounds and failings. It's the place of healing, and we open up in order for healing to happen. We're not doing it on our own. We know

we can heal because God is with us; God is the one who is most interested that this healing happens. In that sense we are healing not just our own wounds, but the wounds of humankind; it is the summing up of the providence. Therefore marriage, according to Divine Principle, is the most precious union of husband and wife which can bring about the fulfillment of that healing process which we call restoration.

From a Christian viewpoint, the means of salvation is the Holy Marriage Blessing. It's the instrument; it's the very means through which salvation is reaching us. That is salvation in the true sense of liberating the heart of God, liberating ourselves from Satan's bondage, and moving into God's kingdom in that partnership of love with God. That is our starting point for our faith and our starting point for our daily practical life. In other words, we are not preaching creeds and catechisms and doctrines. If we are successful in practicing the little bit we understood about the Principle, that counts much more than reading a lot of books. My wife always says I'm too much into books, I should be more a practical person. I try to move in that direction. The point is that the Principle is a practical guideline. It shows us step by step what needs to be done to liberate the heart of God.

In trying to unfold the ideal of creation we are at the same time setting up our own vision for marriage. We see why we can keep going if it's difficult, because we have a clear vision. If we don't have a vision we are caught by the moment and we are pulled under, whatever the difficulty or problem may be. But if we periodically renew our vision for why we are here and what this marriage union with our spouse really means in front of God, then based on that vision, which means the understanding of God's ideal, we can make a clear goal for our marriage.

I would encourage every one of you to think about that simple exercise of goal setting. Declare your goals for your marriage. You want to love your spouse centered on God. Write it down. Write down, from

your own viewpoint, that you really want to serve your spouse, bring happiness to him or her, that you want to raise your children in the spirit of the Divine Principle and pass on our tradition, that your constant desire is to bring happiness to God. Things like that need to be written out. They may be there in our hearts and minds, latently. To make them real in front of us draws our spirit, and feeds our spirit every day anew, and we can be successful in periods of wilderness experience, which definitely come. The point is we have always a guide with us, we have the Divine Principle and we have our own response to the Principle. We need to personalize the Principle message through our goals for how we want to accomplish our Blessing.

Once that is done, once you have a clear understanding of how you want to treat your spouse, if your spouse does the same then you meet and you share your visions, your goals. Then you adopt from each other what you think is important to accomplish in your marriage. Most of the time those goals will be overlapping. But there are unique responses because we have unique individual lives, which determine how we express our goals for our marriage.

Then the second step is to renew our understanding of the Blessing. We have the ideal in mind, God's ideal for us, but then why do we actually need the Blessing? We need to be clear about that. What is that unique aspect about the Blessing? It has to do with the Fall. If there was no Fall we would automatically be born as God's sons and daughters. We would be full of His blessing, we would live lives in the total embrace of our Heavenly Father, and we wouldn't struggle as we do right now. But the reality of the Fall is that we are carrying it with us through our own fallen nature. We have fallen lineage to respond to, and to undo the knots from the past, and so we need to deal with the reality of our fallen nature in a positive way. I'm not scared because the Fall happened. I want to look my fallen nature in the eye and develop a strategy, something effective, to work on overcoming my fallen nature.



Dietrich and Elisabeth Seidel at home

Start by telling yourself what you bring to your marriage. You can say, I want to bring a total commitment and enthusiasm to overcome

my fallen nature because I don't want my spouse to suffer on account of my fallen nature. You can also ask yourself the question, would I be ready to marry a person who is like me, who has the kind of baggage that I have? I am ready to do that? Most people want a better person. But how can you claim a better person if you're not willing to work on your own fallen nature and overcome it? You don't deserve it. If you're serious in your life of faith, being committed to God, doing good things, working out your fallen nature, that in itself is the foundation for harmonizing with your spouse.

If we just expect our spouse to be better than us and we just kind of, as we say in German, pick the raisins out of the cake, if we have this kind of attitude, it won't work. We should recognize we can only expect a spouse who is on the same level as myself. If he or she has similar faults, then we work it out, we are in this together. That is something to be aware of and to be honest about the reality that we are facing.

It is not enough to project our problems into the distant future of an ideal kingdom. That would just repeat what Christians did for 2,000 years. It's really our calling to show that better loving relationships are possible because of the Blessing. How can that happen? How can we actually be successful at living out God's ideal?

The Holy Marriage Blessing itself is marking the transition from our fallen heritage into being switched to God's lineage, coming to a new foundation where God is the sovereign, where we can be separated from Satan. We may understand it theologically. We read it in the Principle, but we have to personalize these ideas. How do I respond as an individual to this message and how can I appreciate the depth of the Blessing and the preciousness of it by seeing what it actually does? It's not just an act of faith. It means in reality that all the foundations that were laid providentially in the past are now being summed up in the coming of True Parents, fulfilling what Jesus intended to do. Jesus wanted to give the Blessing, as we know, but because of disbelief and

rebellion of his contemporaries around him it did not happen. Now that fruit which God was waiting for so long throughout history, that fruit is now with us through our True Parents. The door is open that we can receive God's love to the fullest, we can accomplish that ideal.

The Blessing is then the summing up of all the providential conditions to allow us to be switched from Satan's lineage to God's lineage. It's the change of lineage. It may sound mysterious because we're not used to thinking in these terms. The problem of the Fall was a problem of accomplishing love. Love was accomplished in the wrong way—it was self-centered, it was centered on Satan. To reverse that means to accomplish God's ideal of love. To do that we need to have the foundation for it; we need to find God's guidance to accomplish that ideal love, which was not accomplished in the beginning of human history.

The Blessing opens up the door to allow us to accomplish what God originally intended us to be. It gives us access to our own original mind. We have something in us longing for that love to happen. We're not striving for something which is extra-terrestrial and impossible, far away. Whoever had a Christian upbringing will know there's this habit of projecting into the future: At the Eschaton, when the Last Days are here, when the Second Coming arrives, then God will eventually turn things around and His sovereignty will come. The Last Days is right now! How much longer shall we wait? The Last Days are with us and we are on that cutting edge. Even if we are only a few here, we know that worldwide things are moving in bigger steps. They are moving in the direction of being able to substantiate God's ideal of true love in our marriage Blessings.

From the most internal point of experience in our lives, the renewal is happening. It is not the renewal of politics or economics or culture, it's the renewal of the heart, of the most intimate relationship, which is the marriage relationship. Here God's desire, His wish, and His longing is now being fulfilled and here the change is happening.

Marriage as the Foundation for World Peace

Radio station in Kingston, New York

February 20, 2000

First, thank you very much for inviting me to speak this morning. For many years my personal interest has been the field of marriage and family. I did my Ph.D. work in marriage and family and I taught classes about it. I have realized more and more that this is the one topic that will really make a difference in our society. I realize that besides academic reflection, there is always the more important part of how to be able to build successful marriages and families in practice.

I am married myself. I have two children. It's a marriage of 23 years now. We were married in 1977. Our children are almost grown up now. To speak a little bit more about my background, I was matched by Reverend Moon to my wife Elisabeth. I am from Austria and she is from France. So here we have an international couple! That's a very unique situation. The matching of international couples provides a foundation for promoting world peace and ideals which we usually don't think about so much. In my married life, I have had the experience of not just being married to my wife but also an experience of something greater than just two people. We are continuously harmonizing two nations, or two cultural backgrounds, and that gives our relationship an added dimension.

Normally in our culture we think, I am getting married, I find a partner, and it's just a personal thing. It's two individuals getting together, deciding to be together in their lives. If you look around, there is a lot of heartache in marriage and family, a lot of breakdown. We see the divorce rate is more than 50 percent. So, this individualistic approach to marriage doesn't seem to work. People are disappointed and so they look for some alternative. The matching and the Holy Marriage

Blessing together with many other couples, that whole process, focuses on that point, that marriage is not just an individual event and that your personal happiness is number one. Of course, that should be there; I don't want to play it down. But that personal happiness can be fully achieved only in the context of a higher purpose in the marriage, and that higher purpose is to contribute to the peace and harmony of society in general. Then we can say, if there's peace and harmony in the family there can be peace and harmony in the world. That correlation is taken quite seriously, that connection between personal happiness and the public good.

I just read up on the understanding of happiness in Aristotle. I'm making a little excursion here to my philosophy class! The thing I want to say here is that happiness is not that individual, personal fulfillment, or fuzzy feeling, or pleasure. Happiness in the true sense has to do with our whole life. If I look back at my life, did I live a good life, did I really contribute to the well-being of society? That's how happiness has to be seen, in that whole context. Happiness is not simply a matter of emotional well-being, but it's a matter of a life well lived.

Happiness is a life well lived. It's a life lived in relation to others within society, furthering the goodness and the stability of society as a whole. This brings up the issue that in a marriage we have our differences as spouses and we have our struggles. Then the question is always, do we see our marriage as the institution which guarantees well-being and stability, and how much do we value that institution of marriage in our personal relationship? What I want to say is, we need to promote much more the attitude that we stand up for the institution of marriage. If we do that as a couple, then all our personal differences can be much better dealt with and we can be much more successful.

By standing up for the institution of marriage, I mean that marriage doesn't have a voice of its own. Marriage has to be promoted by the couple, by the spouses. They both need to say OK, here is an order, a

divine order, which is given into our responsibility. We want to contribute, we want to fulfill it, we want to strengthen it. In that sense you could say marriage as an institution is like a little child: It needs to be nurtured, it needs to be protected. And it needs to find a voice. It needs to speak out for the sake of developing and being strong and stable. The spouses have that responsibility.

I went to Seoul, Korea for the World Culture and Sports Festival last week, and a Holy Marriage Blessing was included in that event. There were many couples involved, at least 10,000 couples from all over the world, more than 100 nations. It was quite an event. That ceremony held in Seoul is exactly the public statement to support the institution of marriage.

Most people would say it looks odd that so many people are married at once. What's the point, why are they doing it? Obviously, our attention is drawn to that event and then we ask, why is it happening? The answer is that it's not enough that the couple has their personal loving relationship but, in the larger context, the institution of marriage needs support. That mass wedding is the public statement which carries that content.

In our culture the institution of marriage is threatened in many ways, we have family breakdown. Right now, we need to make a strong statement for marriage and therefore the mass wedding is to get the attention of the public. But beyond that, there is the internal agenda of promoting marriage by transcending all these various barriers we have in our society. The promotion of good family values is something which concerns all religions.

The Olympic Stadium in Seoul was filled with about 80,000 people in attendance and more than 100 nations represented at the Holy Marriage Blessing. Not only that, but major leaders of the world religions were there and they gave their blessing on the ceremony. There

were representatives from Russian Orthodox, from Catholic faith, from Protestant faith, from Islam and Buddhism. All these world religions were represented and came to offer their blessing to uphold the institution of marriage, to show that God-centered marriage is the key for solving social problems, world problems and so on.

You could say that is a big jump: How can the relationship in marriage have such an impact on world situations or world events and promote world peace? In fact, it does. It's my conviction, and the conviction of many others, that if we can strengthen marriage and have God-centered families, we can have a common ground of harmony and well-being beyond race, culture and religion.

World peace and harmony among nations and races and cultures is essentially grounded in the institution of marriage. If we are really harmonious and loving in our homes then this is the seed and this is the foundation for peace in society and the world at large.

If people learn to live with people of very different backgrounds, like myself and my wife, this is also a big help in becoming universal kind of people, people who are able to bridge between cultures and nations and races and colors, and religions even. It's all connected. You could say, where does it all start? The event in Seoul made this public statement: The whole process of harmonizing society starts with God-centered marriage.

It means we need to invest a lot in our marriage relationship. We need to constantly look at how I can improve it, how I can be more harmonious, how I can make my partner happy. Doing all that is not so that we have just personal fulfillment, but we do it with a consciousness that these acts of kindness in marriage actually contribute to the well-being of society, and to world peace in the long run.

The happiness that everybody hopes for in marriage is not simply something we fall into: They fall in love, they marry, and they live

happily ever afterwards kind of thing. It's something that needs to be invested in, something that needs to be protected, cherished, promoted; something that needs to be built. It doesn't happen by itself and that of course reflects back to the relationship of the spouses. Their loving relationship is not something they fall into, like just falling in love. It is not a situation of infatuation or the dating game that we have now in our society.

Love in its final analysis as a lasting relationship is something we always have to work at and invest in. We could say love in a marriage is to decide to make my partner number one in my life. It's an ongoing decision. That is really what love is. It doesn't take out the romantic element, but it provides the grounding for personal fulfillment. It's not just emotion, there is commitment too. The essence is that commitment to a public dimension of marriage as well as to finding happiness in one's own life. Marriage and family for the sake of the world and world peace for the sake of God.

Let me make one final statement here. In my twenty years of studying theology and philosophy, and of course marriage and family, I am prepared to make one statement: In our relationship with God, whatever religion we may have, we can say that if we really love God and want to serve Him, the highest form of worship, the highest form of approaching God, is to improve our marriage relationship. If we can have that love among us with God in the center, then this is indeed the key to bring restoration and wholeness to the world around us.

Communication in Marriage

Radio station in Aruba

March 17, 2001

I'm very delighted to be here and I will do my best to transfer some wisdom about family building and being effective in improving our marriages. This topic is so all-encompassing and there are so many issues involved that we have to try to focus on a few issues, which actually become practical guidance for everyone who is interested.

Myself, starting from my twenties I would say, I was always interested to research family and marriage issues; also, to see my theology and philosophy studies under that light, and from all the things we do in our daily life to bring joy to God. The one thing that I think that brings the most joy to God is to work on our families and our marriages. If we're involved in that activity, improving our marriage and family life, that opens up the channels for God's love to be with us in our marital relationship and in our family relationships. In some ways it's a fulfillment of every religion; for a Jewish person or a Roman Catholic or a Muslim, our love for God on that level is universal. We can draw God's presence into our life by living out the standard of His love in our marriage building and in our family life.

Let me talk a bit about philosophy. Literally, going back to the ancient Greeks, philosophy means the love of wisdom—that's the literal translation. Then you might say, okay, I know what love means but what does wisdom mean? Wisdom is a form of knowledge, special knowledge. It leads us to what the ancient Greeks called the good life, the happy life. In order to reach that, I need to go through some process of self-examination. It doesn't come easy! We need to put some effort into it. But, as I mature in my understanding of who I am and how I relate to other people, and what my place is in creation, that wisdom

comes to me more and more. It guides me to a good and happy life, which is a life filled with or based on virtues, on good values. This is something we always work on. This is a daily task, that we improve our understanding of the values we live by, having the ability to apply those values in our daily life. This is how we effectively build our marriages and our family life.

Let's look at communication. Communication is a very important skill that we have to know and we have to manage. Communication embraces our whole life, right? We could say all existence is based on communication. We are continuously involved in sharing our feelings, our thoughts, our desires, our needs. We as human beings are always communicating. Even if we do not communicate, we send the message that we do not want to communicate. We are still communicating—we communicate that we do not want to communicate with someone. In that sense, our whole existence is built on that give and take action or communication.

We always see ourselves in what we could call a subjective position. We have something in front of us, some object, someone to talk to, and we have that exchange, that give and take, that communication. It is so basic that usually we don't think about it, don't reflect on how our life is structured, and what dynamic is involved in it. But if you take the first step and say, I want to really understand what it means to communicate well, then I can arrive at a good understanding of myself and be more effective at communicating well.

Communication is just a technique. Then, what do I want to communicate? The content is important. I need to think about this especially if I speak about marriage building. What is the plan, what is the goal I want to accomplish in my marriage? That's very important. Then the second step is the skills to make that plan, or that vision I have for my marriage, to make that real. How do I actually do that in my daily life? How do I find more love in my own heart, more patience, and more

endurance to really understand my partner, to build that deeper relationship? Then communication becomes a joyful, happy, daily state of mind.

This happens not only in my family. I would say that marriage is the deepest and the most fundamental relationship. If that goes well, if I'm a happily married man or a happily married woman, all other forms of communication fall into place. I will be able to have a good relationship with my children, with my boss at work, with my fellow workers, and so on. I will always radiate a certain happy spirit, an inspiring spirit like you say here in Aruba "It's one happy island," right? This becomes reality. It's not just some dream in the distant future. It's not just a motto, not just on a license plate, right?

Unfortunately, not all is happy in Aruba. There are many divorces, even the same number as marriages I am told. Lack of good communication contributes to the breakdown of marriages. I wouldn't say it's the only cause, but it's one of the major causes for marital breakup: lack of communication, or miscommunication, or communication which just has the goal to fulfill my needs instead of considering the needs of my partner.

The good news is that every struggling couple has tools available to improve their relationship. All we need to do is to find commitment in our hearts. A strong decision that the partner I have is the most precious human being and I want to treasure this preciousness, I want to build on it, I want to patiently improve that relationship. If that decision is made, then I start being interested in learning skills to make the marriage better. How can I improve? With patience we can do a lot. We can start by making a plan, as I said before, and we can investigate various skills. The starting point is important.

I can make the decision right now that I will improve my marriage relationship on a daily basis. I don't let it go, I don't take it for granted,

but I actively work to improve it. I guarantee if we meet a year from now, and everyone who is listening now makes that decision in his or her heart, the divorce rate will go down drastically.

Ideally both spouses in the marriage have to take the initiative. But research shows that usually women are more interested in improving the marriage. Men receive their self-identity from their profession, from their job. They have their self-esteem if they do well in their job, if they earn enough money, if they can provide for their family. That's how they show their love toward the family. The woman is more tuned toward developing relationships. Her feelings, her heart wants to develop, and so then she will usually take the initiative to buy books on marriage, to read them, and to apply the information.

Actually, there is an interesting book, it's by Susan Page and it's called *How One of You Can Bring the Two of You Together*.³ This doesn't apply just to the wives but to the husbands as well. If one of the partners, just as an individual, makes that decision, I want to improve my marriage. What shall I do? What's the first step? There's a whole book written on how ONE of you can bring the two of you together. I find that quite inspiring.

Ideally, we both do it. For example, both go to a workshop such as what we do in New York where we have Marriage Enrichment workshops on a regular basis. These are one day seminars covering the major topics of marriage: vision statement, how to plan the marriage, the communication skills, conflict resolution, and love and intimacy. This would be how to have a most fulfilling marital sexual life, how to really develop that intimacy and in that sense bring to its fulfillment what God gave us, and to see everything as being a gift of God and to allow it to

³ Susan Page, *How One of You Can Bring the Two of You Together*. Broadway Books, 1998.

accomplish its purpose. We need a lot of work in those areas because there's ignorance, there's misunderstanding, and that causes pain and suffering in the relationship.



Marriage and family enrichment seminar at the home of Dietrich and Elisabeth Seidel

A solid foundation for marriage means first our self-understanding as human beings. Why are we here on this earth? What is our ultimate purpose? How do we respond to the fact that we are created for a certain purpose? I would say in a nutshell that solid foundation means for believers to say, okay I am a *resultant* being. God gave me this life and I want to do the best I can with this life, so I need to know what God expects from me as a human being. The answer is somewhat simple, but probably takes a lot of effort to accomplish. Our ultimate purpose is that we bring joy to God through our love for God. That realization of joy is the ultimate purpose of life.

If I just make a simple analogy, I can be joyful about something which resembles me the most, right? If I have joy about a little stone, then I experience limited joy. If I see a bird, it's already a little bit more. If I see another human being and I say, wow there's someone who reflects my whole being; I have so much more common communication, common foundation for joy to develop. We call the ultimate joy we have as human beings, the marital loving relationship. Love, in its highest expression of relationships, is the ultimate purpose of our lives. And that love should be centered on God's purpose. It's that presence of God in our loving relationship.

How does God feel joy and love? The answer is by having a loving object partner who resembles God in the highest form. I resemble God as a masculine being as a man in a certain way, but my wife resembles God in the feminine way. Obviously, God has those two aspects, masculinity and femininity. In God's own being there is unity and harmony of those aspects. If we can enact that in our own lives, we can be totally the image of God. Then God's love can flow freely in our lives and we can find the fulfillment and happiness we desire, which is in the depths of our own original mind, our own original heart.

In summary, it would be a solid foundation if we both go toward that realization of joy and ultimate love where God can be the center. That applies for all religions; it's a universal understanding of why God created us, how to realize joy, how to bring that love into reality in our marriage life. If that happens, then both partners can develop that dedication and perseverance to work out their marriage, and to bring happiness and joy into reality.

Going into a marriage relationship, first we need to know who we are profoundly, as we relate to our own self. I have to know exactly who I am. Again, it's a process of getting to know myself. Ideally, we spend some time every day in self-examination. What did I do today? Why did I react the way I did? What's the reason behind it? Can I get

more control of my feelings, of my thoughts, of my intentions? Can I make it more oriented toward serving others to bring goodness into this life?

That self-examination prepares me for marriage. I understand better who I am, and I can have more control over my own being, and I can avoid ahead of time potential conflicts. Most conflict comes because the partners don't have sufficient self-control—they act emotionally, they do not understand their own direction of life or their own purpose, and then they throw frustration at each other. I need to be at peace with myself and know myself, know my value, have good self-esteem, a good amount of self-love. We need that, because if we read in the Bible “love your neighbor as yourself” that means I have to love myself, right? Not in a selfish way, but in a way that honors the gift of creation which is present in my own being. If I reach that point, then that harmony is what I bring to the marriage, and that's for both the husband and the wife. If we live based on that harmonious self-understanding, then we avoid many possible conflicts. We are not vulnerable to conflict situations. We can establish this firm foundation of loving God and loving each other.

We have to educate ourselves about essential differences between men and women. There are circumstances that lead to conflicts between men and women. We need skills to work it out. This is the area of conflict resolution, and it's very important. Of course, the first step is that the couple is really committed to the relationship. They say, I want to renew my commitment to my partner and together we will work out our difficulties.

It is better to prevent conflict. If we work on the preventative side this is much more effective than waiting until things fall down on us like a thunderstorm. There is knowledge about our differences, man and woman personality types, which all feeds into prevention of conflict.

Once the conflict is there, what we need to do as a couple is to decide ahead of time what rules we are committed to when conflict happens. We have certain rules we follow, and we can even write them out and agree to them. What I mean with that is to create a controlled atmosphere so that the conflict doesn't go off the deep end and cause plates to fly around, or tables to be broken, or where violence breaks out between the spouses. We need to keep the conflict in a creative setting, or in a creative framework.

I would say the first rule is, if it's too intense to handle a difference of opinion then one is entitled to ask for time out. Time out means we separate, we let emotions cool down, and then we meet again. It doesn't mean we ignore the conflict. We acknowledge each other's right not to deal with it on the spot when the emotions are high and the anger is there. We say, please respect that I need some time out.

As a couple we decide to establish rules for the future. We start the preventative action, not to let it slip into violence, into beating, or whatever may be involved. But we say, I make a decision now to develop those rules and do it together with my partner. Still we have differences and so then we say that if we are angry whatever is said in anger is not the truth. That is one rule. If you say something in anger, you call your partner names or something, that's not really what you meant. You're just in this angry mood and you're losing control, you just don't see clearly. Anger means you're focusing your energy on one point, which is somewhat a defensive action. You feel threatened and you act with anger. Whatever you say is for your own self-preservation, or for your emotional equilibrium, or for payback, some retaliation.

Of course, it's best when couples are starting their relationship that they set these rules. But for those couples that are way into their marriage and have experienced conflict, they can still establish rules after all these years and work together to improve their marriage. Struggling couples often look for guidance. They know that out of their own

resources they cannot make steps forward. In our marriage enrichment seminars, what we advise them to do on a regular basis, even on a daily basis, is to go through certain exercises to improve communication, to work in a preventative way, and if conflict arises to have rules in place. That includes the time out rule, that we agree to speak about the problem at a set place and time, we agree to that. There are many techniques that can be used to improve the relationship.

If our spouse gets angry, it means we need to develop skills for conflict resolution. If something comes up which sets him off, he feels his buttons are pushed, he gets angry and his wife is at a loss, she doesn't know what to do. The point is in times when they have a good relationship, and they love each other and they have good communication, that is the time to come up with a concrete plan about what to do. Ask the husband, what can I do in the situation when you are angry, what's the best? Shall we just separate for a few minutes, or for an hour, so that we cool down and then talk again to each other or what? What is it in your own background that you feel so upset if I do something to you which was not done with bad intention? Sometimes life is like that, something comes up which is conceived by the partner as very upsetting. Communication has to happen. The point is again that if you work much more intensively on the preventative aspect then solutions in the conflict situation are more readily available.

In a troubled marriage the most serious problem is adultery. This is so serious because what happens in adultery is that we are violating the most basic principle of love—that our sexuality is totally owned by our partner. If I commit adultery or sexual abuse then this is the deepest form of suffering for my partner. Therefore, it's so important to have a life of fidelity and to be faithful to each other. If adultery happens, it's really a challenge for the other partner, for the suffering partner who was faithful but who was cheated upon.

Still I would say there are ways to save such a marriage. But there has to be a deep repentance on the part of the transgressor, the partner who cheated. He or she should realize the dimensions of that hurt. He or she should meditate and pray about it and find a spot in his or her heart where he or she can repent and ask for forgiveness. That partner has to reach that point. Then they both can work together, and they can set up conditions that it would never happen again in the future.

The reason why sexual transgressions are so serious is that my sexuality does not belong to me, right? This is the one thing in my life which belongs totally to my partner. God gave me my sexuality for the sake of the joy and the love of my partner. We have this mutual gift to give to each other. The real owner of my sexuality or my sexual organ is my partner, my spouse. I have no ownership on my own. I mean it sounds kind of radical but if you really think about it that's the core of the situation. If I live in the consciousness that my sexuality belongs to my spouse, I offer it to him or her in purity and in total dedication, and I want to protect that preciousness and that holiness of my sexuality by sharing it only with my spouse. Then I will create more and more security in that realm, not to go astray, not to abuse love.

I know our culture is saturated with abusive sexuality. We have pornography, we have so much enticement, right? Especially the men don't know how to handle all that. The only thing is to say, all my sexual fulfillment is oriented toward my wife. Here I have total freedom. I can have the deepest joy and happiness in my sexual life, with my wife. But nothing outside. Nothing outside. I have to protect that realm. That is so important. Let me make a simple example. You enjoy the warmth of a fire right? But if you have a home, a beautiful home, you don't kindle fires all over the place, you have a fireplace where you keep your fire burning. Then you enjoy it and it brings warmth and it brings a coziness and homeliness. But if it's all over the place, then the whole

house burns and it's destroyed. It's the same with our sexual love. We have to be so careful to keep it totally focused on our partner.

Another issue relates to a repeating pattern of arguments. In a marriage it often happens that the spouses fight about the same thing over and over again. It can become a habit to repeat the same problems over and over again and argue about the same annoyances and not develop. Why does it happen that we repeatedly deal with the same problem? One reason is it may be rooted in our childhood, in our upbringing there's some unsolved problem which comes up. If I understand more deeply why these conflicts happen, why my spouse gets upset about certain things, then I become willing to forgive and to understand and we can make up more and we can eventually solve that problem.

I would say in a loving relationship, and especially if it involves sexual relations, we need to put our love within the framework of marriage. Why do we have marriage? Because through marriage we have the support of the whole community, the support of God Himself, to work through the difficulties of the relationship. We can see the difficulty not just as something painful and annoying and something I want to stay away from, but I see it as a task which leads me to the real meaning of love and that we overcome our problems together. Sometimes we find certain aspects in our spouse that we really like and other aspects that we dislike. We have to work out those aspects in our personalities that we don't like about each other. And as we work through them then we touch on the deeper levels of love which God ultimately wants to communicate to us. Therefore, marriage is so important to develop our loving relationship within that framework.

We can see our life as a constant building of steps to our goal of a happy relationship. We say we want to have this meaningful time together, one hour a day. We can build an emotional bank account, that's a good image, right? The wife can say, okay, I serve my husband, I cook his favorite meal, I really want to respond to his desires, and I

want to make him happy in every way possible. That's something the wife can do. On the other hand, the husband can say, okay, I want to be a good listener, I want to give my time, I want to put my wife as number one on my list not on the bottom. I don't want to be a workaholic and have no time at all for my wife or my family. The husband can make decisions in that regard. Together they build more and more an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance and are more successful in dealing with conflict.

When looking at disagreement in our life as destructive we may end up being dishonest about own feelings. Our feelings are spontaneous reactions to a certain situation. I have a strong feeling of attraction to someone and things are working out well. But then I can have feelings of rejection or being annoyed. What I can change is my reaction to the feelings, I don't have to be taken in and I don't have to get angry. I can make a decision, say, no I want to disconnect from this. I want to honor my spouse, I want to always see him as God's son or see her as God's daughter, have respect and develop my sense of honor toward my spouse. I can always work through that and be more successful. I can use the theology or philosophy, apply the theory, and experience it in my daily life. That way I can have the most fulfilling love relationship with my spouse and with God too.

America and the World: Understanding September 11

Marist College

September, 2001

Thinking of September 11th, it was of course an attack on human life. But on second thought, it was an attack on our common humanity. We all believe in goodness and we all are shaken up by this event. As we reflect on what it means for my life, we wonder, how shall I make sense out of something which is obviously irrational and very difficult to make sense of?

What we have to do is to re-examine our human nature. We are realizing that we are capable of things we never would have dreamed of doing. We are confronted with the power of evil. It is kind of jumping in our faces. We may have got used to all kinds of explanations: Maybe we are just part of an evolutionary process and evil seems to happen and we just have to cope with it. Or there is the explanation that evil is needed so goodness can shine even more brightly; we have the aesthetic concept of evil. But it doesn't work. It lost its appeal, its persuasive power.

What we are confronting here is the ability of human beings to commit evil acts, to destroy innocent human life, and that shakes us at our roots. So, what is the response to that? How can we in some way analyze that and still come out with a positive and encouraging victorious spirit? I will make just one or two suggestions.

First of all, we want to understand the reality of evil. Why is it so powerful? Why can it lead people to give up their lives and commit suicide? The answer I am suggesting is that evil draws on the power of love. This may sound contradictory. But I say it draws on the power of

abusive love. What are those forms of abusive love? Let me mention a few of them.

There is the power in the situation where you feel a lack of love, where you feel resentment, where you engage in self-gratification or sexual abuse. Lack of love is shown in increasing aversion toward others, ultimately in hate. The power behind it is an aberration of our original calling—to love God with all our heart, to love our neighbor like ourselves. But if that love is twisted, perverted, if it goes in the wrong direction, then we have events of terror and we are shaken up. We have to deal with this reality of evil.

In the Christian tradition, and the Unification tradition, we have the historical Human Fall in Genesis, where evil is explained. Our first ancestors did not obey God, did not follow the Commandment. Exactly that whole question of abusive love is presented in the story of the Fall.

What happened on September 11th is like Cain killing Abel all over again. Terrorists killed innocent lives. Now we are searching for how to respond in a constructive way.

Let me make a reality check. Even if we see that evil can be that powerful, we realize that our original God-given goal in life is to have a very intimate loving relationship with our creator and with each other. Those are the great commandments: Love God and love your neighbor with all your heart. Then we are confident that love can be the victor. No matter how much evil is confronting us, we know that God's love is ultimately victorious. If we engage in self-examination, finding the goodness of our own heart, being present in the most difficult situations, with our love for God we can love humanity. Then we can bring about restoration of all this pain and suffering that was caused by September 11th.

Sermons at Unification Theological Seminary

Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) was founded in 1975, using as its campus a 250-acre property in Barrytown, New York. This property previously served as St. Joseph's Normal Institute, a Christian Brothers boarding school. It was purchased from the Christian Brothers in 1974, for the purpose of establishing a theological seminary.

David S.C. Kim, an early follower of Reverend Sun Myung Moon and who had studied religion in Great Britain and in the United States, was appointed the seminary's first president. He assembled an ecumenical faculty and prepared to fulfill the vision of providing a broad education in all the religions, as well as Unification teachings and praxis. Dr. Kim took on the challenge of conforming to academic standards for Masters programs, while at the same time establishing interfaith and international events as well as encouraging the spiritual formation of the students through a variety of activities. One of the most significant of these was welcoming Reverend Moon to the campus on many occasions to give spiritual guidance to the students.⁴

The Barrytown campus was used by the Unification Church for workshops, such as the one Dietrich Seidel attended, until the Seminary enrolled its first students in the fall of 1975. Dr. Kim anticipated that out of the early classes of students would come future UTS professors, and so he established a scholarship fund to support doctoral studies for interested UTS graduates. Dietrich Seidel was chosen to receive one of the scholarships.

⁴ Jennifer P. Tanabe, *The Ideal Family to Be or Not to Be: Testimonies of a Life of Faith*. Lulu, 2010.



Dr. Kim and Dean Therese Stewart (seated) with graduates from the first class who received scholarships for doctoral studies

Dietrich Seidel graduated from that first class at UTS in 1977. Having accepted the offer to continue his studies at St. Michaels College in Toronto, he completed his doctorate and then returned to UTS as a professor in 1987. He taught courses in theology and marriage and family there until 1999. During that period, he gave a number of sermons at the morning worship service attended primarily by the UTS students and staff. Always with an eye on the historical value of the words spoken by UTS faculty, Dr. Kim ensured that not only their lectures but also their sermons were recorded.

Generally, these sermons follow the traditional Christian pattern of beginning with a scripture reading followed by thoughts and

inspirations based on the passage or passages. Due to the fact that those in attendance were mostly Unificationists, and that Reverend Moon had founded UTS, a number of the readings are taken from Reverend Moon's speeches or teachings. Several of the readings from Reverend Moon include references to the mission of UTS and the value of theological education. As is common Unification practice, Reverend Moon is referred to as Father Moon, or on occasion True Father, or when speaking of both Reverend and Mrs. Moon, as True Parents.



Dr. Seidel (back) and UTS community members enjoying a visit from Reverend Moon (seated left) with Dr. Kim (seated center)

Although Dr. Seidel had studied theology, and was teaching theology at UTS, much of his inspiration in these sermons involves the practical application of spiritual teachings to our daily life. He also reflects on and applies the scriptures to married life, especially the

Unificationist Holy Marriage Blessing, which he and his wife participated in, as did many of the students and staff at UTS.

To introduce the atmosphere and significance of UTS, the first entry in this section is not a sermon but rather excerpts from an interview conducted by his wife, Elisabeth Seidel, recorded in early 2016. During his time as a student, Dietrich Seidel had many precious experiences, particularly when Reverend Moon visited the campus. In this interview he recalls some of those times and what it meant to the students to spend time with Father Moon and to understand his vision for the Seminary.

Interview with Dietrich Seidel about UTS

Dietrich: I remember in the first class, Father Moon used to come almost every day to UTS.

Elisabeth: You were in the first class yourself, so how did you feel and how was the experience?

Dietrich: I remember Father saying the mission of UTS is to unite the Christian denominations, to speak to the ministers, and to know their theology, and to know their heart. Father gave many speeches in that direction: That is the purpose of UTS, to inherit the foundation of Christianity, for God's new dispensation.

What I remember most is that there was this determination behind Father which we didn't have. We just listened to him and were very surprised about his total commitment to do Heavenly Father's will and to speak to us and to inspire us; and not only nurture us but also to train us. The training was to catch fish in the lagoon close to UTS. The catching of fish was a spiritual exercise. It was cold, this was April, and it was very cold. I was doing a seven-day fast so I was exempt from going in the water, but I realized that Father wanted to train this first class of 50 or so people. He challenged us even to the point of having hypothermia. Some had to go to the infirmary, the medical center, to get warm again.

Father gave lots of spiritual input to the members of the first class, that we should be strong in catching the right fish. That means symbolically to speak to ministers, to bishops, to religious leaders from different denominations. This is what Father thought of UTS, the mission of UTS: The mission is to build on the foundation of Christianity, and also to bring together the different faiths, to bring them all together, and to have a foundation for those faiths to unite centering on the Divine Principle.



Dietrich and other Seminary students making nets with Father Moon

He also made the nets for catching the fish. Net-making is exactly what UTS should do spiritually. I mean we always speak about catching fish.

What it means is that the Principle moves the heart of people, and then they understand also and they accomplish God's will. There is spiritual significance behind the net-making. Father realized we can make the net in a new way to catch as many fish as possible with this special net. So UTS is like the net. We give some bait to people, but it's more than that, it's to move their heart, to move them as a whole that they can understand the Divine Principle. Then they can understand the mission of UTS and be united with this cause of uniting Christianity as the foundation, and also uniting other religions around True Parents.

Elisabeth: When Father came to UTS he would stay a few hours?

Dietrich: Yes, he would stay most of the day. He would come maybe 10 in morning and he would leave at maybe 5 in the afternoon. He would stay a long time, many hours.

Elisabeth: When Father would come around 10 o'clock, what would he do first?

Dietrich: When he came we would always pray first. We would pray, he would speak to us, we would eat lunch, and in the afternoon, we would go to the lagoon, for example. We were students, we watched everything, we would hear him speak, and he would inspire us. The main point is that his speeches had one purpose: to educate us to be leaders. How did this happen? Through the symbol of catching fish.

Elisabeth: That was a very special time, a very special experience that Father spent almost every day with the first class. That made the first class very close to True Father.

Dietrich: There was this dimension to create oneness. I remember Father saying, if you are like me I only need about 50 people to restore this whole nation, but you have to be like me. You have to go through training, you have to understand what God wants, and understand and apply the Divine Principle, and then you become more like me. If there

are 50 people like me no problem, we can restore America in a short while, in a few months we can restore the whole nation! But of course, we were lagging behind, we made our mistakes, we had our fallen nature, and we needed to overcome all these obstacles before we could be like Father. He was totally dedicated to this one cause of comforting God and building His kingdom.

Elisabeth: What was one of the most special experiences you had with True Father during this first year?

Dietrich: The most special experience is the Rock of Decision. Father would be in front of the Seminary and ponder, how shall we restore Christianity, how shall we bring Christianity to the point that they understand True Parents? And then he realized that it can be done through educating people the right way, which should happen through UTS. Education is very important.

The Rock of Decision means Father decided on this rock to buy this property and to make a seminary. It was one year before, in 1974. UTS started in September 1975. The Rock of Decision means Father decided to have a seminary and to bring the word to Christians through that seminary. This was the major point. If this happened there would be no problem to guide them on to understand the new dispensation.

Elisabeth: You had to miss many classes when Father came?

Dietrich: No, he would always respect the classes. No class was cancelled. We had a few hours when Father spoke to us but usually the afternoon was free to study, so we just had less study time. But no classes were cancelled. He respected the professors very much. He would be with them and support them. I remember how much he invested in those professors and how much he wanted all the professors to be alive for God, for Heavenly Father, to use their knowledge to educate us and to raise us up to the level where we could inspire other Christians, ministers, pastors and so on.

Elisabeth: Were those professors coming to hear Father?

Dietrich: Some did, yes. But he mainly spoke to the members. Here and there he would give a speech also for the professors.

Elisabeth: How about the second year? Did Father come many times to UTS?

Dietrich: Second year. He came sometimes; in the beginning more. He came every day of the week for one or two months, but then later on as our responsibility became more Father came less. We understood this.

Elisabeth: Thank you for sharing the heart of Father Moon to bring together Christianity as well as all different faiths, and especially his love for UTS students.

Reflections on Discipleship I

March 1, 1992

Bible reading from Exodus 24:3-8

When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in the bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."

Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

What I wanted to share with you this morning are just a few thoughts on discipleship. We are here at the Seminary to carry out our studies and to also fulfill the calling of discipleship. That is something to reflect on, on a daily basis. What does it mean to be disciples for our True Parents, to fulfill what we inherited with respect to discipleship toward Jesus? We are supposed to build on that foundation and fulfill it by being disciples of our True Parents.

What is the essence of that discipleship? People struggled in the past to find their way in attending God and doing God's will. Of course,

the major obstacle in discipleship is our fallen nature. We have that struggle in our hearts; we realize that Satan is influencing us. There has to be an effort to actualize discipleship. It doesn't come easily. That is the experience especially in the Christian tradition, as discipleship is connected with an ascetic life, a life of self-denial. We allow God to dwell in us by denying ourselves and making room for Him. This is the understanding. Also realizing that so much in us is pulling us away from God: all those selfish thoughts and feelings we have, that fallen nature we are struggling with.

The New Testament understanding of discipleship comes on the foundation of the Old Testament, so it's like every time we speak about a certain topic we have to look first at the Old Testament. Then we look at what Jesus did with it, and then we look at True Parents.

How did people in the Old Testament fulfill their call to discipleship? One example is Moses on Mount Sinai, as we just read, when he called the people to obey the ordinances of the covenant. It was a very dramatic event on Mount Sinai. He made a burnt offering and sprinkled the blood of the bull; half of the blood on the people and half on the altar. As the blood symbolizes life, Moses bound the people with God and made that covenant. Discipleship in the Old Testament was fulfilling the covenant, fulfilling the blood bond which was enacted in that burnt offering. Moses asked his people if they were ready to do that, and he needed an affirmative answer. The people had to dedicate themselves to obey the words of Moses and to obey the law of the Old Testament.

God gave the people detailed instructions on how to live; everything was regulated. Their whole life was a religious life, a service to God. For Jewish people there is no differentiation between regular secular life and a religious life. It's just one life and it is one service to God. It is one demonstration of that covenant between God and the Israelites. In obeying that calling of God, and in bringing that covenant

into daily action, on that foundation discipleship was fulfilled. The covenant contained a promise, the promise that God would be with the people. God also promises eternal life for the people, and it's a tremendous vision always presented to the Israelite people that they are the instrument of God in this world. But then the condition of the covenant was obedience, obedience to the word, obedience to the law. We see that the promise and the condition for fulfilling that promise were manifested in that covenant relationship.

Jesus comes on that foundation. But what Jesus does, fulfilling the word in his life, means he as a person is the connecting point between the people and God. He can show God's presence, God's love to the people, and the covenant of the law is then replaced by the covenant of love. By Jesus being there and being able to give God's love to His people, the law is fulfilled. Jesus is establishing the new covenant, we call it the New Testament. Jesus is giving the gospel, the gospel where all of us are invited to live in that loving relationship with God as Jesus could manifest to his disciples.

We understand that Jesus was there to bring the fullness of that call to discipleship in his own life. He was so strict about discipleship. He said if you really are serious to do God's will you will follow me and you don't even look back. You don't allow the strings of your old life to pull you back. You just cut them off and you fully dedicate your life to me. That absolute calling of discipleship is one very specific characteristic of Christianity. All Christians who take their faith seriously always reflect on these words of uncompromising discipleship.

We know, for example, about the young man who wanted to follow Jesus and who said, my father died and I just need some time to take care of my family obligations. Jesus said, let the dead bury their own dead. If you want to be my disciple and build God's kingdom, follow me. That was shocking for the people in Jesus' time because piety, all the laws of piety toward your own family, had to be observed

first. So, if Jesus says the call for discipleship goes beyond these obligations toward your family, it is a most serious calling and that's what he wanted to get across. The new life can only happen by relating to him, and in enacting the love of God as he demonstrated it to his disciples.

There's another aspect to Jesus' discipleship, which is the suffering heart of Jesus. As he called his people, and as he was confronted ultimately with rejection, then that suffering heart, that deep longing for his people and the lack of response, that is also present in Christianity. We all remember the verse when Jesus said, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how much did I try to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not. You did not respond. You did not understand the call for discipleship in your time and age. So that heart of disappointment or suffering is what we inherited in Christianity.

Beyond that, of course, Jesus speaks about the Second Coming and he is appealing again to that point, that we fulfill discipleship. Will we have faith on earth? Those were Jesus' words looking at his disciples. How would they respond when the Second Coming would be fulfilled?

Every day as we wake up we realize, this is another day, another gift of God, and we are called to the discipleship which is fulfilling all the previous callings of God, all the previous stages of discipleship. We are consummating discipleship to its fullest. And how are we doing it? We are here to attend our True Parents. As we went through the period of the law, and the period of the gospel, now this is the period of attendance.

Discipleship has two aspects. It's not just the aspect of following the Messiah by paying indemnity, making conditions, practicing sacrificial love, and overcoming Satan's claim. Of course, that is the major aspect of discipleship, and that's what we inherited from Christianity. But the newness in our age, by attending True Parents, is that we also

have a discipleship of celebration. The new life is here, and we can connect the fruits which are already emerging, connected with the presence of the kingdom which is now with us through our True Parents.

The time has arrived that we celebrate with True Parents. Discipleship means to attend them joyfully, to offer to them our lives. They still are lives of sacrifice and indemnity, but as we realize the fruit of all that, also we offer new beings who can live in God's kingdom. Let us expand our vision of discipleship and learn to celebrate with True Parents, to share that victory they already gained for Heavenly Father.

I want to share some of Father Moon's words on that topic. Father Moon said in one of his early speeches in 1965:

God is your Father. Why is His business not your business? Why is His suffering not your suffering? Why is His will not your will? Why is His work not your work? Do not expect God to comfort you. You must comfort Him. Our Father is most miserable. When I was in prison under the communist regime I purposely avoided praying because when I prayed I could feel the tears and sorrow of God. Instead I sang, to please and comfort God so that He would not feel more sorrow for me.

You must be dutiful children to God and comfort Him. The restoration of the United States is your Father's work. Therefore, it is your work. The restoration of the whole world is your work, because it is your Father's work. Should you not be busy? He is busy. When do you have time to do anything besides your Father's business?

In a speech from 1972, Father Moon said:

The time of the Messiah is like the time of war. During war you leave your loved ones to protect your country and your freedom. The time of the Messiah is far more critical and historic. God might call upon you to drop everything, like Abraham, to

participate in this millennial crusade. Would you willingly respond to Him? The day of the Messiah is now. This is my message to you. Let us then prepare ourselves to be deserving of his service so that we can truly become one with him, act with him, live with him, and die with him. It is his mission to restore the original concept of God's creation, the ideal world. Let us all participate in this great homecoming into the Garden of Eden.

Reflections on Discipleship II

March 8, 1992

Bible reading from Luke 14:25-27

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

The last few days I was thinking about the topic of discipleship. I spoke about it last Sunday and I thought I would expound further on this topic.

This verse from Luke especially is quite confrontational. It shakes us up and we wonder what Jesus meant with that kind of discipleship: To completely deny those whom we love most dearly, our own father and mother, our wife and children. He does not consider the marital relationship, or the parent-child relationship, as something ultimate. He instills in his followers the notion of completely leaving behind the past and following him, taking up the cross, and in that way being Christ’s disciples.

We know in the Christian tradition that it is always a challenge to reflect on Jesus’ words and to find meaning, and to apply that meaning to our daily lives. With that quote we are confronted with some kind of enigma. I want to ponder here if the conclusions drawn from that saying of Jesus are the right ones, and what is the inner meaning of that saying.

One interesting thing is that Christians in general use that quote to make us believe that Jesus encouraged us to a life of celibacy: Discipleship means that single-mindedness, that you as an individual completely unite with Christ. We are puzzled because if this is the

ultimate way of reaching God's heart, embarking on that kind of way to reach holiness, then we have to leave behind the created order. We have to live in a way that is removed from the natural order. That has been the struggle in Christianity—to see a path that is further away from the natural order as the more holy path. The closer you come to the natural order the more sinful your life will be, and the more difficulties and fallenness you will encounter. Therefore, the celibate path is the superior path to holiness. That is the conclusion.

I want to analyze that saying and try to understand Jesus' harsh language on that point. First of all, we have to understand Jesus' agenda as he speaks to his people. One way is to see the larger context. What is Jesus saying to his people? Calling them to that ultimate discipleship, by giving up their own life in such a way as to cut off all the loving relationships they had before in their life, using this kind of language, Jesus is speaking in a way based on the Jewish tradition which we may not be so familiar with. It is a way of penetrating through the layers of defense people have in holding on to their old life.

That tactic or that approach was already there in the Torah, it was already there in the Old Testament. For example, if I quote from the Torah it picks up that harsh type of language and speaking to penetrate through all the defenses people may have in accepting God's guidance. It says here about religious life in ancient Jewish tradition: "If a man does not show himself as cruel toward himself, his children, and his household, he does not succeed in acquiring Torah." Jesus' teaching is very similar in style and purpose. He is confronting his people in their perception of their present life and he is cutting through their defenses by using these harsh words—to hate even their own mother and father and wife and children to accomplish discipleship. In other words, Jesus does not advocate celibacy at all, even if that quote is sometimes used that way in Christian reflection.

The term “to hate” is an idiom, a Semitic idiom, which actually means “to love less.” It sounds quite different if you say you have to “love less” your wife and children, your parents, in order to be my disciple. We see if we do some textual analysis here, we get to the meat of what was Jesus’ intention and what was the actual message he was giving us.

The reason I go through all that is I want to stress that it was not the solitary life, it was not the cutting off of existing relationships of love that would qualify us as Jesus’ disciples. What Jesus wanted to express was that the family of God comes before one’s own personal family. He wanted to lead us to a new awareness of what it means to live in the family of God. He comes as the first one to establish that new family relationship. In Christian spirituality there is a battle to see discipleship not as a single solitary life, but to see it as a life in relationship to others, and more than that as a family life. Again, there are more passages in the Bible which we have to examine very carefully to bring out that meaning of the superiority of the family relationship over and against the relationship we have as individuals to Christ. We always have that personal relationship with Christ, but the fulfillment of that is the family relationship.

I want to illustrate that shift, or that connection, with one more verse from Matthew. This is a little bit longer because it contains Jesus’ direct teaching about marriage, how he sees the marital relationship. What we heard before was that to be a disciple is to hate your wife and children, which would mean marriage has no place in discipleship. But as I just explained, that was not what Jesus meant. It was just to penetrate the defenses of people so that they would be open for his word and to prepare to become part of God’s family.

In a more direct way Jesus speaks about marriage in Matthew 19: 1-12:

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”

Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

This is one of the most puzzling passages in the New Testament. The more we read and reflect on it, how can this be reconciled? Here Jesus speaks about marriage, how God instituted it, how they should be one flesh, and man should not put it asunder. Moses gave the divorce laws because people were fallen, they were selfish, they had hardness of heart. But from the beginning it was not so: God declared husband and wife to be one in an unshakeable, indissoluble way. Then the disciples say if this is the case, if such an absolute standard of marriage applies, if this is the case then it is not expedient to marry. That is the disciples' conclusion. They say, what you are asking is too much, we cannot take that. It's more expedient not to marry, to stay away from such a commitment.

Jesus is upholding marriage as an absolute value, an absolute relationship. But then after the disciples reacted that way and said we are afraid of such a commitment and cannot take it, then Jesus talks about eunuchs. He mentions three kinds of eunuchs: people whose sexual functions are impaired, they are eunuchs from birth; others have been made eunuchs by men, their sexual powers taken away, they are castrated; and then there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs. He doesn't speak about self-castration, that's for sure, but he's speaking about some internal commitment which appears as a eunuch way of life. This third type of eunuchs, they made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Then he just says, who is able to receive this let him receive it!

You may think this is a heavy text, but it is very revealing and it teaches us about discipleship. It teaches us about the transition from an understanding of a celibate, single relationship to Christ, to expand that, to break out of that, to see the fulfillment of our relationship to Christ as the marriage relationship, and with that the family relationship.

How can I say that? How to make the connection with this most enigmatic eunuch saying in Matthew 19? Let me reflect on

interpretations that were presented by some Christian theologians. First, what Jesus expresses here is obviously a reaction to the disciples' assessment of his previous description of marriage, showing the ultimate standard of marriage as it is revealed in Genesis. And the disciples just don't want to accept that kind of a commitment. They cannot take that; it's more expedient not to marry. So, Jesus reacts to that, that's the context. And how does he express it? Again, in a very dramatic way by offering that eunuch saying.

Jesus is implying that love requires more than seeking individual happiness. We are brought up with that notion. First of all, we want to fulfill our lives, we want to be happy in our lives. That's what we are looking for and if we don't find it, we look for something else. Jesus is advocating an agape relationship, which means if you love God 100 percent then that vertical love of God can be transmitted to your partner. You can reach out for your marriage partner in an unconditional way. You can set up a standard of love which is ultimate, and absolute, and indissoluble.

In order to illustrate that, I cannot express it better than one commentary on this quote which was given by a Jesuit. Who are the Jesuits? They are Catholics who completely dedicate their lives to Jesus. They are part of the Jesuit order, and they are celibate; they are Catholic priests. This Jesuit, Quentin Quesnell, makes the following comment on the eunuch saying of Jesus:

Regarding Matthew 19, then it is better not to marry at all. That is the unbeliever's foolish reaction. It is the choice of the safer way, the selfish way. It is attempting to save one's life. Jesus does not accept this. He restates the doctrine quite as strongly as before and attaches to it the Christian challenge of faith, let him grasp it who can. Restating it, he admits that it is a frightening prospect. It can leave a man in a state comparable to those most pitiable of men, the eunuchs. A man must, in marriage, take the

risk of staking all he has, and is, on one person, becoming one flesh with her. And this means that in his fidelity, and determination to continue to express that fidelity forever, he also takes the risk that if his wife and he have to separate he will be left for the rest of his life pledged to loyalty to one who is not even there. To continue this loyal and perfect love even when the love is not returned is effectively to make oneself a eunuch, a person incapable of marriage for the rest of one's life. The world will not understand this. And it cannot make any sense, except as a step toward inaugurating a world where all men will love perfectly and fully. It makes sense that it is only as a contribution to the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵

When I read this commentary, I was very moved. I realized how deep the saying of Jesus is about upholding the sanctity of marriage and showing the absolute standard of love that the marriage relationship embraces and which it contains. To say it one more time, discipleship here means to take on, in your own life of faith, that ultimate commitment to uphold the holiness and sanctity of the marital relationship as your ultimate guide. Because of our fallenness, and because of the processes and dynamics of restoration, and all the battles and struggles we encounter, if it should happen that we need to separate from our partner, because most difficult situations arise, the commitment to uphold that holiness and sanctity of the marital bond, that should remain unabated. It should be the constant guide in our lives. That means even at the risk of making ourselves eunuchs for the rest of our lives, and in doing that we give testimony to that ultimate standard of true love which is then to inaugurate the Kingdom of Heaven, to give testimony to the Kingdom of Heaven. That is the discipleship which Jesus indicates in the

⁵ Quentin Quesnell, "Made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (July 1968), pp. 335-358.

eunuch saying. It is not at all to advocate celibacy or to advocate the single way of life. Unfortunately, that text is used repeatedly in encyclicals and in other statements in Christian faith as proof that Jesus intended us to be celibate, or to choose the single way of life.

We are to take the best we have from the Christian spiritual tradition, which is the celibate tradition of reaching holiness in the single discipleship of Christ. But then, right here is a pillar affirming the sanctity of marriage and upholding the absolute standard of marital love. From there the transition to discipleship as married couple, as exemplifying God's love in the marriage relationship, that transition is done in our age. This follows exactly what our True Parents are teaching us. We are to take on that responsibility to disseminate the consciousness of true marital love throughout the world. This is the path where we can reach God and live with Him and uphold an ultimate standard of truth and love and life.

Father Moon has said: "Religion is all about teaching about the Father." It means teaching about the familial relationship. It is making us aware that whatever we understand about God is connected with family relationships. Fatherhood has its origin in marriage. It is all connected, it is all embracing, and on that foundation the true meaning of religion becomes clear.

This teaches us that discipleship has to do with filial piety. As we enter these familial relationships, we see the fulfillment of any personal relationship is to build true families. I want to share some of Father Moon's words concerning that commitment we have toward God and what discipleship means:

God wants to show someone as an example of the loyalty to God. What kind of person will God pick? Not the person in a mansion, not the person in a limousine, but the person who is so humble, so naked and so undernourished, but is still giving his utmost

loyalty and faith to God. That's truly the example God is seeking as His champion. God picks His champions under the worst conditions. God seeks His champions in those areas, not in glorious areas. And God will let that person represent the entire glory of God.⁶

Again, on the foundation of humility, of living out loyalty to God in the most difficult and lowly circumstances, that is the start for discipleship. As we move on, what does it mean to follow Christ? Father Moon said in 1977:

To follow Christ, a person must also follow like Jesus' own brothers and sisters, who were meant to understand him completely and love him and do the most difficult things for him. By doing this and becoming one with Jesus, Jesus and God Himself will never be able to say in the future, "I don't know you." Those who are following Christ as a real friend can console him, going over the path of thorns in this world and feeling fury at all the injustice done to him. Such people can say, "They don't understand. I will compensate for their mistakes, so don't blame them or be agonized at the situation. Try to forget about them and let's do it together."⁷

So again, the attitude of forgiveness to those who don't understand Christ's path and his mission.

Finally, to follow the path of God, Father Moon said:

We are assembled here to follow exactly the same path that God Himself is going to find God's love, reclaim it, and give it out.

⁶ Sun Myung Moon, "A New Breed of People," Tarrytown, New York, September 15, 1974.

⁷ Sun Myung Moon, "God's Will and Christmas." *God's Warning to the World, Book II*. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1985.

God is doing exactly the same thing, wanting to give His love away to the world. Since knowing how God lives I have been trying to live the same way. When you know how God lives, you will live the same way as well. Then you can have the qualification to be a son or daughter of God and a master of the past, present, and future.

All these sayings about discipleship culminate in the responsibility we have as Blessed Couples. As we accomplish our path of restoration we realize that on an individual level we can reach only a certain level, but we have to go beyond that. In accomplishing God's original ideal, in upholding the restored marital relationship, that is the key to live God's way of life—to have that loving attitude of selfless giving to embrace people who may oppose us or misunderstand us. In other words, the real source for that inner strength, to be completely immersed in that path of discipleship, that comes from the Holy Marriage Blessing we receive from True Parents. It comes from building restored family relationships. Here is the wellspring, here is that reservoir with which we can accomplish all the other demands of discipleship as it was told through Jesus, and as Father Moon is telling us again, and so fulfil God's expectation for our lives.

The Power of Living for the Sake of Others

September 22, 1992

Reading from Luke 10: 30-37

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

This is the well-known parable in the New Testament about the Good Samaritan. Jesus is speaking about a man who was robbed and left half dead on the side of the road. Three people met this man: a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. Our question is, what is the whole content of this story?

As I thought about it, two points came to my mind. First, Jesus is judging the false religiosity of people who externally observe certain customs and obey the law, as was the case with the priest and the

Levite. They were not moved to the essence of what God wanted to teach them, which is to care for your neighbor, to love your neighbor. There is judgment in that story. It is judgment on any action which is associated with a hypocrite. This means we may pretend, we may appear to be good and loving, but actually we are not. There is still something in us which remains selfish, which remains fallen, and where Satan still has his dominion over us. So, in a larger sense, that struggle, or that lack in our own hearts of being what God expects us to be, is being addressed here.

The second point is that the Samaritan exemplifies what God wants us to do, to have compassion, to have love for our neighbor, to act out our love. That goal of the religious life is shown here. And of course we are called to learn from the Samaritan. The point is that the Samaritan in the eyes of the priest and the Levite was the most despised person. There was a tremendous looking down upon Samaritans in the age of Jesus. The Samaritan was an unworthy person. And he is exactly the one who fulfills the law, who goes beyond the law by helping his neighbor.

Christian spirituality focuses so much on compassion. We are trained in the Christian tradition to mend wounds, to be charitable, to give to the poor, and that becomes in many ways the focus of our spiritual life. Of course, it has its place and it's good; it is a constant exercise in ridding ourselves of the remains of selfishness.

Now why do I speak about this story, this parable of the Samaritan? What can be learned from it beyond these two points which I mentioned? There are many more points in this parable. One is the reason that someone suffered and was left half dead on the roadside. The reason was that there were robbers around. There were people around who caused harm. In many ways that fact is not dealt with sufficiently in traditional spirituality. Therefore, what happens is we may feel the

need for healing people in their suffering, but we do not pay enough attention to elimination of the robbers.

What do I mean by that? It means that we move from the situation of sin to a situation of not sinning. Of course that's a real big task. But in my reading of this parable, that is another message that is implied here. If the will of God is to be done, then we need to find ways of moving away from what is dominating Christian spirituality, namely that traditionally our understanding of our situation is that we are not able not to sin: "*Non posse non peccare*" as Augustine would say. In many ways that puts a limit on our development in our relationship with God. We are identified continuously as sinners. We think first we are sinners, and then we can perform some acts of mercy. So, the focus in Christianity is to show mercy, to have compassion and charity. Then the question of not sinning is left on the side, or there is a certain admission that we are incapable of achieving that goal.

Now, the next step is that it is not only those who are suffering who need healing, but the ones who need healing are also the robbers. They need to be healed. It is the sinfulness in our own hearts that needs to be attacked, that needs to be taken out, and restoration needs to take its course. Jesus addressed that problem too in another very well-known passage. Matthew 5: 43-44:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

My reading of this saying of Jesus is, the robbers need to be healed. We need to find ways to penetrate into a level where we can actually embrace our enemies, where we can pass on the new tradition

of loving one another, and in that way avoid future harm, future suffering from happening.

Christians say this is the pinnacle of Jesus' teaching: The Old Testament is fulfilled by loving our enemies, by loving those who are sinful, and are steeped in sin, and to find ways to pull them out of that situation. Now that's a very demanding task. It is something which takes everything out of us, to approach that tremendous task of loving our enemy, and making the further step to show a way of not causing any harm to others.

Now I want now to describe the age we are living in, which is the age of True Parents. We are given the tools to do exactly what was done in a preparatory way in the Christian tradition, namely that we heal the robbers and we love our enemies. It is love in action, not love in hope as we project to the future, as we wait for the eschaton. It is here and now that we are called to heal those who are sinning and who cause harm. We realize at the same time that we are the ones who do both at once. We have to learn to heal ourselves, not to sin any more, and then we have to multiply that experience and help others to do likewise.

I want to reflect on the power of living for others, living for the sake of others. That is exactly the quality of love that is given to us through True Parents. That is what has the power to eliminate the robbers in this world, and to develop a caring attitude which can bring ultimate healing. What we are called to is to bring compassion as the major expression of Christian love, to bring that to its fulfillment and to show the world that the new world order can be built by practicing love which is directed for the sake of others, which is love in action.

Let me read to you Father Moon's words which he spoke at the Founder's Address for the recent ICUS conference in Seoul this past August.

He said this to all the scholars and scientists there, who have a very down to earth approach to religious life:

In every culture, religion should be the conscience, setting the standard of public righteousness. While each religion has pride in its own teachings each has universal elements, which come from God. The one God is the God of all religions. Therefore, religions must purify themselves and elevate themselves through universal principles. The central value in religion is true love, which can be described by the teaching, “Live for the sake of others.” The individual lives for the sake of the family; the family lives for the sake of the community; the community lives for the sake of the nation; the nation lives for the sake of the world. Likewise, my religion lives for the sake of other religions. This principle is true.

The source of this universal principle is God. In creating the universe, God invested Himself totally for the sake of His creation. Throughout history, it is God who has been continually sacrificing Himself in order to save fallen human beings, who have been living just as they desire. The prophets, saints and sages who knew God's will have followed God's principles in their own lives.

Not content to keep the truth to themselves, they have walked the way of sacrifice in order to teach others. Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Socrates and Jesus are saints who suffered hardships and were persecuted, even as they taught people. They sacrificed their lives in order to enlighten and liberate humanity.⁸

⁸ Sun Myung Moon, “Absolute Values and the New World Order,” 19th International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, Seoul, South Korea. August 20, 1992.

What we understand here is the healing power which can lead us from a situation where we are confronted with the impossibility of not sinning. The only healing power that can transcend that state, and to lead us to a state where we are confident that we are able not to sin, that is the power of true love as shown in living for the sake of others.

Now, as we attempt to practice that new life of living for the sake of others, there is a two-fold dimension to it. We have to continuously cleanse our own hearts. We have to overcome hypocrisy. That burdens us down because we know God's ideal, we know His calling, and we realize that we fall short. We live in that tension and we are judged that we are to some degree always hypocrites, that we preach a very high ideal and standard and we live up to it to some degree, but we realize that there is a gap. We don't want that to pull us down, or to make us feel guilty. We want to use that tension in a healthy way, and always transcend our present standard of living for the sake of God and humanity. What I want to point out here is that there is growing internally for the sake of others taking place in our hearts so that we can extend love and life for the sake of others. This can be healing, and this can also teach others not to sin any more.

Reflecting on that first step of growing internally for the sake of others, just yesterday evening I had a very moving experience. One brother testified about his matching⁹ and Blessing. He initially struggled to accept his spouse, and he prayed a whole day, giving his life to Heavenly Father and asking Him to show him the path to accept her and to understand what his own situation means in God's eyes. Then he suddenly realized that he is here to live for the sake of his spouse, to extend his heart and love to her, and in that way to extend God's love

⁹ Many Unificationists accepted arranged marriages where they were "matched" by Reverend Moon, often to people they did not know beforehand. Dietrich and Elisabeth Seidel are such a couple.

to her. That moment he realized that only by living for the sake of his spouse, completely, he can make God happy and contribute to God's kingdom. Then all his hesitations and his personal difficulties were just swept away and he felt so happy, and he felt so filled with true love and true affection for his spouse.

So, as we grow for the sake of others, as a first step we grow for the sake of our spouse. Here is the immediate realization of new life and the application of the ideal of true love. Of course, as life goes on we realize that ultimately whatever we are, however loving we are toward God, and how much we help God in His work of restoration, all of that only comes to fruition if we are able to pass on the tradition to our children. So again we are growing for the sake of our children. We are the ones to show them the example of how to be healers, how to live for the sake of others and to bring healing. This means not only having compassion, but showing love in action, leading others not to sin any more.

I had another experience last Saturday at a workshop where Blessed Children¹⁰ were being educated to become Sunday School teachers. The speaker shared his heart with them. The major point he made was that the education of Blessed Children starts at home; it starts with the parents. Only to the degree that the parents truthfully live True Parents' tradition, really embody the heart of God, and can practice that love in action, only to that degree can the children absorb that tradition, can become an extension of True Parents' tradition. The burden is on the parents. Whatever growth they accomplish in their own hearts in their relationship with God, exactly that is the heritage they pass on to their children. Whatever they lack in accomplishing that, then exactly

¹⁰ Children of Blessed Couples, couples who had received the Holy Marriage Blessing.

that lack is passed on to their children. This shows us the need to have more motivation and more enthusiasm and strength to live up to God's expectation. This means growing for the sake of others, for the sake of our spouse and our children. And then the kingdom of God can grow; it can become strong and invincible.

The speaker also spoke of John the Baptist, and he said John the Baptist had all the talents and he had all the foundation of the Old Testament. He embodied that foundation and his mission was to pass that on, to give it to Jesus, to unite with Jesus, to be there to help building God's kingdom. The point he made here is that we, the first-generation people, are in the John the Baptist position. We are the ones who should accomplish that change of lineage, who should separate from the world that admits that we are not able not to sin. We should then move to the world where we open up the new life and God's new calling of not sinning any more. We are in that age of transition. We are supposed to bring something to the new generation, to the new life and the new lineage which is embodied in the Blessed Children. How can we be John the Baptist to our own children? That is the challenge the first generation carries. Again, what we need to understand here is that the transition time we are living in is continuously marked by that internal growth of living for the sake of others, and in that way being able to embody True Parents' tradition.

To sum up our reflections, what needs to be done today is to uplift all the foundations laid in the Christian tradition. We are to open the path for all the pious Christians who desperately want to live God's will and who do so many good works of charity, works of compassion, works of healing. Together we can completely unite with God's calling for our time to attend True Parents and to live their standard of true love in the sense of living for the sake of others. In that way we express God's heart in a more substantial way worldwide. Let us keep in mind that whatever growth we are doing toward Heavenly Father, we do that

not just for us to be close to God but we do that to be a better example, a better channel, a better instrument for God to work through us. And that we continuously grow for the sake of others.

What Moves Us the Most?

October 27, 1992

Reading from the Old Testament, Numbers 14:1-9

That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

Then Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

Yesterday evening I had a short Divine Principle discussion with my son and the content of that discussion was this passage which I just read from the Old Testament. I wondered, what is God communicating here in this event? The spies went forth to Canaan to discover the promised land and to report back to the Israelites. Ten of those spies came back with very discouraging messages, and only two, Caleb and Joshua, stood up and tried to persuade the congregation that God has something very special in store for them, and that the land is an

exceedingly good land, and that there is every reason to have hope and trust and confidence.



Dr. Seidel with his son, Christopher

I thought to myself, here is another incident in the history of restoration where God works in a most dramatic way. Restoration is not a smooth path, where everything falls into place, and we eventually come back to God. It is always a dramatic battle, there is always a frontline where the opposition seems to be overwhelming. In the face of such opposition the most logical thing to do is to retreat, to run away, to go back to our old lives and never to consider God's vision and God's ideal. The Israelites were in exactly that situation. According to reason, according to their old way of evaluating things, all they could come up with is to reject Caleb and Joshua, even to the point of urging themselves to stone Caleb and Joshua as they spoke out for God.

What moved me here in that instant was how God is addressing us in situations which seem to be difficult and where He is opening the vision of His kingdom anew for us. He gives us another chance. That story of Caleb and Joshua can be applied to our own life situation, and can be applied to the nation of America, and many other instances.

What does this story really tell us? Beyond the historical setting, what is the internal content of that story? As I said, God is revealing His work against all odds in history. There are always difficult situations, obstacles in the path of restoration. And the Old Testament is a witness to how God overcomes these obstacles, how He renews the vision of His kingdom for His people, and how He moves on. The plea of Joshua and Caleb is actually a plea to our original mind. There is something in us ready to receive God's word, ready to respond. It's our responsibility to allow that call from God to come into our original mind, to revive us, and to cause us to march forward into action.

The path of restoration is an uphill battle of a righteous minority. God works through a few and He tries to penetrate people's hearts and minds through a few: His prophets, Joshua and Caleb, Jesus and his disciples. Always a few, always a handful, who encapsulate God's calling and are ready to respond with their original minds to God. But also, those few are confronted with real battles. That means Satan is not sleeping, he is continuously trying to divert our attention and our focus and put us in the mood of sleepiness and compromise with the world around us. And in that situation, we see that the majority, most people around us, would follow the path of an easygoing life and compromise with what the established society is offering.

But God is touching our original minds. He is making us aware that we have the instrument in us to know what is right, what is principled, and to apply the sword of His truth to the world around us, of course in the face of opposition. In other words, the battle that Joshua and Caleb dramatically encountered in the physical, external way, that

becomes a battle in our own hearts. What we see there is evidence for God's righteous action in history. There is evidence for being touched by God, when our original minds cried out for God and wanted to live with God. But all that evidence has to battle against constant influences on us, trying to pull us away and to keep us in Satan's bondage.

I offer these reflections as an introduction to what I want to share with you concerning the experience I had recently in Korea. There were some instances where I was deeply moved. Sometimes there are moments when God reaches into our original minds and revives our awareness of what we truly are. Then we can revive our spirit, our dedication, and we can understand more clearly our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

This summer I was in Korea attending the World Culture Festival. As you may expect, one of the most moving moments was Father Moon's announcement of his messiahship to a congregation of about 2,000 dignitaries. As Father Moon spoke in Korean very powerfully, and as we heard the translation through the earphones, the atmosphere became very intense. It was that atmosphere of God reaching deep down into our original hearts and minds and speaking very clearly to us that here are the True Parents of humankind. Here is the savior; here is the Lord of the Second Advent, now fulfilling that providential mission. Just that statement in itself caused the battle, caused that immense awe on the one hand and the battle of what to do with it on the other hand. Even as a Unification Church member, already a follower of Father Moon, I felt again shaken up and confronted with whatever compromise I had allowed to happen in my path of faith. I realized again that God is speaking to our original minds.

Everybody knows that the world as it is now cannot go on; it has to change. But we all know that change is painful, and we tend to hold on to the status quo. We tend to hold on to our past achievements and our comfortable life and whatever securities and foundations we have.

We want to stay in that comfortable environment and we find it a very piercing and unsettling experience to hear God's voice touching our original minds.

So that setting was quite dramatic. We had people there from the political arena, political leaders, and religious leaders, and we had scientists and educators and scholars in the audience. Why was Father Moon's proclamation such a shockwave for this audience? They knew all along what we as members believe, but still that announcement told them very clearly, told their original minds, that they are now called to action. It's not enough to just offer their reputation, their goodwill, in a gesture of sympathy to True Parents. But what True Parents want these people to do now is to get down to business, to be the changers of this world, to be the molders of a new society where God can be the center. And why was it a shockwave for them, and for all of us, members included? Again, because we were confronted in the depths of our hearts with whatever compromise, whatever condition we made to allow Satan to still have a hold on us.

It seems like the congregation True Parents addressed on the evening of the 24th of August, this congregation represented in many ways the Israelites who were thinking back to their time in Egypt, thinking back to the pots filled with meat, at least having that, at least having external comfort. And those pots of meat could be represented by political power, which some of these people had, or pious respect paid to them as religious leaders, or recognition as scholars, men of knowledge. They all had securities that they had built up in their lives. These were the pots of meat which they brought with them, and which they looked at as they heard Father Moon's message, and which they were challenged to put aside and to allow their original minds to be touched by the message of our True Parents. We see this original battle was present there, like Caleb and Joshua were speaking out for God, representing the minority, representing that word of God which tried to

touch our original mind. Here again was a very similar situation, that True Parents' word was now touching their original minds and they were challenged to put aside their pots of meat, figuratively speaking.

Now, every day we are confronted with that situation. What I want to convey today is that we are always called to allow God to touch us in our original minds. We also need to have confidence that there is something in us which we call our original mind. There is that potential in us to be touched, to be taken in, and persuaded by the love of God, by His vision and ideal for our lives.

There was another moment when I was deeply touched this summer. That was the opening ceremony of the Assembly of World Religions. What was so special about it? First, there was people from twelve different traditions represented, including the Unification tradition. These people agreed to meet one another in a welcoming ceremony. That means they agreed to share their most precious possessions in their faith, in their tradition, offering a reading of their sacred text, offering a gesture of goodwill to be together to allow God's spirit to move among them in that welcoming ceremony.

It was beautifully done and I really felt that beyond words and beyond sacred scriptures and rituals, God's heart was there binding these religious leaders together in the Assembly of World Religions. What that amounted to was a common testimony that everyone allowed themselves to be touched by God's love. They said, we have our various paths to meet God but what we share in common is our ability to be touched by God's love; that is what we want to celebrate, we want to share together.

In that welcoming ceremony, as moving as it was, and as beautiful as it was set up, still the sense of unity that was created there was based on ritual. It was the reading of texts, it was the interaction with the audience, it was the piousness and the atmosphere which came forth from

each of these religious leaders. I was thinking that beyond that unity based on ritual, which is in many ways still a symbolic unity, the intention of True Parents with this Assembly of World Religions is to make that unity more substantial, to move it further on, to show all these religious leaders that they actually worship one God and they share in one ideal. This can then move us into more substantial unity of cooperation, beyond toleration into really understanding that we are continuously called to put God's word into action.

How is our True Father bringing about that more substantial unity? What is True Father's strategy to do that? I want to offer a reading from the opening speech of the Assembly of World Religions. Father Moon is speaking to the religious leaders. He encapsulates a strategy to bring the rituals which those people shared, the rituals in their own traditions with which they approach God, to bring that symbolic unity of rituals into a substantial unity. Father Moon said:

God is calling us. He passionately desires to challenge injustice and evil in the world and express His true love. All religions should be of one mind in making known and practicing God's fervent hope for humanity. God, who transcends all ritual and doctrinal disputes, desires believers to raise up their spirit through profound spiritual dialogue and exchange with Him. Religions should establish the spiritual order to which man, who has a spiritual nature, should relate himself closely. They should systematize it and create a lifestyle which expresses it rationally. Religious leaders of all creeds should take the lead in self-purification and—furthermore—with mutual respect for each other, raise up influential inter-religious organizations.¹¹

¹¹ Sun Myung Moon, "Religion and the Creation of World Peace," Assembly of the World's Religions Founder's Address, Seoul Korea, August, 1992.

Beyond that common appeal to the religious leaders to unite with God's heart and to go beyond their rituals and their creedal formulations, True Father gave a short account of how he wanted to make unity among the religions a more substantial event. He continued:

Until I founded the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace last year, I endured enormous difficulties. For forty years, I trod the path of sacrifice, living for the sake of others, and envisioning the hitherto unrealized ideal of inter-religious harmony and the accomplishment of world peace centering on God's will. Despite the persecution of a number of intolerant religious groups in various countries, and a lack of understanding shown by successive generations of political regimes, and at the cost of all kinds of personal sacrifices, I determinedly worked to establish an ecumenical movement, an ecumenical theological seminary, the New Ecumenical Religious Association, and the publication of the World Scriptures. I have also continually supported the Council of the World's Religions and the Assembly of the World's Religions for the promotion of inter-religious harmony.¹²

The reason I quote Father Moon is to understand where we are right here in the Seminary in that quest of being movers. How can we allow God's spirit and God's love to be expressed more substantially and to create that substantial unity which our True Parents are seeking? True Father said, I determinedly worked to establish an ecumenical theological seminary. Are we such a seminary? We are right here. Father mentioned us to the religious leaders. We realize that is something we really have to work on.

It is so easy to move into an atmosphere of security and comfort. We have so much of God's truth and it's really comfortable to live with

¹² *ibid.*

that security. But that's not really what God wants. He wants us to open our hearts, our arms, to be truly ecumenical. He wants us to allow the rituals and doctrines, and different approaches to how they approach God, of people throughout history, and in our own generation, to allow all that to come into our hearts, to be digested, to be elevated. In that way we will be able to contribute to substantial unity of the world's religions. That task is enormous. And maybe because it is so enormous there may be the tendency that we become more a denominational seminary rather than an ecumenical one.

But our original mind tells us, to truly fulfill Father Moon's vision, we have to be ecumenical, we have to be interfaith oriented. We have to put aside the comfort of doctrinal assurance and just studying ourselves, navel gazing. It's not what God wants. Of course, He wants us to treasure highly the truth He gave us. But He wants us to allow it to act as a sword, and not just as a sword separating good from evil, but to act as a foundation for substantial unity—to see the various traditions of the world reflected in the Divine Principle and to see the common ground which is already established on a worldwide basis.

In this assembly I felt there was another moment where not just myself but also all the religious leaders were touched in their original minds. They knew what is right to do, and to take up the battle against the status quo, and to open up new avenues for true cooperation and true ecumenical dialog. That was the agenda of the meeting.

What can we learn from all of this? First of all, on a daily basis we have to allow Heavenly Father to touch our original minds. Whatever comes to us, we must be ready to join the ranks of Caleb and Joshua, to stand up in the midst of security and comfort and consumerism which is offered to us from the outside world, and to hone and sharpen our own longing to bring God's vision, God's will, the purity of His heart and His love. We are to bring that to the world, and to allow God to use

us as His instruments, in this very time, in this very generation that we are living in.

So, let us allow God to touch our hearts, our original minds. We are to contribute to that enormous task of making substantial unity, not only among the world's religions but making substantial unity in our own hearts and minds, between our mind and body. And we are to make unity centering on His vision and His love as a community of brothers and sisters.

The Ideal World of Adam

November 10, 1992

Reading from Matthew 16:24-28

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

We all know this passage pretty well. We heard it before many times. In so many of Father Moon’s speeches the theme of denying our own lives for the higher purpose, for the sake of God’s world, is very strong and appears often.

I was thinking, what is it we are to deny? What is it still separating us from that ideal world, from God’s kingdom? It is our inheritance from fallen Adam. We are struggling with that, and our life of faith is to overcome that inheritance and to replace it with a new tradition. What our True Father is constantly urging us to do is to reflect on this new tradition, to reflect on what is already there in us, our original endowment, what God gave us. God is inspiring us to live up to that heavenly standard which is already engraved in our hearts.

In everyday life, many times we feel some complaint, or some uneasiness, or feel upset when something evil approaches us. We are only

able to have that reaction because there is that grounding of our being in God's ideal world. We have the heavenly standard. It's already there. It's always telling us to pull ourselves together and to declare war on evil in our own hearts. One of Father Moon's approaches is to make us more aware of that original endowment in our hearts and what God's ideal world means for our daily life.

I want to present excerpts from one of Father Moon's speeches and reflect on the content. The title of the speech is "The Ideal World of Adam." Interestingly enough that speech was presented exactly one month before the 2,075 Couple Holy Marriage Blessing in Madison Square Garden; it is from June 1st, 1982. Father started out first to lay the foundation step by step for us to realize that what God wants is total harmony of love with Him and with one another. In its highest form, this harmony of love is with our spouse. That goal has to be prepared. We have to reflect step by step on what God put in our hearts originally, and how we can understand it. Here are Father Moon's words:

Everyone looks forward to reaching the ideal world, a world of peace and happiness. ... The ideal world is a balanced world in which give and take actions create a circular motion. No matter where you might be in that ideal world you would have no restrictions but would be able to turn and move in any direction. ... In order to balance two elements, there must be some central theme that they can harmonize around; some element must bring them together. ... Love is the ultimate value in the universe; to activate it, we need to have a circuit between subject and object. ... There is no alternative to love as the center of the ideal.

What is the difference between true love and false love? We say that self-centered love is false love and is therefore bad. Why is it bad? In order to call something "true" it must contain four characteristics: It must be unique, eternal, unchanging, and absolute. You can measure self-centered love against those four

criteria. Certainly, it is not unique; it is not eternal; it is not unchanging; and it is not absolute.

When someone desires true love, he desires unique and eternal love. No one wants to have changeable love and everyone wants absolute love, not mediocre love. Why must love be like this in order to satisfy us? To obtain a relationship with the absolute, ultimate plus Being, you must share the same qualities. That ultimate plus Being has those four qualities. Each person is seeking to become an absolute minus to the ultimate plus in a vertical, give and take relationship.¹³

What Father Moon is emphasizing here is that we should reflect on what “true love” means. What is that quality of love we are supposed to achieve? And in what way does it deviate from what we experience presently? He cites these four characteristics:

Uniqueness Every one of us is a unique truth body, a unique object for God. That uniqueness gives value.

Unchangeability That value seeks to be maintained and seeks to be honed and perfected, and so we have a quality of unchangeability and stability. Love should always be centered and focused in the same way with God as the center. There is this unchangeable characteristic.

Eternal Love must also be eternal. We don’t want love to fade away. As we are created with an eternal spirit, so we want that love to be eternal too. That characteristic leads us into an eternal relationship with God, with our spouse, and with one another. We ourselves are created as eternal beings, which means that we can carry out that eternal characteristic of love.

¹³ Sun Myung Moon, “The Ideal World of Adam,” Belvedere, June 1, 1982.

Absolute Finally, love is absolute. That means those three characteristics—uniqueness, being unchangeable, being eternal—they can be summed up with the term absolute, which means it is uncompromising in its quality. There is nothing next to it which would be of equal importance or value. It is superior to any phenomenon in our lives.

That absolute character of God's love, of true love, that is something that does not fit with the world around us where everything is so much relativized. Everything is subjected to the emotions of the moment, or the desires of the moment. That is the direction and judgment we receive from God, to see that quality, that unchangeability and absoluteness of love that comes to us and tries to generate in us the readiness to respond, to activate the original nature in our own hearts so that we can unite with that ideal of love which God put into our hearts. These qualities have their roots in God, and the more we can embrace God in our lives the more we are able to live out that quality of love as God desires us to do.

Now, how shall we bring the ideal world of Adam into our daily life? Father Moon continues:

What is the ideal world of Adam? Whenever we speak of Adam, don't forget that we are already including Eve. When you speak of an absolute subject, you automatically include the absolute object. Within the ideal world of Adam, there must first of all be a man and a woman. Also, God as the ultimate subject is the center and subject of love.

Your love does not originate with you; it comes from somewhere else. When a baby is born, he doesn't have any awareness of love; he certainly doesn't have the ability to love others right away. There is a giant love line coming from somewhere else; wherever we are, we must hang on to that love line. When you are above that line, you are in the plus position; when you are below it, you are a minus. It is almost like a big electric wire to

which is attached all kinds of bulbs; you are like one of those bulbs hanging from the wire.¹⁴

Here, Father Moon illustrates that yearning in us to be connected with God's love line. An important point is, in reflecting on the ideal of love, we realize it comes from an outside source. We realize we did not create love on our own. It is something given to us. It is an endowment that we are able to respond to God's love, that we have that quality. That puts us in a position of gratitude. We received a gift. We are endowed with that special quality to respond to God's love and to connect with it. So as much as we have a yearning to be part of God's superior love, to be connected with it, to be plugged into it, at the same time we realize it is not automatically there, or that we generated it on our own, but it is always God's gift to us. The emphasis on God's gift to humankind is always what characterizes the Christian tradition: the emphasis on the grace of God, that we are in the position to receive that grace. The first aspect of understanding God's love is to be a vessel for God's grace to operate in us.

Father Moon continues:

Every creature on earth, including man and woman, has its own unique pride. Even the most homely woman has her own unique self and her own unique form of beauty. No matter how unattractive a woman might be, she has a special skill; she can win the hearts of men. She should think "When I sing or laugh, I can melt those men!" Everyone is like a different flower and everyone is unique.

We have the terminology of "individual truth body" within the Unification Church. Those words signify that everyone is an individual unit with his own unique character. Each of you is an

¹⁴ *ibid.*

individual truth body. Each individual truth body harmonizes with every other, with love at the center. The concept of the ideal immediately includes the relationship of subject and object, centered upon true love.

If you know that you are not a very handsome man, that does not have to be a problem. Look at yourself like a multicolored neon sign with red, yellow, and all the colors harmonized within you. You should think, “I am not handsome but I am an integral and unique ingredient of the masterpiece of creation.” Look at yourself and say, “I am MOST important because I am unique, eternal, unchanging and absolute!”¹⁵

This shows us that we are endowed with these qualities, with this readiness to live out the ideal of God’s love. Our life of faith includes the challenge to activate that simple truth in our daily lives, and to see beyond external appearances, to always penetrate to the essence of what we are and what the things around us are really meant for. Actually, if you think of it, it is not only we who are directed with our whole being to that fulfilling ideal of God’s love. All of creation, every created thing, has as its most essential ingredient that directedness to contribute to the fulfillment of the ideal of love. That itself is an awesome thought! You walk in nature and every leaf on the tree, every little flower, every animal which crosses your path, it has that internal desire and directedness to contribute to the realization of God’s ideal of love. The more we can be in harmony with God, and in harmony with creation, the more readiness we have in our own hearts to be that channel and instrument of God’s love, the more we can be the ground for the realization of that ideal.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

The Greeks would speak of *telos*, a goal, an inbuilt goal, an internal directedness toward that goal. In our time that *telos*, that fulfillment of the whole world, becomes clear. We realize what God wanted. It is a revolutionary thought to think that God puts Himself in an object position to the realization of that ideal of love. In that sense it is really a mandate, it is a most precious responsibility for our lives, that we are the ones who should bring about that most fulfilling and all-embracing state of unity and love with our Heavenly Father. And in that way, advancing together a higher form of existence, a fulfilled form of existence within that mystery and completion of true love.

The consummation of that ideal happens in an ideal couple. Everything in creation prepared the ground for that ideal couple to emerge. Therefore, what we have to look at is our essential directedness. We are prepared to build that ideal relationship horizontally in our marriage.

Father Moon illustrates this further:

Before two beautiful women get married, they can be very good friends. They may call each other all the time and go everywhere together; they can share all their experiences. However, when one woman finds a man she will not desire the same degree of closeness with her girlfriend. Is that necessarily bad? That woman will not want to hurt her friend, but her heart is telling her that she doesn't want to share her time with anyone as much as her husband. This is simply human nature.

Universal law automatically protects the unity of plus and minus; that unity should not be invaded or broken. That is the ultimate goal of the universe. Therefore, it is within the universal principle for one minus to reject another. This type of conflict actually leads to an increased harmony. Thus, the woman in our example may feel neglected, but she should not have resentment. She should say "This is a good thing; I can see the beauty within your love relationship."

Let me give you another example. When you are sick with the flu, you feel pain and aching all through your body. Is it the disease itself which makes the body ache? Actually, it is the protective law of the universe that is creating the pain. As long as your body is enjoying the harmony of plus and minus forces, you are protected. But as soon as you lose that harmony, the universal force will reprimand you in order to warn you that you are off balance. Certain unhealthy elements need to be removed from your body so that harmony can be restored. Thus, the pain you are feeling is the result of the universal law pushing you toward harmony again. As your body gradually returns to a balance between plus and minus, you feel better and better until finally all the pain goes away.¹⁶

What Father Moon is illustrating here is that we are part of a universal law. We are under the protection of that universal law, which in itself is advancing the purpose of realizing the ideal of God's love. In human relationships we see that once husband and wife come together, once they form that unit of love, then all other relationships are to serve that higher fulfilling relationship. All other relationships become relative to that fulfilling one. Friendship is supposed to serve that higher relationship of a fulfilled love of husband and wife.

To illustrate the protective law of the universe, Father Moon speaks about our situation when we are off balance in our own harmony of give and take relationships. In other words, the pain we feel if we are sick is that signal, is that reaction, of that protective law of the universe, that we should move back to harmonious relationships within ourselves. All the elements in us need to be rebalanced and then we can be an instrument for God again and we can be ready to accomplish the ideal of love. From the individual level to the level of an actual

¹⁶ *ibid.*

relationship with our partner, there is that protective law of the universe directing us to the realization of God's love.

As we develop, and as we want to accomplish God's ideal, every action has a reaction. If we set a good action we can expect a good reaction. In that sense there is an extension of our own being to all beings. How we act on creation determines how it will respond to us. Father Moon says:

The actions of both uniting and repelling are necessary. Thus, we should not consider "reaction" as something negative; it is part of the universal law which protects the universe. An example of this is when parents restrict their teenage sons and daughters from staying out late or going to certain movies. Those parents might be saying "no" to their children a lot. Is this a destructive thing, since it is a negative reaction to the children? No, it is a constructive reaction for the protection of those children. Until that teenager is fully mature, he needs those protective forces around him. ...

The adolescent years are extremely sensitive ones. The smallest things cause tremendous emotional reactions in teenagers. Their reasoning is often obscured and their feelings are often strong and uncontrollable. At such a time, more protection is needed and therefore discipline is necessary during this growth period.¹⁷

We all realize the preciousness of these teenage years. Here the final maturation takes place and we as human beings become direct instruments for God's love. Here we undergo that final qualification to be ready to live out the ideal of God's love. It's that final preparation before becoming husband and wife, before we can relate to one another with God's love at the center. The reason that time, the teenage time, is

¹⁷ *ibid.*

so precious and so fragile is because here is that period of qualification, that period of fulfilling that precious share of responsibility in our own growth. Help is needed from the parents. Discipline, and restriction, and guidance are necessary ingredients on that path. Father Moon is very open about that. He's calling us in our own time to prepare for these years for our own children, to be strong, and to have a clear understanding of how to guide them and what direction they are to accomplish. In many ways the task of parents, to raise their children through the teenage years, is a most crucial one and the most precious task.

Let me move on in Father Moon's speech as he speaks more about husband and wife actually realizing that ideal; how we activate all these original endowments in our relationship with one another in this horizontal relationship. We have to learn to form a strong spiritual tradition in our relationship and to realize that whatever binds us together as husband and wife has to be true, it has to fulfill these four characteristics of being unique, unchanging, eternal, and absolute. When we encounter something in our relationship, if we always measure it with these criteria, then growth in our mutual relationship as husband and wife can take place.

At the close of Father Moon's speech, he says:

It is most important that you inherit the spiritual tradition. The first requirement is that you recognize and claim your own absolute uniqueness. Nobody wants to be anything other than absolutely unique. Likewise, each individual desires to be unchanging, as well as eternal. Most people believe only in what they can see, which is this life on earth; thus they do not recognize that they have eternal life. They seek to find value only within this short span of life. Those of you here recognize the existence of eternity; thus you are members of the "eternal class."

The fourth requirement for fulfilling the spiritual tradition is achieving the quality of absoluteness. No matter how average a person you may be, there is always something within you that is totally unique. Something within you never changes. Likewise, you have an eternal life; and finally you are capable of an absolute quality. Everybody has that dignity and that pride.¹⁸

Father Moon encourages us to have dignity and pride. To understand pride as something positive. To find that internal dedication to live God's standard and to activate these gifts and endowments that God gave to every one of us.

Why is it that every person possesses these qualities? As objective beings, we could not have such internal, spiritual qualities without some subject. That subject must also have the same qualities. We call that subject God. God is our subject of uniqueness, unchangeability, eternity, and absoluteness. Those are God's central characteristics.¹⁹

We can only uphold that ideal spiritual tradition in complete oneness with God. We must orient our lives on a daily basis to that harmony with God.

I mentioned in the beginning that this speech was given just one month before the Holy Marriage Blessing. Father Moon said,

Are you in that absolute position now? You are on your way. Now that you are about to receive the Blessing, everybody is excited. That's fine, but what about this tradition? Have you inherited it? Are you living it? If I gave you the Blessing regardless of your qualifications, would I be doing the right thing? Certainly not. What shall we do, then? This is a very

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*

serious matter. Your marriage is not the problem; the problem is whether or not you are inheriting this tradition.

God has been longing for a relationship with mankind for so many thousands of years and now He is just about to come down to reach you. You are men and women who are supposed to be living for God, but how much is your heart truly longing for God and His love? How hard are you trying to live up to His expectations? Marriage is nothing other than the manifestation of the ideal of God. It is the connection between the horizontal reality and the vertical inheritance from God.²⁰

Let us continuously strive after that goal to bring God's tradition into our marriage, to make the Blessing we receive a substantial happening in our lives. As Father Moon said, it's not the marriage itself that is the challenge, it is how to bring God's eternal tradition to that marriage relationship. It is the challenge to make that Blessing we receive a light which can shine in the society around us.

²⁰ *ibid.*

Repentance and Change of Heart

March 16, 1993

Reading from Matthew 21:28-31 (The Parable of the Two Sons)

What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work today in the vineyard."

"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, "I will, sir," but he did not go.

Which of the two did what his father wanted?

"The first," they answered.

When I read the parable of the two sons I thought to myself, what is the real message of this small story in the Bible? Jesus illustrates what repentance means. The first son said, I will not go, I will not do what you say. He was rebellious, he just did his own thing. But then he turned around, he changed his mind, and he went to the vineyard and he did what his father told him to. On the other hand, the other son enthusiastically said, of course, yes, I will do what you say. In this way he made his father think, he is alright, he will do what I say. But then he did not go, he did not do what his father asked.

We have to understand that Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders of his time, and those people were the ones who always proclaimed they would do God's will. But in Jesus' view they actually didn't. They saw the example of goodness and they saw the repentance of the people, but they themselves did not repent.

All of that leads me to reflect more on the mystery of repentance, on that first turning in our own hearts to leave behind our old ways and to accept God's word, to allow God's word to bear fruit in our lives. Obviously, there is some pain involved in changing our heart and in accepting the guidance of the Father, and to make a breakthrough in the struggle to do the will of God. What we need first of all is faith. We need to have that commitment to live according to God's word. Then as we have faith, and as we nourish a desire to do God's will, something else has to happen. It's not enough just to have this ideal within us, to have God's guidance with us, but we need to step out and do something about it. The next step in accomplishing repentance, and to actually do the work of the Father, to work in the vineyard, the next step is we apply God's word to our own situation. In that way we gain the skills which can lead us away from our fallen way of life. The tax collectors and the harlots in Jesus' time, they made that transition. They actually had that deeper motivation of heart to enable them to start a new life and to follow Jesus' words.

As we overcome old attachments and as we move on to do God's will, we find more skills and eventually we create what I would call good habits. We will intuitively do the right thing. That's our goal. Another word for that is to live the heavenly way of life, to live out what God intended us to be. To apply that desire not to sin any more, that is the crucial point. If we just keep it as a spiritual ideal, as something to reflect upon or to understand, but never make the breakthrough to action, never apply that in our daily life situations, we will not exchange our bad habits for good habits. That is the course of restoration, that we become new people, that we go through that transformation.

I want to illustrate this in two ways. First by reflecting on our present situation in America, and then more specifically, and that goes back to an inspiration I received in my Marriage and Family course, I want to speak about building a good God-centered marriage. Let us

start with looking at our situation in the United States. What is the present ethos? What is the underlying principle of life, if you want, where people practice their motivation or their desire? Looking at the situation in the United States, I would say our ethos today in this nation is an achievement orientation. People are driven to bring results, to be efficient, to do a job well and quickly. That is the mindset, and competition and business is based on that mindset. There is an emphasis on skills. If you know how to do something your value goes up, you are skilled. In that regard there is something good in this nation.

But we see that enhanced achievement orientation is also combined with an overemphasis on individualism. That means people are using these skills for their own gratification. They do things selfishly. That means in many cases the motivation goes the wrong way, because people use whatever skill they acquire for self-gratification or just to get the most out of life. That enhanced individualism, applying skills for one's own benefit, that leads people to occupy themselves with psychology and psychoanalysis and to find ways so that their own motivation and their own desire in life can be straightened out. But still it happens in an individualistic setting. Faith, genuine faith, is here exchanged with reflection on the human soul in terms of psychology or psychoanalysis. That is a very general description but I just want to capture what is going on today in the United States.

If I compare our situation today with maybe 100 years ago, or even earlier, in the past people were challenged to survive. We had the pioneer age in this country, and in that struggle for survival there was more orientation to find meaning in life. All of that was done through pulling in the resources of faith and religious values. The Founding Fathers, they had their power to pioneer because they had faith, because their motivation was oriented toward God. That orientation to search for meaning, and the pioneering way of life, that seems to have been exchanged today. We have what we call a consumer orientation. We are

no longer challenged just to survive or to pioneer, and we have lost the urge to search for meaning, to penetrate our present situation and to reflect on it. That consumer orientation has as its ground a pragmatic understanding of life, and with that comes the relativism of humanism. What that means is that consumer orientation is based on a secular view, and we have more and more a decline of religious values. This means the very starting point for change, that initial motivation, that initial urge to better our lives, is no longer rooted in faith or in a desire not to sin any more and to do God's will. It is increasingly rooted in the desire to do the best for ourselves, to find that self-gratification. The result we see today is a decline in our search for meaning, it is a decline in human relationships, and so we see the tremendous lack of genuine motivation in our time.

What does that general evaluation of the situation of America have to do with a most crucial issue in our life, which is to build a successful marriage, the task of building a successful God-centered marriage? First of all, I was struck by a survey which was conducted in a junior high school.²¹ Sixth graders were asked to write down in an essay what is their greatest wish in life. The teacher was very surprised about the results, because most of the students wrote down something connected with the decline of the family. For example, students wrote the following wishes: "I wish my parents wouldn't fight" and "I wish my father would come back." Another one said, "I wish my mother didn't have a boyfriend" and another one said "I wish I had one mom and one dad so the kids wouldn't make fun of me. I have three moms and three dads and they botch up my life." That was the result of that survey in this class where the teacher expected that they would say "I wish to go on a trip to Hawaii," or "I wish to have this computer game" or such things

²¹ James Dobson, *Dr. Dobson's Handbook of Family Advice: Encouragement and Practical Help for Your Home*. Harvest House Publishers, 2012.

6th graders would usually wish for. But out of 30 students, 20 wrote answers related to the family.

Now this gives us two messages. On the one hand we see the result of the modern American ethos, that it is incapable of building successful marriages and it results in a decline, as is reflected here. But it also shows that we go beyond the consumer orientation, we go beyond self-gratification, because the new generation realizes that what really counts in life is that deeper fulfillment that we find in the family. It is that practice of life in a genuine and, we could say, in a God-centered way. Their wishes were to change the present ethos, to bring back the true motivation for life, and to bring back the true meaning which is embedded in our hearts. From that, even if it's a very sad situation, I see some inkling of hope. There is a reflection on the present ethos and a correction of that ethos, especially in the younger generation; something is breaking through in that regard.

Let me make a further reflection on what Jesus said about building a God-centered marriage. We know the famous passage in Matthew 19:5 where Jesus repeats Genesis 2:24 and says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." Then he said, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning."

Jesus makes the statement that there is something that prohibits that original fulfillment from taking place in marriage, and he calls it hardness of heart. Then he adds, but it was not this way from the beginning. So, from the beginning, originally, we were not supposed to have that hardness of heart.

In analyzing Jesus' saying about the task of building a successful marriage, we see the central point of leaving our present situation of hardness of heart is first to find true faith, to find repentance. Because

what we are asked to do is to defeat Satan. That is the core issue in our life. In the Old Testament, the people were connected with God through the covenant, and they had the laws and the commandments. But all of that did not penetrate deeply enough to change people, to change their orientation in life, to change their hearts. Satan was still occupying the innermost part of people, their ability to love. It was still twisted. It was still a hardness of heart, even if people had the laws and the covenant to live by. Therefore, Jesus points to that needed transition. He points out that repentance is the way we can overcome Satan, how we can make a step away from that hardness of heart.

But to actually do that, to bring about the realization of a new life, and to bear new fruit for God, we need to apply that genuine motivation in our daily life. We need to practice it, and here again skills are needed. We need to reflect actively on how to gain those skills to make repentance happen, to change that hardness of heart, and to overcome all these influences we have in our time which teach us a very self-centered attitude to life. We need to overcome our old attachments, and then we need to build successful relationships.

It's not only the marriage relationship, but to become new, to have a new life, means to be able to relate to others based on our renewed motivation to do God's will. Here again we need to have skills to do that. I may have all the good motivation and desire to do God's will, but then I feel stifled because I don't even know how to speak to my neighbor or how to build a successful relationship with my spouse. I need to actively go after those skills, so that I can bring about the fulfillment of my new motivation which I find in my repentance.

As Jesus speaks about the original ideal of marriage by mentioning Genesis, he also says that as the man is called to leave his parents and to join his wife, he is actually called to overcome old attachments. In that natural way of building marriage and family he has to learn to get along with his wife, to build that new fulfilling relationship. So being

joined to his wife involves skills. And eventually the two shall become one flesh. A new life would develop, a new fruit would develop. We move on to what we could call a new state of being; it is oneness with God in that fulfilling relationship. Our whole life would be an expression of good habits. We would just live naturally in that way. That is the ideal which Jesus points out. This is a core issue of how to apply our faith and to move on to a new life. We build those fulfilling relationships and bring fruit in our marriage, which allows us naturally, and out of our deepest desire, to do good things and to live according to good habits.

I think the reason we have the decline of marriage and family today in America is because the realm of skills took over. People are so much focused on doing this efficiently, and doing it the right way, that the true motivation is neglected. Here a balance is needed; a correction needs to happen. We need to bring back the priority of faith and the priority of having the right motivation, and then we need to apply skills to make our ideal happen.

Father Moon speaks about this:

I don't look at you from the standpoint of success or failure of your task but centered on your motivation of heart. It is important whether your motivation is self-centered or God-centered. When your standard of heart is the same as God's, all problems will be solved. ... Unless you develop a heartistic sense and feel it to the bone in real life, you will never be able to remove your fallen nature.²²

This is Father Moon's evaluation of the situation. On the one hand we are called to bring results, to bring success, to really work out our

²² Sun Myung Moon, *The Way of God's Will*. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1980.

difficulties in life; but on the other hand, we need to be aware of the priority in our life, which is rooted in our faith in the true motivation and being constantly connected with God's ideal. Then, all the skills we acquire will have good results, will be able to solve any problem.

We can also say that skills are connected with education and insight, and that applies especially to the Seminary. We are developing skills on a daily basis. We are improving our ability to transform our ideas and ideals into reality. The triad of faith, skills, and good habits applies to our educational process. It is a tool for reflecting on our daily life, especially here at the Seminary.

I want to close with one of Father's prayers, and this is taken from a Commencement ceremony at UTS. Father prayed especially for the Seminary and for the students:

We know clearly that what we need most is not knowledge or power but young people who are truly pious and loyal to you. Heavenly champions who are willing to fight for the cause of truth and goodness. Your long-fostered wish is to unite all religions, beyond national, cultural boundaries, and their traditions, and to create a unified world where all people will love each other. We need champions for you, Heavenly Father, young people who can accomplish this solemn task. That was the very reason for establishing this Unification Theological Seminary.²³

Father Moon is encouraging us to have that pious heart, have that right motivation first, and then our training, our education, especially here at the Seminary, will enable us to harvest the fruit of the foundation laid by Christianity. We can be the mediators for other religions to

²³ Sun Myung Moon, "Unification Theological Seminary Commencement Address (Prayer)." Barrytown, New York, 1982

contribute to the building of God's kingdom. We will all move into a new life which is the expression of that transformation centered on repentance.

Love is a Decision

April 10, 1993

Reading from Isaiah 14:24, 26-27

The LORD Almighty has sworn,

“Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen.”

This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

It’s a joy to be here this morning. What moves us to come here in the morning? We want to greet our Heavenly Father, we want to start the day with Him, and most of all we want to feel His heart. The difficult point in doing that is that we still live in our own world. We have some hesitation to open up, to allow God to come to us and to move us, and to walk in His ways. We know why this is. We know we have our fallen nature and this is our daily calling to move out of that fallen nature and to open our doors, open our hearts for God to fill us.

Recently I attended a marriage encounter workshop organized by the Catholic Church. I was quite moved by the experience. I realized that what I experienced there applies first of all to my relationship with God, and then from that I can also understand how to improve my relationship with my spouse.

One of the most significant messages in this workshop was that love is a decision. You may think, what’s so new about that? Yes, among other things, love is a decision. We have to make a decision to love our spouse no matter what. And in our life of faith we have to

continuously make a decision to love God no matter what obstacles may come.

To express it differently, love is the decision to put the other person first. Of course, that addresses the very point that we are used to putting ourselves first, and now here is the calling to put the other person first. And the other person is God, it is our brother and sister, and ultimately it is our spouse.

What we just read in Isaiah shows God's determination to fulfill what He purposed to do. He purposed His complete communication of His heart to us. He wants us to live in His embrace and He wants us to live according to our original mind. And that original purpose He is pursuing without compromise. God continuously decides to love us, no matter how much we hurt Him, no matter how far we are away from Him, and how much we are caught up in our selfish way of living. That is our first model. By looking at how God worked in history and how He always decides to put the other person first, from that we can gain the power to decide to love centered on God and to put the other person first.

As we start our day, we are called to continue that decision to love; to renew it, and to live in that spirit of renewal. When God looks at us and sees how much we struggle, and how much we always try to push away our selfish feelings, then the difficult point for God is to always have trust in the face of disappointment. He trusts us that we actually will live out that original nature He gave to us.

One of the most dramatic points in my life, and I assume also in your lives, was the point when I found the Divine Principle, when I found our True Parents, and when I went through that conversion process. Thinking of that moment, here was a point in my life when I had to make a decision to love God first no matter what other interests I had. No matter how I pictured my life in becoming an electrical

engineer or making some great inventions or all other goals and expectations I had from life, I had to put all these personal desires on the side and to allow God to fill my heart and to completely give myself to Him. In that moment, I realized here was a decision to be made that I never made before in my life. And that decision is a reversal of what happened at the Human Fall.

We can spend a few minutes to reflect on the deeper problem in the situation of the Fall. First, there was on the part of Adam and Eve a decision against God's original desire for us. We realize it was that overwhelming power of misdirected love. Here the Fall happened and Satan took dominion over humankind because of that. But somewhere in that process there was, on the part of Adam and Eve, that decision to give in, to move away from the commandment, to allow that unprincipled love to take hold of them.

What I want to highlight here is the decision to love centered on God involves obedience to the commandment, it involves that responsibility. And the precious value of human beings is represented here. We are continuously called to redirect our love to God, and redirecting means to make that continuous decision, to always have God first, to always reflect on whatever selfish desire is in us, and to always overcome that.

Just to decide to love will not do. We are never in a position to save ourselves just because of a decision. But in our daily life there is something required from us, something which can be understood in the form of making an active decision to walk toward God. In every moment we face the decision: Shall I choose a more selfish easy path, or do I have that determination to walk the stony road, to climb the mountain, to really reach out for God and to reach out for that original ideal he puts into our hearts?

For Adam and Eve, it was the call to be loving while keeping faith. Here was that precious commandment, that Adam and Eve should walk on that path of responsible action. They should have decided to love for the sake of God, not for the sake of their own desires, but for the sake of God.

Let me recall some of the crucial points in the Fall that may also help us in our daily life to be more equipped to decide to love centered on God. We read in the *Divine Principle*:

Since Adam and Eve had been advised by God not to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they should have kept the commandment in accordance with the freedom of their original mind, without God's intervention.²⁴

Here is the keeping of the freedom of the original mind. It's that keeping which presents a decision, which presents that precious investment of personal responsibility:

When Eve was about to deviate from the Principle, the freedom of her original mind, seeking the actual results of goodness and responsibility in the Principle, apparently worked to keep her from going off the track by arousing a sense of insecurity and fear within her.²⁵

In other words, Eve was not so sure of what she was doing. There was some inkling in her that if she followed that unprincipled love then she will end up being fearful, being insecure, being ashamed; some state of existence will happen to her which is quite undesirable. There

²⁴ Sun Myung Moon, *Divine Principle*. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of Christianity, 1973. Chapter 2, Section V, Part 2: Freedom and the Human Fall.

²⁵ *ibid.*

was that original mind still working in her. She had guidance, internal guidance:

Even after the Fall, this freedom of the original mind surely worked to have man return to God. Therefore, man could not have fallen due to the freedom of the original mind.²⁶

In other words, God gave us that freedom of the original mind, that inner orientation to live according to God's ideal. But then unprincipled love was a stronger force, and it pulled Eve away, and in consequence Adam away from God.

Within Eve there was that struggle between the direction received from God, according to her original mind, and the unprincipled love, the temptation from Satan, and that here she was at a point of decision. She had somehow to give in, she had to allow that temptation to happen. The temptation in itself is not the cause of evil. It is the response, it is the yes on the part of Eve, and the yes on the part of man, which then brings about the unprincipled love and in consequence the Fall.

Despite the Fall, God sees in us continuously that original freedom, that original mind, that disposition that we can actually live God's ideal. When God looks at us He always sees that in us. He is addressing that in His word, in all the historical events in the Bible. He is addressing that original goodness in us. That is the fountain from where we gain the energy to always make the decision to love centered on God, to bring about the realization of restoration.

As God sees in us that original potential, that goodness, so also we are called to see in each other that original goodness. As we love God we are supposed to love our neighbor, that means our brother and sister and our spouse. It is that relationship of love for God and love for

²⁶ *ibid.*

neighbor which we know is the core message in the Christian tradition. This brings about complete salvation, that we bring heaven and earth together, that our faith in God, our love for God, can be expressed in our mutual relationships.

We understand that loving God and living a life of faith, that is our daily direction and our daily desire. But the difficulty in our lives is always how to love brothers and sisters, how to love people around us who have fallen nature, who are demonstrating the misuse of love which we inherited from the Fall. Here that decision to love comes in even more powerfully, because we have to make that statement in our own hearts, to say I love my brother and sister, I love my spouse no matter what. I make that affirmation in my heart to do that, and that is not easy. It would be so easy to love one another if we all lived according to our original minds, if we actually lived what God put into our hearts. But because there is evil, and there is impatience, selfishness, frustration, and we express all that, then our relationships become relationships of struggle and eventually separation. The tendency is to move into our individual worlds and then remain there, to try to secure ourselves inside these individual worlds.

To apply our life of faith to our relationship with our spouse in particular, I find that is a most crucial point. Because what happens here is that the decision to love becomes the decision to make a transition from a conditional to an unconditional love.

If I reflect on my life, I live in a somewhat two-story universe. I love God and I want to do His will, and I love True Parents, and I have all this fountain of strength and motivation, it is there. But then I also live in the world as it confronts me on a daily basis, as I have to relate to brothers and sisters, to my spouse and to my children. In that real world, in that daily interaction with other people, I feel that I still live in a realm of selfish desire, moving in my own world. Why is that? It is because I have many times unrealistic expectations. I want that

fulfilled love which God tells us to have, and I want that to happen quickly and easily. So then that impatience comes in. We have to persevere to first sort out the difficulties of our fallen nature. In the most intense way that happens in the marriage relationship. We have very clear expectations, very high expectations for our spouse, and then what happens is that fallen nature comes out much more easily than original nature. Then struggle happens.

What I want to say is that marriage as we see it today, marriage in the modern world, is usually a 50-50 proposition. This means I will be loving if you are loving; I do my share if you do your share; and we meet somewhere in the middle. What that contractual understanding in the marital partnership does is it creates two worlds in that relationship, because one is always waiting for the other to take the first step and to show love and affection. If we live in that 50-50 proposition it means that eventually we live two parallel lives. We don't really communicate with our hearts. We don't really allow that original mind, that original fountain of love which God gives us, we don't allow that to spill over and create that unity of heart which we so desperately desire.

The decision to love in the marital relationship means to leave behind the 50-50 proposition and to move toward a 100-100 proposition. This means total investment in the relationship by both spouses, and to live out the kind of love we receive from God all the time, which is unconditional love. Of course, we realize as an ideal it sounds great, and we heard Father Moon telling us this so many times in his speeches. But what seems to be the difficult point is the day to day living, making it actually happen, not just projecting it as an ideal in the future. Then we repeat the mistake of postponing the fulfillment of things to the eschaton. The fulfillment, the perfection, the love for God, the love of Christ among each other, to be Christ-like, all that will happen in the Last Days, in the eschaton. But as we know, the eschaton, the Last

Days, is now! We are here now to make that fulfillment of love happen. And the first place to make it happen is in our Blessed Families.

If we walk this path of 100-100 proposition in our marriage partnership, it means each spouse puts the other one first. Then, even if there is some disappointment, I would constantly see my partner from God's point of view, I would see in him or her that original goodness, that original fountain of love which is given to us by God. In doing that I will have the strength to share deeply with my spouse. What we need to learn is to share our real feelings. I discover every day how difficult it is to honestly share our feelings with one another. It is easy to explain intellectual concepts, or opinions, or to reflect on our feelings. But to actually speak about them puts us in a position of vulnerability. It means I have to trust my partner, that he or she will not misunderstand, will not misuse my exposure of my real feelings, how I really feel toward my spouse, how I really feel toward God and toward True Parents in my life of faith; that honesty of sharing my deepest self. That involves a vulnerability and therefore we take a step back. We feel more secure to just reflect on it intellectually, and to have opinions, and in that way we converse with one another.

I realize increasingly that restoration means to develop that skill to share our feelings deeply and to take the time and effort to do that. Feelings are something very spontaneous; a spontaneous reaction to a certain situation. For example, if I come home late for dinner, the spontaneous reaction of my wife is, why are you so late, dinner is cold, we are waiting for you, you don't respect our schedule, what's going on! So that is an impatient initial reaction. Then of course you feel frustrated. You feel separated because of that. Recently my wife didn't say that. I came late and she said, you must have had a hard day, you worked hard, long hours, it must have been difficult, so just relax now, we are ready, we have dinner. And I realized it was a different reaction.

It was an attempt to see the whole situation and to not get caught up in an immediate reaction to a situation.

There are so many situations in our daily lives where we think we have the right to be upset about something. We think we have the right to just show our impatience and our frustration. But can I take a more Godly position, moving to the point of saying what is the original desire of my partner, what is so precious in my partner? Can I address that, can I draw that out in my reaction to him or her? Then on that level I will be able to share more deeply my real feelings and to create the unity of heart which we all desire.

In short, the message this morning is that our love for God is a daily decision to allow our original nature, our original mind, to bear its fruit in re-creating the ideal which God has for us, in experiencing His love and multiplying His love in this world. As strongly as we have this decision in our commitment of faith, in the same way we are now in the position to apply that commitment in our marriage relationship, and our relationship with our brothers and sisters, as we are called to be loving toward one another all the time. That decision to love is a constant on the path of restoration.

The Starting Point of Healing

May 19, 1993

Readings from Malachi 4:1-3

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty.

and Revelation 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the LORD God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

You may ask yourselves, how are these readings related to each other and what is their essential message? First, we read in Malachi that after the Judgment, after the evildoers are burned up, the sun of righteousness will rise and there will be healing following. The condition for that is to be in awe of God, to have fear of God, to take God

seriously. So, the first understanding of healing relates to that personal renewal, that we as individuals take God's word seriously and make substantial steps on our path of salvation.

The second reading in Revelation shows us the larger perspective, that God's work is progressing, that the world as a whole will be confronted with God's healing power. That is expressed in the Tree of Life. It is expressed through the leaves of the Tree of Life, that people who can live out God's righteousness can go forward to heal the nation. I see here some relationship between individual healing and healing of the nations. Both are strongly related because we can only be successful on our personal path to God if the society at large can increasingly fulfill God's will.

Let me first reflect more on that question of individual healing. Where is the starting point? How are we to understand it? As I said before, it is the fear of God, it is the awe of God, that is the starting point. We get inspired to take God's words seriously and we orient our lives according to the will of God. Healing on the personal level functions like God as the physician entering our lives. He realizes that we are separated from Him, that we are in a state of sinfulness. The process of healing, as we know from medical science, functions on the physical level as a process of receptivity: The patient has to trust the physician, hand himself over, and allow healing to take place. In our relationship with God, the initial step is exactly that trusting attitude on our part to allow God to come into our life and to be filled with His power and with His strength.

God tries continuously to inspire us. He tries to feed us with His word, with His vision for this world, and also with a clear understanding about our original potential. Because healing implies that we can become healthy, we have to know what it means to be healthy. Therefore, God's word first addresses our original relationship with Him. God is continuously embracing us, trying to lift us out of whatever

sinful or painful condition we may be in. Because of that inspiration and guidance that we receive from God, we open up to Him, we have receptivity toward God's words, and then healing can start.

That first starting point for healing has to do with confidence in God's original plan for us. If I'm absolutely convinced that I can be God's son or God's daughter, that I can live up to this wonderful ideal of creation which He communicates to us, if I have that self-conviction and confidence, then I will gather all the strength and power to overcome whatever fallen nature is still there. Then I will go forward in the process of healing.

This inspirational faith, the embrace of God, that parental concern God shows to us, is the first step. I remember back in 1968 in Vienna when I studied the Divine Principle for the first time, I really could feel that parental embrace. God showed very clearly what He meant with His original ideal. I was struck by the clarity and the simplicity and the penetration of the Principle through all the conceptual formulations in Christian theology. This was especially the case with the doctrine of the Trinity.

As I walked in Vienna I passed a church, quite a famous church. The Austrian emperor built it in fulfillment of a vow he made to God that if his wife survived he would build that church. She survived and so he built that church. I passed that church and it struck me that Christians are grappling with the idea of the Trinity—God the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, they live in this loving union being of one substance and three persons. All of that became suddenly clear, became connected with our day to day life here and now, as human beings called to build an ideal marriage and ideal family. It was a sudden opening up of some new access to my own original nature. God in that way moved me and I felt inspired and pushed forward to enter that healing process, which was of course still ahead of me.

God attempts to touch our hearts and to urge us to take a step where we may hesitate, where we feel there is some unknown territory. In that first phase, that first healing phase, we can feel God's embrace and the clarity of His word as He guides us forward.

That initial inspiration of God is tremendously needed. That's God's grace which pours out to us, that we actually enter the healing process. But then we realize, as we are confronted with our sinful nature, to actually achieve results on this path of healing we need to do something. We need to involve ourselves. There is some difference between spiritual healing and physical healing, where our body functions more according to natural laws and we trust the physician's wisdom and experience to gain physical health. On the spiritual side of life to gain healing we are called to contribute, to make active steps.

What is that first active step we do in response to God's inspiration and His word touching us? If you reflect on it, at least one possibility would be to understand that what needs to be done is the restoration of human relationships. This is the first step to allow healing of my soul to take place. What I mean is, I essentially take a position to say I am ready to reconcile with my neighbor, whoever it is. I am ready to forgive whatever difficulty may have arisen in the past in my relationship with brothers and sisters, with my spouse, with my children, anyone I met. I am ready to forgive. That is my first substantial active part in the healing process.

Recently we had a visitor here at the Seminary, one of our former professors. Maybe some of you know him. I know him well because he was my teacher when I studied here. He served here on the faculty for many years. Then through some difficult circumstances he left the faculty and started a different life. But recently he came and visited us. He testified about his life away from Unification Theological Seminary. He said, the reason he came back here was because he decided in this later stage of his life to meet all the people he had some difficulty with,

or who may have been angry at him, or where some reconciliation was needed. He poured out his heart about a sincere desire to really reconcile. The first thing which happened to him was he went to New York City to the Riverside Church, and the first person he ran into was UTS President, David S.C. Kim. They had a very good and reconciling talk. I was really touched by that because it showed he had a sincere desire to allow healing to take place in his life and to make an active contribution to that, and to reconcile with whoever separated from him or there was some tension or difficulty. And that was answered. Right away he had the best possibility to make substantial what he intended to do.

In our own lives there are many situations where we can make the first step of forgiving one another, of seeking reconciliation, and based on that then we can receive more of God's healing power. As God initially inspires us and guides us and pushes us forward with His word, He then asks us to take the step of reconciling with our neighbor, and in that way allowing further doors to be opened. We know once we restore human relationships, that is what the kingdom is all about. If we can push that agenda forward and allow it to happen, then God's love can be among us.

In the New Testament, Jesus spoke about the believer who comes to the altar and makes an offering but then remembers that he has something against his brother. And Jesus says, first go and reconcile with your brother and then make the offering. So, on that path of restoration the first substantial step is that act of reconciliation, that we go forward and then allow further healing to happen.

To make that first step means to overcome something in us, our pride, our own self-justification, our self-centeredness, whatever it may be. What we are actually doing here is we set that first indemnity condition. As we know from our experience, nothing is a more controversial topic in our daily lives than laying indemnity conditions.

By controversial I mean that that we tend to make excuses, or we tend to find a compromise. And it's only once we say, I had enough, I really want to make a strong and a good condition to bring about reconciliation, to answer God's calling, God's inspiration, then we can go forth and allow God's healing to work in our life. Until we make that first step we just go in circles and we never accomplish an actual healing of our soul.

We find on the individual level of restoration, the individual level of healing, that joyful motivation, that anticipation of actual healing as we embrace our brother, as we seek forgiveness, and as we forgive ourselves. That is the beginning of the healing process. It's up to us to reflect on that and to see we all have so many chances in our lives to bring about that healing, and to step forward in that first phase.

Another recent experience in my life of faith was a continuous awareness that our faith needs to find a more substantial expression in our daily life. We need to find conditions where we can actually live out what we know to be true. We need to set conditions to fulfill that, especially in our relationships in our families, with our spouse, with our children. These are our closest neighbors, these are the people we meet every day, and we may take their love for granted, or we take the relationship toward our children for granted, or toward our spouse. But we need to actively build these relationships. We need to make an investment. We are confronted on a daily basis with an overly busy schedule, that never ending to do list which we realize that probably not even in eternity we can fulfill. We tend to make a last priority out of that mandate to actively build our human relationships with our spouse and our children, with our brothers and sisters, with our neighbor, and to learn certain skills in doing that, to really seek out counsel, to invest ourselves in that task to rebuild our relationships and bring restoration that way.

As we look for spiritual food, as we read Father Moon's words, or reflect on the Divine Principle, we have to realize that this is absolutely necessary nourishment for our soul: It rekindles our desire to go forward on that path of healing. We starve our soul if we are only busy externally, accomplishing many things, going to classes, studying a lot, reading a lot. We know all of that, as necessary as it is, has to be carried by that deep commitment to nourish our souls and to allow God's inspiration to touch us on a daily basis, continuously. In other words, we need to rearrange our priorities. We need to take time out for reflecting on our relationship with God, building it, praying with more fervor, with more depth and sincerity. In this way we are opening up our hearts for God to inspire us and to push us forward so that we are ready to fulfill the needed indemnity conditions. Then we will be inspired to forgive one another, to have that attitude of humility and self-denial which is so needed to bring about reconciliation and the healing of human relationships. All of that concerns healing on the personal level, as I introduced with the passage from Malachi.

As we all know, we are living in a most exciting time right now. When I went to New Jersey to hear Father Moon speak, I realized that the decision of our True Parents to speak to the nation of America is a statement, at least in my view, a statement of forgiveness. It is another attempt to allow God to embrace this nation and to allow healing on the national level to take its course. The words of Revelation refer to that. Our True Parents are setting up and establishing the Tree of Life right here among us, and we are the leaves of the Tree of Life. We went through a course of healing. Of course, it needs to go on and there's more to be done, but whatever we could gather of spiritual treasure, that is to be shared and we are then instruments for God to heal this nation and to move that personal experience of healing to the national level. We can only make a final breakthrough in that whole process of healing if our environment, the society at large, becomes more Godly—

if God's values can be accepted by the whole nation. That is exactly True Parents' intention with this speaking tour—to bring the quality of life, God's original plan for all of us, to bring that to the nation, to orient the thinking of all Americans toward the fulfillment of God's will.

America as a nation is in a desperate situation. The decline goes on day by day. And more than the decline, it is the misinformation, the misorientation that whatever is done it seems to go in the wrong direction. The value system is eroding and that is the real sickness. Here is the real problem that needs correction and where healing has to come most urgently.

The starting point, then, for the nation, like the starting point for the individual, is faith in God's word. It is that awe before God to allow God's word to become the center in our lives and to move us continuously forward. As we as individuals experience healing from the inside out, there is another healing taking place from the outside in. This is desperately needed to restore the society at large and to bring God's values to the nation.

I want to close by reading the last paragraph of Father Moon's speech from New Jersey:

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great privilege to announce to you the establishment of the first True Family. My wife and I, together with our 13 children and 20 grandchildren are absolutely dedicated to serving God and humanity. With three generations in one family, we have achieved, on the family level, the central root, the central trunk, and the central bud of the "Tree of Life" mentioned in the Bible. It is our sincere hope that you will symbolically graft into this lineage by joining us in our efforts to create an ideal nation and world. This marks the beginning of the Completed Testament Age.

As the world enters the Completed Testament era, we will live with God again. Realizing this, we must accomplish the unity of our mind and body, parents and children, and husband and wife. Then we can establish ideal families centered upon God's love.²⁷

Our True Father is summing up his life's work. He is offering it to the American nation to be accepted in an attitude of trust and faith in God's word, to show that readiness to be healed, to allow God's physician to step forward and to accomplish that long-sought process of healing. Let us go forward then, as brothers and sisters, in that self-understanding that we are the leaves of the Tree of Life, that we are in this time God's instrument not just to advance our personal path of healing but to be instrumental to bring at this point in history this nation of America back to God and to finally accomplish the healing of all the wounds of the past.

²⁷ Sun Myung Moon, "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age." May, 1993.

I Believe in Order to Understand

September 14, 1993

Reading from 2 Peter 1:3-8

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Good morning! Welcome to a beautiful new day. I thought this morning we would spend some time to reflect together on what it means to understand our faith and pursue that path, not only in our classes here at UTS but in our life in general.

In my own studies I was struck by one medieval theologian, Anselm of Canterbury. He reflected actively on his faith, on the revelation he found in the New Testament. He wanted to make sense out of it. He wanted to apply his reason to more deeply understand the content of his faith. He coined the phrase *credo ut intelligam*, which is Latin and means “I believe in order to understand.” This means believing is the starting point. You receive revelation from God, you receive God’s word. Then follows your reflection, the process of internalizing that word and making it your own.

Anselm was a pioneer in that aspect of our lives. He was known in his monastery, where he started his own spiritual search and development, as one who was obeying the rules of the monastery down to the letter. He was the most pious, the most ascetic and dedicated of all the monks there. When the abbot of the monastery had to leave he picked Anselm as his successor.

Our ability to reason and reflect and understand is originally a godly gift, and we have to develop it. We know that throughout history that gift can be misused, as are many things in life, and so we want to discover how to rightly use that gift of reflection and reasoning, gaining knowledge, and in that way being more effective to do God's will.

What I want to convey this morning is how to understand more deeply the inheritance we receive through revelation, and what is then the process to deepen that understanding. Let me refer to one more Bible quote, 1 Corinthians 8:1-3:

But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. But whoever loves God is known by God.

Here Paul tells us that to know something in the true sense is knowledge and unity with God. Once we are penetrated by God's love, once we have that desire to know God ourselves, then the direction and the whole intention of our own knowing is right and it will be beneficial. And we will gain the ability to be more effective to do God's will. For us, as we study, our quest for knowing has to be always rooted in our love for God.

I want to share with you one experience I had over the summer. My wife and I visited her hometown in the French Alps, and we visited many of her relatives. One cousin in particular left a great imprint on my heart. That cousin had a child with a birth defect, and so that family showed such a keen interest to know more about God, to know more

about the spiritual world, in order to help that child. In their own search they came to a point to be totally open for God's guidance and they had a very deep faith. With that they could help their child in an unprecedented way. The child developed way beyond what the doctors expected and is living a more and more normal life. We had a very deep conversation with them and what I could feel or sense in that situation was a pure desire to know God, and to really embrace that knowledge as something useful, as something to be applied in their particular life, in their care for their child. Here is an example of unconditional parental love. To actually practice that parental love, knowledge of God and knowledge about God's will is a precondition. That's what I learned from that encounter.

Throughout the whole history of trying to bring faith and knowledge together, humankind went through many battles and struggles. The reason for this is that because of the Human Fall a division occurred. Our life of faith, our intuitive life, our natural disposition, was separated from our intellect, from our reflective capacity. We see the danger when our reflective knowledge goes off on its own and ends up in a prideful, assertive knowledge which separates human beings from God.

The realm of intellect is claimed by Satan. To restore that realm of intellect is a very challenging task. What needs to happen is to bring our spirit and our body together. Father Moon always mentions that unity. That is also the case in the process of learning and understanding. What I mean by that is we need to bring our whole being as we are created by God, our intuitive capacities, our naturally given endowments, we need to combine that with our intellect. In that way we can bring faith and knowledge together and we can be effective for God.

What seems to have happened in the past, especially since the Enlightenment, is that people trust in reason and knowledge just on a purely intellectual level and forget, or bypass, or put aside, the profound

truth given to us through religion and through faith. This division occurred. Now we are in the position to bring together our natural endowments, our intuition and our faith, with our ability to reason.

In doing that, in bringing faith constantly into our own reflection and making progress in understanding God's heart, we see that our relationship with God, our love for God, will be deepened. If we just more or less blindly believe, of course that is a virtue in itself. But we want to expand that, we want to be ready in every life situation to know how God would act, or to understand God's heart in a particular situation. So we need to reflect, we need to apply our faith in our search for more knowledge.

Father Moon spoke extensively about the mission and the purpose of the Seminary. What he points out in one of his major speeches is that what we really need is the foundation of thought, the foundation of thinking, and then based on that we can be successful in other areas of life. In other words, first of all we need to have theological principled thought and with that foundation any other pursuit of research or gaining knowledge can be successful.

This education in universal thought, or principled thought, is comparable with our mind. Our particular education, whatever we want to become in our profession, that more particular rational thought, is more comparable with the body. We need to have unity within our own heart and mind, within our own desire to have more knowledge. We need to always understand the very foundation for knowledge has to be principled thought, has to be universal thought, and then we can pursue our specialized fields.

I remember back here in 1977 when Father Moon came to the Seminary and spoke to us many times, he would consistently point out that he wants all human beings, all people, to have theological education, to

have that foundation. Then they would go on to study their particular fields. That is the first agenda we should remember in our own studies.

This summer I visited Slovakia, where I had a chance to meet about 70 young people who were at a 21-day workshop. I had the chance to speak to them about the Seminary, and about my own experience, and my own first steps with the Divine Principle. It was such a moving experience because I saw all these young minds really hungry for God's word, having that thirst and hunger for true knowledge, for true understanding, for that universal principled foundation which Father Moon always points out as the starting point for any real knowledge.

At that workshop we had young people from about seven different Eastern European nations in one room. Of course, they spoke different languages, and they did not all know English. What happened was we had these little groups with a translator and as I spoke in English it was like a whirlwind of voices coming after me with all these translators talking and informing the group around them. The moving part was that I could see that everyone's mind, their original longing to know God, was so stimulated. Everybody was so ready to drink in the Principle and to hear more about how we would apply it, or what that really means for our day to day living. For me personally, it was like going back to my own roots, realizing that having studied Divine Principle once and having accepted it was just a starting point in my search to know God, to live with God. We are always inspired by one another's thirst for knowledge. If I find someone who is more thirsty to know about Heavenly Father and about True Parents and how God's work is unfolding in our time, I am drawn to that person. I want to participate in that kind of thirst and hunger for God's word.

Our education here at the Seminary is a constant search for how to apply our universal foundation of principled thought to every field of knowledge. In doing that, in really understanding God's heart more deeply, what we are actually doing is we are building up knowledge

which is eternal, which we take with us to the spiritual world. Here is something which has lasting quality. If we just have a job and earn money on a day to day basis, and just be bread winners, then we are caring for physical survival. But once we go to spirit world we have nothing to take with us. Once we have that understanding about God, and God's heart, and His desire for our lives, that is the precious eternal knowledge which we take with us. We understand more about spirit world and the treasures in spirit world if we pursue principled education.

What are we doing here at the Seminary in bringing our faith together with our understanding? We are tracing back all the attempts made in history to know God more deeply. In doing that we are also discovering God's heart as, throughout history, He inspired many thinkers who would advance our understanding of God based on revelation.

In particular, in our study of Christianity and other world religions there are treasures from past thinkers who invested their whole lives to have more understanding about God. They are the ones who pushed forward, who helped set up the foundation for God's work to be accomplished in our time.

I remember way back in my 20s, for about 6 weeks I attended a Benedictine monastery in Austria, not as a monk but just as a worker. I volunteered to work with the monks and to take care of the forest there. And the monks invited me to eat lunch with them every day. I was there in this assembly and they had a very strict discipline. While they were eating, one monk would read so that they would always be aware that feeding their body means at the same also feeding their spirit. One would read and they would eat while this reading was going on. There was an awareness of the balance of physical and spiritual needs.

But what struck me more in my heart from that experience in that monastery was the longing of God to bring back His children. Throughout history we have an accumulation of God's longing for His children manifested in the Christian tradition and other traditions as well. If we walk into a church or a cathedral it's always a manifestation of God's longing for His children. I felt this especially once I knew the Principle and I walked into the cathedral in Vienna. Also, I experienced it more recently in the cathedral in Reims in France. That is the cathedral where all the French kings were crowned. I could feel God's longing and presence: Throughout history He tried to raise up His children and prepare them for a final understanding of His will and His heart. We are here now to inherit those foundations. And not just in the purely spiritual way but also in the intellectual plane, that we would make our own reflections on our faith based on thinkers from the past. That is our task in studying Christianity and world religions here at the Seminary.

Father Moon pointed out in his speech to Seminarians that we have to be always aware of a very keen balance between our understanding and reflection of our faith and at the same time developing practical skills, to bring those two together. We may have all the enthusiasm and faith and idealism on the one hand, but if we lack practical skills to actually apply that in real life situations we cannot be effective. Father Moon calls that the marriage of life. Life has these aspects. There is always the spiritual aspect, the mind aspect, loving God, being inspired by God. But there is also the physical aspect, that practical aspect, how to actually act out our motivation, our desires, our whole longing to comfort God, to live with Him. We have to act on it.

Many times, we find ourselves at a loss because we tend to be more in the camp of being pious and being prayerful, which is good, but then the calling is always to act out of that state of mind and to be effective, to set up some good results and in that way to comfort God in the real sense. The balance between internal thought and external skills is a

constant agenda we should keep in mind in our education here at the Seminary. This means very concretely that if we study a specific subject, whatever it may be, and have some insight then we should share that freely. We should make a point of walking up to one another and inspiring each other to pursue our reflective exercises together and to share whatever insights come up. Especially since we are a student body of many international students, to go beyond various barriers of language and culture is always a challenge; it does not come easily. I encourage you to take that calling of Father Moon seriously, to bring your ideals from your life of faith from your own spirituality to a very practical setting by reaching out to one another and sharing your insights and discussing things together, studying together. In that way you are contributing to the whole process of allowing one culture fully centered on God's ideal to emerge.

Our future mission is to become leaders. We are to be leaders in the sense that we should educate people who have responsibility, who are in leadership positions right now. That is the reason that we should have a broad knowledge, a broad understanding of our faith. The need for that balance between our understanding of faith and our practical skills, that applies especially in our calling to be leaders.

I recall one occasion this summer when I was in my wife's hometown. We drove to one little town in the South of France, in the French Alps, called Albertville, which you may know from the winter Olympics. It's a very lovely town. We went there to visit a friend. Then we had the idea to visit the mayor of Albertville and to introduce the Woman's Federation to him, to prepare him, to show him what we were doing, and to invite him to hear Mother Moon's speech. That was our agenda and to be honest I felt not so easy, not knowing French too well. But I had my wife with me.

We went to the City Hall there and the clerk said that the mayor just went out. He had a celebration because it was the day of the

liberation of the city of Albertville from the occupation forces in the Second World War, from the German forces. They had a celebration for that event, to remember that day. We frantically drove around to find where the mayor was. It started to rain and we thought maybe they cancelled the meeting. Finally, we found the monument to the French Resistance movement and a group of people with umbrellas standing there. Aha, that must be it. We quickly parked our car and joined those people. A speech was read and music was played and then we spoke to someone who knew the mayor. After everything was over this person introduced us to the mayor and we had a very nice talk. We could give all the literature about the Women's Federation to the mayor of Albertville.

The reason I mention that is that there was struggle there, there was perseverance needed to meet someone in a leadership position. Also, just to be confident that we could do it, that confidence comes from the foundation of a Principled education, that you are ready to answer whatever question may come up and to lead the conversation in the direction that is beneficial for that particular person. As I said before, my French is quite limited, but still I could talk a little bit to him and give him some inspiration to take that literature seriously and to read it and to pass it on to his aides. This is an illustration of how our goal is to be leaders able to guide other leaders.

Let me finish my reflections with Father Moon's words on the whole question of what true knowledge and true understanding means in connection with our faith:

The Unification Church is a school far greater than Harvard or Yale or Princeton, and is a place where only the elite of the universe can enroll. Harvard University can graduate a Ph.D. but that person can only turn around and teach theories at a

blackboard. Even a thousand Harvards together could not create one son of God, but our school turns out sons of God every day.²⁸

²⁸ Sun Myung Moon, “The 23rd Anniversary of the Unification Church and the History of God's Dispensation.” Tarrytown, New York, May 1, 1977.

Communicating with God

April 3, 1994

Reading from Exodus 6:2-9

God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.'"

Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor.

Good morning brothers and sisters. Today I want to speak about communicating with God. I realize that may sound somewhat general. But thinking about it, our time and age is known as the age of communication. So many seminars are held on topics like "Effective Communication." We realize how important it is to communicate, to come out of ourselves, to reach out to others, and most of all to reach out for God. But we know that throughout history God was the one who

reached out for us, all the time. Communication was always on the mind of God, and He wanted always to come to us, embrace us, lift us up.

We have so many means of communication in our age. Still, even if we are able to contact someone in Russia, in South America, or in Africa in a matter of minutes, in spite of all that external opening up of communication we feel many times that we are lonely and isolated. We are still not making that breakthrough in communication which will bring a fulfilled and happy life as God intended for us. Putting all these factors together, let us reflect again, how did God communicate with us? How did He reach out to us and try to instill in us the desire to reach out to Him as well?

We read in the Bible about the exodus, and we see this was the turning event in the Old Testament dispensational history. The Israelite people were guided out of bondage in Egypt and could then establish a new nation. It was, you could say, a political redemption. Here God communicated His mighty acts to these people. The Red Sea and the Pharaoh were overcome through the plagues and the mighty signs of God. In that providential activity God communicated with mighty acts. He made the people wonder. They were amazed at how God could work in their lives.

We see God's communication was always working according to the Principle. It did not come out of the blue sky that people were carried away by His actions; there had to be a foundation. That foundation for God to communicate His heart and His will to us is our response of faith and is our indemnity which we offer up to God. In the case of the Israelites, they had to suffer for more than 400 years. As we read in the Bible, they couldn't even believe Moses' talk because of their discouragement and their broken spirit. They were so steeped in suffering that they would not even dare to think that God would reach out to them. That was the biggest problem in communication there, that the people

of Israel could not envision that God would come to their rescue. Moses' task was to remove that obstacle and lead the people step by step to open up and to understand that God was really their God and He would liberate them.

Restoration through indemnity, we know that principle, and it applied in the Old Testament; not only for the Israelite people but also before. If we look at Joseph for example, he went through enslavement first and he was nearly killed by his brothers. He was unjustly imprisoned, and then he became the Prime Minister of Egypt. We see innocent suffering before God can actually work, before He can accomplish that liberation we all are longing for. We see that pattern established in the Old Testament, how deliverance is happening, that has been carried through into the New Testament.

As the Jewish people celebrate Passover we realize Christians are very much connected with that ritual. There is a lot of interpretation of Christ's work in terms of the Passover. What does this Passover mean? It means that the angel of the Lord, the death angel, who was smiting all the firstborn of Egypt, would pass over those houses where the blood of the lamb was painted on the doorposts. Here was a mighty sign of God, and liberation was shown by means of the blood of the lamb. That topic was picked up by the Christians to understand Jesus' own suffering and crucifixion.

We had Passover last Sunday and now we are going through the Holy Week and we are reflecting on the Passion, on the suffering of Christ. Good Friday is a culminating point in the piety and in the spirituality of all Christians. The question will come up, why did Jesus die on the cross? What was God communicating to humankind at this very moment in history? God wanted to communicate His eternal will and His ideal through Jesus. He wanted to go a step further beyond His external mighty acts which He performed in the Old Testament. He wanted to bring the fulfillment of His ideal, communicating His heart

and His standard of love through Christ, through Jesus. But again, He needed people who would be able to overcome their brokenness, and who would listen, and who would connect with the one He sent. That's the crucial point. Communication always needs two. It is not enough if God always fulfills His part, we need to respond. In Jesus' case, Jesus' contemporaries had to respond. It was their calling to have open hearts and open ears for his words.

Why did the crucifixion happen? We know from Divine Principle it was because Jesus' contemporaries rejected him. What they indicated through that was they would rather stick to their old ways than take on the new ways. They would stick with the old sovereignty of Satan, and this made a condition for Satan to attack even the Messiah. But we see that as Satan had to mobilize his utmost power, his ultimate power, to attack and to kill Jesus as the Messiah, then God could exert His ultimate power to resurrect Jesus, to make victory out of that most saddening and most difficult situation of Jesus' crucifixion.

Here again is a difficulty in the Christian tradition. Christians emphasize the cross, that here the salvific act takes place. But the cross is the indemnity condition to show that because of Jesus' dedication, because of his love for God, he would make an offering so supreme that the claim of Satan to Jesus' contemporaries based on their rejection of Jesus, that claim could be overcome. It could be indemnified. And a path could be opened for God to work. That working of God, that miraculous working of God, is the resurrection of Jesus, and with that comes the opening up of spiritual salvation.

We are celebrating Easter this coming weekend and there is an awesomeness to that event. However, it's real meaning is still not fully comprehended, at least within the Christian tradition. Christians are still baffled and astounded. Because the salvific event is put on the cross, it is not seen in the resurrection. The resurrection is rather

confirmation of the crucifixion, but the redemptive act is believed to be the death of Jesus itself.

God is working through the resurrected Jesus to lift us to a new realm, to show us we can live with God as His sons and daughters in paradise. We can receive that spiritual salvation. Forty days after the resurrection we see the coming of the Holy Spirit. This marks the birth of the Christian church, where Jesus and the Holy Spirit would be the spiritual True Parents providing rebirth for spiritual children, the faithful Christians. That whole tradition developed, and the victory of God at that point is that our vision and our hope for fulfillment is set up through spiritual salvation. We are conditioned as Christians to look for fulfillment, to look for God's ultimate communication.

You can describe the Old Testament as a political redemption, that a new nation could be formed and that God would work through the laws and through the commandments and through external mighty acts. Then that communication became internalized in the Christian tradition: We received the path for spiritual salvation, to offer our spirit, to offer our own longings and our heart to God, following Christ, active discipleship, and in that way receive God's love on the level of life spirit.

Still, all that is in process. All that needs fulfillment. The Gospel is the Good News that fulfillment is coming. Now we need to bring together the external mighty acts of God in the Old Testament and the more internal spiritual salvation in the New Testament. What is still missing is physical redemption. Because of Jesus' crucifixion we are looking for that physical redemption. How can we bring our mind and body, our spirit and body, into harmony? How can we have true communication in our own person, and then in that way become wholesome people who can meet our Heavenly Father?

Ever since our True Parents proclaimed the Completed Testament Age, all Christians have this opportunity to understand their own tradition. Also, all Jewish people have the chance to understand their tradition in the light of the fulfillment of the Completed Testament Age.

How is God communicating in the Completed Testament Age? That is now our question, because we are living in that age. We ask ourselves, how can we contribute to the fulfillment of these foundations, of these providential foundations? Let me offer one quote from Father Moon on the Holy Marriage Blessing, taken from this book *Blessing and Ideal Family*:

The perfection of a man and a woman's love is the perfection of the universe. The day this love was broken, the universal order was destroyed and the vertical world was broken. Therefore, from the providential viewpoint, you must know how important marriage is. The Blessing centering on God is the place of meeting of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and the Kingdom of Heaven in heaven. Horizontally, it is the place of meeting in the external and temporal world. Through true love, man and woman gradually get closer to the center of the eternal world. Man and woman centering on God will unite into one in the center. Man and woman centering on God, giving and receiving love, will become one and will give birth to sons and daughters. Sons and daughters who are born as the fruit of love, through give and take action centering on parents who are one with God, will produce the four position foundation.

The religions which have been leading the human race do not know about the Blessing. A majority of religions emphasize an ascetic life and are prepared to be the bride. The difference between the Unification Church and the other religions is that the Unification Church has the Blessing in the name of the True Parents. From God's providential point of view, this is a surprising fact. Also, it is surprising that the Blessing candidates

include representatives of all humanity on the earth. That is possible with true love. The Blessing is the beginning of the new world.²⁹

Here, Father Moon is teaching us how God is communicating in the Completed Testament Age. The communication of His heart and His will is manifested through the True Parents and the extension of the True Parents, through all the Blessed Couples, the Blessed Families.

What is so unique in this communication is that we finally have access to bringing our spirit and body together, making a wholesome fulfillment of God's ideal possible on this earth. That requires that our communication with God can be deepened constantly, that we are seeing our whole life as that task to respond to God's longing. Throughout history, God was reaching out to us on various levels and He wanted to lift us up and bring us to the fulfillment of His ideal. But now we are in the position to reach out to God and to allow His effort to bear fruit, that we are all lifted into His presence.

We hear this from all the Christian pulpits. We should reach out to God, we should be prayerful, we should live in an atmosphere of constant prayer for constant awareness that God is right there with us, that we are never alone. Of course there are struggles. It doesn't come easily. We have to indemnify our own past, our own ancestors, whatever burden there is. But we have the foundation for that ultimate communication totally established, and we have the confidence now that we can live with our Heavenly Father in ultimate unity.

How is that done concretely? On an individual level, we bring our mind and body together, we have a very sincere and deep prayer on a

²⁹ Sun Myung Moon, *Blessing and Ideal Family*, Chapter 3, Part 3, "The Meaning and Value of the Blessing." New York, Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1993.

daily basis; we have that personal spirituality. But that again is the foundation for a further fulfillment. We are not meant to live as single people, as we just heard. We are meant to live in four position foundations. And the real breakthrough, the real message of the Completed Testament Age, is that we can communicate in an ultimate sense as husband and wife, and as parents and children. There is nothing hidden away, there is no private agenda—I do my own thing and let you be out there. There is at least the possibility for the fulfillment of that ultimate unity, coming together, communicating most freely, sharing our hearts as husband and wife and as parents and children. To enter into that phase, and to practice that calling, that is the key for entering the Completed Testament Age and making God's ideal come true.

We have difficulties to be open to our spouse, or to our children or to our friends and colleagues. The pattern of communicating well in a marriage is the pattern of how we communicate with others, with our brothers and sisters, with our friends and colleagues. If we have that freedom and openness to share everything which is in us with our partner, if we can bring God's love into active realization, then based on that we can have the openness and freedom to communicate with one another and to make our lives and our deeds always an offering for the higher purpose.

Then we would have the strength to overcome all the whisperings of Satan, which make us believe we have our private agenda, and we go this far and this is it, and then we live our own little private life. Especially we have the culture around us, preaching individualism, preaching private lives and what rights people have as individuals. There is a place for that of course. But the form it takes in our society is the opposite of what God intended us to be—to be fully communicative, to be fully open.

Reaching that point is also being able to communicate the most precious gift that God gave us, our original nature. Then we can

actually live that out and share it with one another. We are not afraid to totally communicate because there is nothing to hide. We are not ashamed any more of whatever may have been in the past.

That agenda is there, and that goal is there, and that vision is provided through our True Parents and through all of dispensational history. We must take that to heart and realize that to communicate with God involves that first calling on our part to become one with God out of our sincere love and effort. That has to be done within the family. From there, the harvest can be spread to brothers and sisters, to everyone around us, and we can build new relationships where we can freely share our original nature, with nothing to hide any more. This is the true realization of love as we all wanted and we are all longing to experience. In this way we allow ourselves to become true objects for God. The final communication, the final oneness between God and human beings can be established. Then we can give true beauty to our loving Creator who has always wanted to embrace us since the beginning of creation.

Oneness with God through the Holy Marriage Blessing

March 7, 1996

The first question I have is, why are we here this morning? Obviously, to feel closer to Heavenly Father, to greet him at the beginning of the day and to hope that the whole day can be filled with His presence. I think that's what we usually feel in our hearts when we come to Morning Service.

We long to live with God every moment of our lives, not just today but all of our future. That longing is expressed in all major religions. It's that constant struggle and striving to make unity with God, to be with Him and to love Him. We are well aware of that and we know this is the original desire in our heart; it's always there. Then we encounter obstacles, we realize we are living in the fallen world and further steps need to be taken. But what I want to point out first is that there is that desire to live with God. We all have that.

Today I want to talk about the Holy Marriage Blessing and our relationship with God. To understand the Holy Marriage Blessing, I am suggesting three steps. First, we must be aware of where we are right now, our condition in our life of faith, that we are still living in the fallen world, that we are humble before that condition, and every day make effort to move away from Satan's claim on us. That awareness of our fallen condition is a starting point. It also brings up the need for salvation. We realize something happened in our relationship with God and we want to mend it, we want to restore it. The need for salvation becomes very clear.

Where does it all start? I want to present Father Moon's words:

The human ancestors fell and a man and a woman were chased out of the Garden of Eden, therefore the husband and wife must triumph over that situation. That is the Blessing.³⁰

Here in a very succinct way Father Moon points to the central issue, where it all starts and what situation we are in. We are driven out of the Garden, we are the descendants of fallen Adam and Eve, and that man-woman husband-wife relationship is shattered. It is ungodly; Satan has a claim on it. We are suffering from it and restoration needs to take place. Here is where the Holy Marriage Blessing comes in. That's the first realization, the first step of creating an awareness for the need for the Blessing, and where it all begins.

The second step is to actually make that initiation step to move on the path of restoration. In that second step, we know from our Divine Principle study that we need to undergo the change of blood lineage. Also, that step of initiation on the substantial path of restoration happens through the Blessing. Let me present again Father Moon's words:

We ourselves do not have any value other than the ability to proclaim the Principle and spread principled opinions. Then, Satan cannot do anything. The entire Principle instructs that the Blessing is the ceremony of initiation for this path. The Blessing is the eternal jewel. It is the one form of promise by which we start now on the path of ten thousand descendants.³¹

We have a starting point, we are entering a new life, we are entering a new process to make total unity with God. That initiation, that first step to move back to God, being aware of our fallen condition and

³⁰ Sun Myung Moon, *Blessing and Ideal Family*, Chapter 3, Part 3, "The Meaning and Value of the Blessing." New York, Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1993.

³¹ *ibid.*

wanting to overcome it, mobilizing the original desire in our hearts, that happened in other religions, and especially in Christianity. I want to make a few comparisons.

What is that initiation step on that path of salvation? For the Christians it is baptism, and it is known as a sacrament. The real core purpose of baptism is to rid ourselves of Original Sin. The claim is that if you go through that initiation process then Original Sin is removed and you enter the Christian community. You are proclaiming that you are a child who returns to God. You make that dedication. In that sense baptism as a sacrament communicates God's grace, which is God's love. In many ways the Blessing has a similar function. It has that function to take away Original Sin, to switch us back to God's lineage. There is a parallel. But, the Blessing fulfills what baptism promises. It makes that actual shift from Satan's side to God's side.

In their daily life of faith, Christians live with the consciousness of that sacramental content. They know they are baptized, that they are on the path. They want to go back to God. On the personal level, that is the consciousness of Christians, to live out that sacrament of baptism as a first step, to be part of that redeemed community.

The real central point in the Blessing, and also a central point of the life of faith among Christians, is what I would call the third step in our understanding of the Blessing. That has to do with consummation or fulfillment of our original desire to reach oneness with God. The Blessing is providing just that—our desire to live with God in a very substantial way, that we experience God as our Heavenly Parent, that His love is not just something we read about but is experienced in our daily lives. That culminating point and that vision for our life of faith, which of course is the content of the Kingdom of Heaven, that needs to be clearly understood and emphasized.



**Dietrich and Elisabeth Seidel with Reverend and Mrs. Moon after
the Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony**

Regarding that point, Father Moon says the following:

To receive the Blessing is to become one with God. If you are one with God, you can become whole. Everything of God,

whatever the subject has, can be received. God has eternal life. From eternal life He has universal love—as ideal subject He has the world view. Everything is being bequeathed. That is why receiving the Blessing is the same as inheriting everything. You received God's love previously. By the Blessing we can receive God's substantiality and God's substance. Furthermore, it is not all just God's but it becomes yours. That is why marriage means to inherit everything. The most valuable part of God's love is being bequeathed, God Himself is being bequeathed and everything is being bequeathed. In these contexts, we use the word “Blessing.” Receiving the Blessing means receiving good fortune.³²

Personally, I feel that this quote sums up so many things. It not only shows us the profound meaning of the Blessing for our daily life of faith, for our daily working out of the path of restoration, but it also makes bridges to the Christian tradition on which the Principle is built, and which is our foundation.

Why do I say that? Just to repeat here: “By the Blessing we can receive God's substantiality and God's substance.” That was the biggest controversy in all of Christianity: The understanding of Jesus as being one substance with God. It's that thinking in terms of substance. Even Father Moon says it here, so I was really struck reading that.

Just two days ago we had a small gathering and the Catholic priest of Red Hook came and he gave a little talk. We discussed how we can protect the young generation, especially teenagers, from a declining culture which more and more erodes our God-centered values and traditional values. His answer was, all we have to do is really make clear that Jesus is God. That was his answer. If that is clear to the young people then they have the strength to overcome all this onslaught, the

³² *ibid.*

erosion of their values. Then the discussion was how to understand that issue, Jesus is God, is one substance with the Father.

Here we read that through the Blessing we can receive God substantially, God's substance. This whole puzzling situation about who Jesus is and what is his relationship to the Father, what it all means to be one substance with the Father, was discussed in the Ecumenical Councils. Light is shed on this whole controversy through the Blessing. At least that's how I see it. The light is that to understand substance we have to move away from a static Hellenistic philosophical thinking, and we have to see substance in terms of relationship. That means, if we can love God as He originally intended us to love Him, as it is communicated to us through our True Parents, as it is offered to us through the Blessing, then we can enter God's presence in that substantial way that His substance is communicated to us. Then we become one with Him in that ultimate fulfilling sense, which was hoped for in Christianity, which was put in doctrinal formulations and creeds. These formulations were not understood, they were seen as a mystery of faith and an awesome statement with future fulfillment, pointing to the Second Coming.

What we can learn from that is the longing to have oneness with God in our daily life of faith is prepared through the Christian experience and also other world religions—the Jewish experience, Islamic and so on. That original desire to have ultimate unity with God, the consummation of that, the substantial working out of that desire, that is presented to us through the Blessing. Father Moon's words are very illuminating and present another bridge to our Christian brothers and sisters.

The second major sacrament in the Christian tradition is the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper. That again is a sacrament indicating unity with Christ. It is a ritual where the believer makes unity with Christ through celebrating that meal. Originally it was a meal. Jesus gathered his disciples and he initiated the Last Supper. He encouraged his

disciples to celebrate that supper when he was in spirit world in order to have a substantial foundation for his presence among the Christian believers. Taking part in the Lord's Supper for the Christian means to unite with Christ, to take part in that mystery of God's presence as it is communicated through the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Blessing builds on that and shows its fulfillment. As believers, Christians create a personal unity with Christ through the Eucharist. We are now in this Completed Testament Age, as couples we are fulfilling ultimate unity with True Parents and God by receiving the Blessing. The sacrament in its ultimate sense is also represented through the Blessing. It is an ongoing ritual to reinforce the unity between Christ and the believer as expressed in the Eucharist. That reinforcement, or that total involvement on a continual basis every day is communicated in its fulfillment through the Blessing.

We think the Blessing is the big ceremony, the Holy Wine Ceremony, True Parents officiating the Holy Marriage Blessing. We receive that, we go through the motions, and then we are Blessed. What's next? Then the path of restoration takes a very substantial form. Then we actually work out whatever obstacle there was in our relationship with God. We are no longer working it out on an individual basis, like our past tradition emphasized, the Christian tradition, but now we have to work it out as a couple. We can only claim to be closer to God if we are closer to God as a couple. It doesn't count any more to be individually close to God. That's at least how I see it. That's the beauty and the profundity of the Blessing. Through the loving relationship of husband and wife as they move on their own paths of restoration closer and closer to God, in that way they can become fully God's object partners. God's presence can be communicated in the most substantial way to them, and God's substance can be communicated to them.

There is a preparation for understanding the Blessing in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the fulfillment is given to us now through True

Parents. Of course, there is still that daily working out on the path of restoration. But, having received the Blessing we know the goal, we know the consummation, that unity with God in its ultimate sense, can be achieved. The original desire of our heart is met and we all can enter the Kingdom of Heaven as couples.

Now what else can we say about the Blessing and our daily life? I see our daily life as having an outer dimension and an inner dimension. Every day we are in that situation. We are steeped in a certain culture, and we see the struggle between the secular sphere and the Christian cultural sphere. In the Last Days we see the working out of that confrontation, and we are right in the middle of it. We need to arm ourselves for that meeting in our daily lives for that outer aspect in our life of faith and proclaim the Principle. Like Father Moon said, we ourselves have not any value other than the ability to proclaim the Principle and spread principled opinions. That is because of our fallen past. What the Blessing does then is to put us on the right track, pull us out from Satan's claim, and put us on the track of restoration. Then our actions, our witnessing, our life of faith can bring fruit for the sake of God's kingdom.

What is involved is to step into that struggle between secular and Christian cultural spheres. We have to arm ourselves with a clear understanding of the Blessing. Not only that, but we need a renewed dedication to make the Blessing work in our immediate situation, which means we need to make unity with our spouse, we need to work on it on a daily basis. The point is we can only be successful in the long run if that inner unity with our spouse is actually accomplished, and if we make daily efforts to accomplish it. This means also to learn the skills of personal interaction so that we can overcome whatever obstacles from our fallen nature may be in the way.

Then we have an inner dimension in our daily lives. That means seeing one another as husband and wife, seeing one another as second

messiah. I call that the inner dimension of our daily life. It means the most hidden recesses of our hearts, the most hidden fallen nature or bad habits or whatever we have. These can be restored only if we make total unity with our spouse, and if we accept our spouse as our second messiah. That working out of restoration in our Blessing, in our marriage, and in our relationship with our children, building heavenly families, that calling is again the most central and important part in our life of faith. It has to be rekindled. We have to reflect on it continuously to be successful on that level, and only in that way our external life also will have lasting success.

We touched on many points today, but most important is to understand that unity with God, and all past concepts of unity with God in terms of substance and loving God and uniting with Christ, all of these ways of expressing ourselves point to that ultimate fulfillment which is communicated through the Blessing. If we keep that in mind, our everyday life of faith will receive very clear direction, clear focus, and we will have new enthusiasm to work out our own Blessing, to make that extra effort, and to go beyond the mountain of indemnity to reach that fulfillment with our Heavenly Father.

Mobilizing the Spirit of Victory

April 6, 1997

Good morning, brothers and sisters. Today I want to talk about mobilization of the spirit of victory. There is so much potential in us, in every one of us. But we have our day to day living, and we get used to our circumstances, and we need an experience to awaken and mobilize that spirit of victory which is deep within us.

The starting point for that spirit of victory is the conviction that the love of God is the strongest force in the universe. With that weapon, with that conviction, that mobilization can take its course. What that also means is that God's love is allowed to be on the offensive. No matter how difficult our situation may be, no matter how many term papers you have to write or exams you have to take, and no matter how much your bank account is overdrawn, it doesn't really matter in the final analysis if we can mobilize God's love deep in our own hearts. I felt that was really the essence of my own experience in my recent workshop at Cheongpyeong.³³

Let me expand that context of my experience by offering one quote from Matthew 16:18-19. This is when Jesus speaks to Peter:

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind

³³ Cheongpyeong is a beautiful location in Korea, a favorite of Reverend Moon's, where Unificationist leaders and members were invited to attend seminars on the Divine Principle. From 1995 the seminars focused on the spirit world, including separation from evil spirits and ancestor liberation ceremonies.

on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Here Jesus gives Peter a very clear assignment, that he is the rock of the church. And more than that, there is a passage here which speaks about how the powers of death or the gates of hell, or the gates of Hades, cannot prevail against the church. Now usually we think, aha, the church has to defend itself because Satan is always there trying to get us. This is usually the interpretation. But if you really look into it, the gate of a city is a defensive structure. You have the gates and the city walls, so the idea is that God is marching forward, God is on the offensive, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against the onslaught of God’s love. If we really make that our own, that attitude, that conviction, then restoration takes its course. Then we really walk in the footsteps of our True Parents. Rethink that one verse and it expresses the situation we are in now.

The church, of course, who is the church? In our time the community of Blessed Couples, that is the church. Unfortunately, we have to say, we have not been on the march forward. We were in that aggressive, offensive position against the powers of evil. And why was that the case? Because many evil spirits held us back. They tried to resurrect with us, but we didn’t have the strength to accomplish our own path. The church, that’s us as Blessed Families, we now have that mission and that calling to really make our Blessing work. That’s the whole agenda behind the Cheongpyeong providence. Blessed Couples can work out their relationships and become heavenly couples, really practice true love, not just read the Principle day by day, understand it, but then feel stuck in living it out. We should have that uplifting experience for living and substantializing what we know to be true from the Principle in the context of our Blessing.

The question is, how is it accomplished? How does it take place? Ideally, we go to Cheongpyeong as a couple. We experience together

the cleansing that is communicated. You may expect some miraculous testimony now, but I have to say that cleansing is something which happens very quietly and in the depth of your heart, and it may be very difficult to communicate to others what concretely happens. In my personal experience, I was only there for ten days, I felt I am just standing on a different foundation. Something is built up on the spiritual side of life which then allows you to sort out your difficulties and to actually work on them, and to hopefully be more successful than in the past.

What it also means concretely is that you are in the position to repent for the sins of your ancestors. It means to repent for ancestors who committed some crime, or some sin, against others who are then resentful and who bother you in your own spiritual growth. I found this is not that easy to repent for something when you don't even know what it was. But you have that feeling that definitely there is a debt there and we are in the position to pay off that debt, to have a serious heart of repentance. On that foundation forgiveness can come from those spirit men and women who were mistreated by our ancestors. Having a German background, I am sure I have a lot of ancestors who caused a lot of damage and a lot of resentment, so I could feel there is a very serious dimension to that process of salvation. Ancestral sin and hereditary sin, that is what needs to be solved. It is the goal of the Cheongpyeong providence to overcome this sin and to indemnify it.

This debt has to be paid; we need to get rid of these heavy spirits around us. But on the other hand, at the same time, we need to build up the positive forces. We need to feed ourselves with God's word. We need to make it clearer what is God's intention for us, what is His ideal for us. So, we read the Divine Principle, we share with each other, and we make the Principle alive in talking to each other. In that sense, beyond being a written text in a book the Principle has to become dialog, has to be the center of our common striving, our exchange. There our spirit can find new nourishment. That happened at the workshop over

the mealtimes, during the breaks. There was a constant reflection on how can I build a better relationship with my spouse. How can I overcome that ancestral debt, and how can I march forward and build a heavenly family?

Let me offer you one quote from Father Moon where he speaks about the importance of the husband and wife relationship:

The perfection of a man and a woman's love is the perfection of the universe. The day this love was broken, the universal order was destroyed and the vertical world was broken. Therefore, from the providential viewpoint, you must know how important marriage is. The Blessing centering on God is the place of meeting of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and the Kingdom of Heaven in heaven. Horizontally, it is the place of meeting in the external and temporal world. Through true love, man and woman gradually get closer to the center of the eternal world. Man and woman centering on God will unite into one in the center. Man and woman centering on God, giving and receiving love, will become one and will give birth to sons and daughters. Sons and daughters who are born as the fruit of love, through give and take action centering on parents who are one with God, will produce the four-position foundation.³⁴

Father Moon explains to us that if we are successful in that point, if we can make our Blessing work, we are not perfecting just ourselves we are perfecting the universe. The whole universe is waiting for true sons and daughters of God who can actualize that ideal. We always heard that our Blessing is conditional: It depends on fulfilling our responsibility. What does conditional mean? We have to always lay good

³⁴ Sun Myung Moon, *Blessing and Ideal Family*, Chapter 3, Part 3, "The Meaning and Value of the Blessing." New York, Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1993.

conditions. We always have to look forward and expect our relationship will work out with our spouse. Then we can overcome whatever obstacles there may arise from our past.

The Cheongpyeong experience showed me that we want to go beyond the conditional aspect of the Blessing; we want to make the Blessing substantial. In the past we said we have all these struggles because we are carrying with us all these past difficulties from our ancestors. But now the time is here, we are receiving a new foundation, a new input and encouragement to actually substantially fulfill what God expects from us, to really harmonize as couples. We see that if we can do that, if God's love is present between husband and wife, the rest falls into place. We will naturally be successful in raising our children and creating a harmonious family.

We may feel it's easier to care for our children than to work out the relationship with our spouse. Then we have a very distorted family situation. That is happening in American society. What we need to do is to commit ourselves, to recommit ourselves to the substantial realization of our Blessing. The starting point for the Cheongpyeong providence was to allow Blessed Couples to be successful, to actually live out their Blessing, and not to just hope that in the distant future God may be gracious enough to allow some harmony and love to come to them, but that they receive the necessary foundation to be successful in the here and now of their existence.

As it is with any of these reflections on our spiritual growth, we always have to realize what the love of God is really like. If we are the object partners for God, then our relationship with our spouse is the deepest if our relationship with God is the deepest. As we both love God with all our heart, then our relationship with one another can be the right one and can be fulfilling. God always wants to love us but He cannot because of our indebtedness to Satan, because Satan has a claim on us and we have all this spiritual baggage which we carry around. If

we understand the deep yearning on God's part to love every one of us, then it is up to us to respond to God's invitation. God wants to give His love unconditionally, and especially to Blessed Couples. We need to connect our understanding of the Principle with our daily reality and find a common path for solving all these difficulties standing in our way.

Understanding that God gives all His love to us and we are supposed to respond to it, has been the topic of numerous sermons in the past. I remember one preacher who spoke about God's love and said that the love of God is like turning on a light bulb. It shines and it gives light to you and you are just in the midst of God's love. And the preacher said there is a wire connected to the light bulb and God is like the generator giving all the electricity and all the energy and He gives it to you. Then someone in the congregation said, wait a minute, wait a minute, there are two wires not just one! One goes to the light and one comes back. The idea is that in order for God's love to reach us we need to respond, we need to actualize that second wire. God is always ready to give His love to us. It seems like God's wire is really big and can carry a lot of amperage, and ours is just a tiny little return wire. We have to expand that, we have to work on that to allow God's love to embrace us.

What does it mean in our daily lives? All these ideals, we understand them, we realize they are true, and we need to do that. But in daily life when things get rough, when we have a heavy schedule to fulfill, we get impatient, we get angry, our buttons are pushed. We are going through these motions over and over again and we don't know why, and we don't really want to make the effort. My realization at Cheongpyeong was, every time something happens to me which I do not intentionally want, there is a situation of spiritual influence. Something happens through me, like blowing up, being angry at something, and feeling very sorry about it afterwards. Some spiritual influence,

some evil spirit is there to vent his own anger and frustration. That realization was pretty clear.

Knowing it, or realizing it, is only the first step. Then we have to work it through. We were advised that after the Cheongpyeong experience we shouldn't expect miraculous changes in our lives, because all we received is a new foundation to work with. We still have to work out our various difficulties. We have to patiently take one step at a time and work on these problems or difficulties we have. The conviction that we will be more successful, or that more help is there, spiritual help, that conviction is solidly established through the workshop experience.

It's like coming out of an operating room. You are totally exhausted, bleeding, an operation was done on you, on your spirit. You have to take a certain time to recover, also physically. There is that understanding of healing and having to go through indemnity conditions as the workshop goes on. I have to say, because there is that high spirit and that solidarity of desire to really make a breakthrough it is relatively easy to go through these conditions. External things don't really get to you because you provide a genuine desire to make a breakthrough in your relationship with God and to actualize that breakthrough for your marriage relationship, to make your Blessing work. That is the goal of it. It is not a place where we contemplate individual salvation. That is not the point. We should gain some individual strength and progress, but for the purpose of making our Blessing successful.

The Cheongpyeong providence is not just a revival, but it is an ongoing healing providence for everyone. Father Moon said everyone should go to Cheongpyeong. Ideally, he wanted people to go to Cheongpyeong before they get Blessed so that they come with a purified heart to the Holy Marriage Blessing and that the Blessing can bring much more fruit to them.

I want to just briefly mention Father Moon's visit to Cheongpyeong. True Parents came on March 10th to perform the ground-breaking ceremony for the new sanctuary which will be built there. To my knowledge it's a building which can hold 10,000 people. Part of a mountain was taken away to create the surface for that building to stand on. On that day Father Moon was very exuberant. It was amazing how much he invested in his speech to uplift everyone there. The whole building site was covered with people, standing room only. It was really packed. Dignitaries from the local community and leaders from our movement also came. Father Moon was very hopeful and joyful because he knew that with this providence and with this new building, this facility, so many more thousands of people can participate in that liberation and can make substantial steps forward in their own restoration.

In other words, what Cheongpyeong does is it focuses our responsibility. We know we can only receive salvation if we fulfill our responsibility. But we have to do so many things and we seem to fizzle out with energy and time, and things go very slowly. Cheongpyeong is focusing our responsibility on certain conditions that allow cleansing from evil spirits, and because of that our restoration can march on more effectively.

Father Moon said at one point, we first have to recognize the amazing position of the Blessed Couple. That was his starting point. As Blessed Couples we have to have that self-understanding of Blessed Couples, we have to nourish it and deepen it, and reflect on it. Once you are aware of it then your desire to work out your own marriage situation will increase and you can bring much success on a daily basis. So, recognize the amazing position of the Blessed Couple.

Another point he said, do I believe in God or do I know God? As Father Moon said, of course we start out believing in God but if we grow closer to God eventually we know God, we really live with God

in a very substantial way. For Father Moon that is a daily experience. He said from all the things he is doing, it is his testimony that he knows God. He is not just believing, or hoping, projecting some ideal in the distant future. He knows it is happening now in this time and God is so close, closer to us than we could have ever imagined. We should move in that direction as well. From believing to knowing God, really living with Him in a daily loving relationship.

Father Moon spoke about a few very concrete points. For example, he said universities need to have the standard of true conscience, true love, and true lineage. Especially the young people, the young generation, they need to be educated, they need to be guided in their own spiritual life. It has to start with conscience, and with true love and true lineage. He said if he scolds us then God can give us merit. The harsher True Father speaks to us, we should take it in and digest it and affirmatively take it as our guide. Because Father Moon said God will give us merit for that. That's one way of paying indemnity, to take on Father Moon's direction and take it very seriously.

After his speech there was a nice celebration and a big lunch. There was one amazing point, you may think it's a little thing but for me it was very touching. The day started out with heavy rain and here we were in an open field. Four and half thousand people and everything is set up with microphones, and it kept raining and raining. Then sure enough when True Parents came the rain stopped, the heavens opened, it was blue, it was sunshine. And the moment the speech was over the clouds came back again! I couldn't believe it. It was somewhat similar to the Holy Marriage Blessing ceremony in August 1995. But this was more distinct because we really had sun and blue sky in the midst of rain all around. I think Father Moon made a remark, observing that you have to realize God is real. He is right there with us to show us how much He is also joyful about that event, that the sanctuary is being built now.

Let us understand that the new life which is promised by God to us through our Blessing, it is a daily calling. Every day we can work on that and we can mobilize that inspiration and we can mobilize that spirit of victory. Once that conviction is there, nothing in the world can deviate us or pull us away from God's love. God's love is the most powerful force in the whole universe. Once we have that the victory is ours, and we can ultimately comfort God's heart and bring joy to Him.

All Things are Possible for Him who Believes

May 23, 1999

Reading from Mark 9:17-26

“Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

“You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered. “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

“If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out.

Good morning, brothers and sisters. It's wonderful to see all these bright faces. More than that, your bright faces are a good balance to the cloudy sky today. It means that every one of you is sunshine. That's as it should be.

Reflecting now on what we just read about Jesus, as he said, all things are possible for those who believe. There is one little sentence he said before that. The father of the boy was desperate. This boy was possessed by some evil spirit and his only hope was that Jesus would liberate his boy. And so the father said, if you can, have pity on us and do something. And Jesus' initial response was, "If you can," and then Jesus said everything is possible for one who believes. He said "if you can," and that indicates that Jesus is first seeking the faith of the father of the boy. What is his disposition, what is his attitude? Is he ready to receive help?

We should ask ourselves, how do we stand in our daily affairs, in our life of faith? How serious are we to examine our faith from time to time and find out if it needs improvement, some rebuilding, some strengthening? Today I want to lead you through a few ideas of what it means to make an assessment of our faith, and how we can improve on it.

First of all, as God's children in this most special time in history the crucial thing is always to have faith. That sounds great and of course we say we want to have faith always, but we do have our ups and downs. We have reason to have faith and then sometimes we may think we have an excuse not to have faith. We need to carefully examine that.

We also have to be careful when Jesus said, all things are possible for those who believe. That doesn't mean just anything. It means all those things that are the will of God. Because believing has to do with building our relationship with God, doing the will of God, helping God build His kingdom. That is really where all things fit in. It is

accomplishing God's will, having that motivation and that dedication to do so. There is a qualification for the all things. It is to accomplish God's will. We cannot just pray to get a million dollars. I mean we can do that, but probably if it is self-centered it won't happen. If I pray because I want to build an orphanage or something, it may happen. It the motivation, how much are we in line with God's will, that is crucial.

Interestingly enough, if we read the Family Pledge,³⁵ in the 8th paragraph it says, we need to have absolute faith and then comes absolute love and absolute obedience. So absolute faith is number one. Of course, it always goes around in our minds, what does absolute mean? How to fathom that one word? If I may offer my interpretation: It means having a mature faith, having a faith which involves the whole person, and not just a blind faith or a robotic faith where we would just be driven by fear to do something. That is not absolute faith, at least as I see it. It is faith which can cover all realms of our existence, that we can meet God in a very intimate way and feel inspired and motivated to do God's will.

That whole question of faith and how to make it stronger, that is an issue which continued throughout the past 2,000 years and probably before that. We have many Christian theologians who wrote about it and thought about it. I want to distinguish three phases, and maybe this is geared a little toward the Seminary students since they study theology and they may be interested in this. But I think for every one of us, we can grasp at least the concern of having strong faith, that this ran throughout history, and it meets us today. And that from time to time we go through certain struggles which reflect struggles from the past.

³⁵ Sun Myung Moon, *The Holy Scripture of Cheon Il Guk: Cheon Seong Gyeong*. Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, 2014.

I will start out with fideism, which means my whole religious life, my relationship to God, is built on a blind faith. Whatever I hear God saying, or whatever I read in some revelation, that's it. Literalism goes in there, and fundamentalism. We just stick to the word, we cannot move out, we shouldn't even think about bringing some meaning into this. One theologian who spoke about this was Tertullian, in the 2nd century. Tertullian was responsible for developing the doctrine of the Trinity, three persons in one, and a mystery of the faith. Tertullian said, because it's absurd I believe. That's fideism. He also said, what has Jerusalem to do with Athens? What does the revelation we hear from Jesus and from the Hebrews, what does that have to do with the Greeks, who are philosophizing, rationalizing, and who want to know more of the meaning of it? He separated the two. He just said faith is faith, and philosophy and reflection and reason is something else. I don't want to say fideism is wrong; it's just one aspect of having faith. From time to time we need that. We need to go through a certain situation just having that kind of faith and it will lead us to our goal.

What is the second step? The second step took about a thousand years. It is known in church history as scholasticism. Anselm of Canterbury came along and he said, "*fides quaerens intellectum*," faith seeking understanding. Finally, after a thousand years people wanted to make sense out of what they believed. How far did Anselm go? What did he do?

Anselm is known for developing the theory of redemption known as satisfaction theory. On his mind was this mystery, why is Jesus divine, why do we describe Jesus as the God-man? He thought this over and he wanted to make sense out of it. "*Cur deus-homo?*" Why the God-man? What he did, he looked at his society, which was a feudal society. In the 12th century, if a nobleman was assaulted or attacked verbally, insulted, there was a rule that the one who insulted the nobleman should pay a certain amount of money to take away that deficiency

or hurt that was caused to the nobleman, especially the honor of the nobleman. That's called "*Wehrgeld*," a German word that means to ward off punishment by making a payment. That is the idea behind the rule. That is the culture Anselm grew up in and he just expanded that.

He developed his theology, his understanding of Jesus and Jesus' redemptive work by using this basic situation in his society. His theory was that God was insulted, His honor was diminished because of the Fall, and something needs to be paid to make up for this diminishment in God's honor. Since the offense was infinite, the Fall caused infinite loss of honor, so the price to be paid has to be infinite. That is the reason Jesus had to be God, had to be divine, so that his value could be infinite so that he could make that payment of infinite value on the cross. That's Anselm's theory in a nutshell.

Interestingly enough that very theory is still alive in the Catholic Church today and in other denominations in various forms. Here we see how reason is driving us to make sense out of belief. There is that desire to make sense out of Jesus' life, out of his work. Then understanding would mean that my faith is strong, and I can accomplish God's will.

But reason has its traps; it is not enough. There was a movement based totally on reason, and it went against religion, the Enlightenment. We are still suffering from that because what we have today is largely a secular society. So that whole desire to apply reason to our faith, we have to take that with caution. There is a lot of potential to pursue that path, but we have to admit its limitations as well.

Now the question comes up, if I see fideism on one side and a more scholastic approach on the other applying reason to our faith, what does absolute faith really mean? How can I develop a strong and mature faith? As I reflected on this, I thought a strong faith would be able to digest the paradox of faith, that I would be able to rise above obvious

difficulties, obvious drawbacks in my life of faith; that I would become so strong and so close to God that His love would drive me and push me forward; that I could feel the presence of God burning in my heart. From there I can interpret the things happening around me, or the messages I receive, interpret them with a strong faith and be victorious. In many ways I personally feel that is the third step to take, reaching a mature faith, drawing from both of these polar positions which I just outlined.

What is it to have that mature faith, the third phase? Obviously that faith has an aspect of motivation and determination. We want to do something and there is willpower behind it. In that sense we need to check that we are doing God's will: Is my motivation unselfish? Do I really advance God's dispensation in my life? How strong is my will? Can I penetrate through obstacles, difficulties, and so on? That has to be taken into account, and that especially comes to the forefront once I face some paradoxes in my faith.

What do I mean by paradox? There are many passages in the Bible which at first glance do not make sense. They pose a paradox. Father Moon speaks repeatedly about these paradoxes, and the Divine Principle gives meaning to some of the paradoxes in the Bible. For example, Rebekah deceived her husband Isaac and her first son Esau. The Divine Principle explains they had to restore something through mother-son cooperation, and the second son had to fulfill an Abel position toward the first-born son who was in the position of Cain. But the point I want to make is in that setting, in that time, there was the pain of deception. It was a real-life situation. The explanation came at a much later time in the future. What we need to do is to enter the hearts of Isaac and Esau as they felt cheated, and as they felt betrayed, and felt disappointment. Once we feel that, we see the reality of solving a paradox that could meet us in our own time.

We also have Tamar disguising herself as a prostitute, sleeping with her father-in-law Judah, and becoming pregnant with twins. This Bible story is usually bypassed, and if we ask a Catholic priest or a Lutheran minister he won't give any real answer to that situation. It's embarrassing. How can this kind of situation happen in Jesus' lineage? For Tamar, as she went through that, it must have been heart-wrenching. But she was making the condition to restore the blood lineage for the Messiah. Again, the explanation came much later. In the moment when it happened there was a sincere struggle and pain involved to solve a paradox.

Then we move on to Mary; we learned a lot about Mary's life. Mary conceived Jesus in the house of Zechariah, knowing that women who got pregnant outside of wedlock would be killed. She had to go through that feeling. She had that real experience, to totally trust God, to give herself, and to become the mother of the Messiah because of that dedication, because of that total commitment on her part.

But still there is a paradox. Conventional understanding clashes with the Biblical action. It clashes with how people act within God's providence. That makes us reflect all the time: What's going on here? How can I understand that? How can my faith become stronger to digest that? Once I digest it I can meet God on a much deeper level. Because what it all means is that it has to do with restoration of love, restoration by indemnity. We may find in those Biblical figures these conditions, these conflicts, these disillusionments. They pay a lot of indemnity by going through them. But they are victorious. They rescue the foundation for restoration. They rescue the lineage for the Messiah. They make the right conditions.

In some sense we are all touched by that. What would I do if I am confronted with a situation which I cannot really explain in all its details, but I have to live with it? I need strong faith, and I need to strengthen it continuously. Of course, we also want to understand more.

But then again there may be some time involved in order for a real understanding to come.

We have many other passages in the Bible which seem to be a paradox and somewhat illustrate our life of faith. One of the most outstanding ones is the one when Jesus said in Matthew 16:25, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.” It sounds like a paradox. But, we understand from the point of view of restoration through indemnity that’s exactly what we need to do. We need to take up the cross and walk that path, to really lose our old lives in order to gain the life which is centered on God’s ideal.

Just to indicate a few things which highlight the intricacies of the restoration process, in one of Father Moon’s speeches he mentioned that the restoration of love becomes the overarching agenda in all these Biblical happenings. Father Moon speaks about Jesus’ mission, for example. Jesus of course wanted to become the True Parent in his time. For that, he needed his bride and his mother should have helped him. Mary should have helped him. Father Moon said, “Jesus had to reverse, at the very root, the false love by which the Archangel had caused the fall of Eve, who was growing up as the sister of Adam.”³⁶ What that indicates is that the restoration process is not that obvious. There is a certain delicacy to that whole process of restoring love which requires a total reversal of what happened at the Fall. So especially the Messiah is involved in that reversal, and Jesus should have done it with his bride, with the bride he was looking for. Father Moon said the one who is in that position of being a younger sister of someone in the archangel position is none other than John the Baptist’s younger sister. For me this

³⁶ Sun Myung Moon, “View of the Principle of the Providential History of Salvation,” Inaugural Banquet of the Washington Times Foundation, Washington DC, April 16, 1996.

brought the realization that there is a certain restoration that is happening which is not obvious when we first look at it. It takes patience and time to deepen our understanding and also to strengthen our faith by going through that.

In Jesus' family there were a lot of incidents where, with a normal understanding that the customs of the time would allow, with that normal understanding we wouldn't be able to penetrate what Jesus really intended. Here is something to be digested. We have a chance to reflect on it and through deeper understanding, but also, by just accepting certain things on faith which was our first position, we can go through it and strengthen our faith.

I would call your attention now to the situation in Jesus' time when he needed a wall of protection to do his mission. He needed Zechariah's family and Mary and Joseph to support him and protect him. Then based on that protection he could have won the hearts of the Jewish people. But in his family, there was a tremendous struggle developing. It was a struggle of having faith and persevering. When they first received God's revelation Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary responded to it with faith. But as time went on their faith started to go down, and more and more they seem to have doubted, and Jesus suffered from that. Especially hard hit was Joseph when he found out that Mary was pregnant. We read it and we think, he was a righteous man because he defended Mary and said this is my responsibility and he protected her. But still in his heart there was a turmoil. There was a tremendous amount of indemnity paid on the part of Joseph to stick it through. He had to ask himself, is my faith strong enough to go that path and to support Mary all her life? He was asking himself, who was the father of Jesus? That was always on his mind. As we know, this question bothered him so much that he couldn't really connect with Jesus in heart, and the two became more and more distant.

I would say in our daily lives many times we are like Joseph. We are hit by that pain of wanting to know and not knowing; and being asked to persevere in our faith. For me personally Joseph is a prototype of what it means to go through difficult situations, to persevere, and to eventually become victorious in doing God's will. History is always showing us various aspects of the life we are going through now and illustrating for us where we have to do better. We have to do better than Joseph. We have to uphold God's standard of love and the Principle no matter what happens around us. So that is really the calling we have in our time.

Why do I say all that? Why do I speak about faith? As I conduct classes at the New Eden Academy³⁷ in Bridgeport I realize that especially the young people need strong faith. Why do they need strong faith? Because they are attacked every day, every minute, by a culture that wants to pull them away from God, and not just a little bit but all the way. We are in this battle. If we cannot give our children that strong faith, that deeper conviction of who God is and what God's ideal is and God's plan of restoration, if the Principle doesn't come alive for them as a real force in their life, we lose the young people, we lose our children. That is very strongly on my mind.

The question is then, what can we do better? The first people children look to are their parents. How much can we show that strong faith, that love for God shown in the love to one another as spouses, and that God can really dwell in our hearts, that we become His flesh and blood, His body; that we are walking gods on this earth? That is the ideal. The more we can accomplish that, the more our children can be drawn to

³⁷ A college preparatory high school, now called Bridgeport International Academy.

that love and can distinguish between all the imitations and aberrations and abuses of love which seem to saturate our culture.

This is the appeal we have today. We have to build our families in the strongest possible way, really having God's love in the family. And how is that done? We can do it only by establishing good traditions. It is not done by giving a little pep talk to our children now and then. Children need to be guided continuously. We need to raise them to build a strong faith for themselves. And why is it more difficult for the second generation? Because they were born into the faith. They didn't have any choice. We chose to walk the path of the Principle. We were convinced. We had a deep experience of conversion, which is hopefully on the way for the second generation. But at a certain point they have to decide on their own. And they will only be able to decide if they see in their parents that conviction, that fire for doing God's will which is so desperately needed in our time.

Let me offer you a short reading from what Father Moon says, summing up his own understanding of strong faith in terms of what is driving him, what is that reason for persevering even in the most difficult situations life may offer:

My greatest interest is focused on two major points. One, how can I liberate humanity from the bondage of evil forces. And two, how can I relieve the broken heart of God and help all people to understand God's sorrow. The most important thing to remember is that what counts is your motive. If you see something from your own selfish motive it is evil. But to see something from God's motive, the mission oriented motive, the unselfish motive, it is good. Whether it is eating, sleeping, working, earning, doing or speaking in everything what counts is your motive. Particularly young people, please bring your heart into rapport with God. Align to God's position and see things from His point of view.

Father Moon realizes that as long as we can establish the habit of taking God's point of view in our own thoughts, in our prayers, that will mobilize the foundation for strengthening our faith and being successful.

In all these quests of understanding and making our faith strong, what that means is to invite God into our hearts in a very substantial form. The first theologian in the Christian tradition, Apostle Paul, realized that whatever was available in his time was very limited in terms of understanding God and God's heart. In I Corinthians 13:12-13, he said:

For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

That was Paul's assessment of the situation. We see dimly in the mirror like a reflection, but then we shall see face to face. Our goal is to walk with God face to face, to become the dwelling place, the temple of God and to be really moved by God's presence and inspiration.

I want to share with you one last point which refers to my relationship with my son. We had many discussions about life of faith and I realized discussions don't really bring any results. They may enlighten for the moment but what really would bring growth and would bring conviction is the good habit of faith, the good traditions we establish, really living with God. My son was inspired to think about that, to bridge that gap between ideal and reality, and he wrote a little article in the "Unification News" about it. I just want to read the last paragraph, how he summed up his own longing to become strong in his faith and to really unite with God:

The ultimate purpose of all this is not just to become “perfect” per se, but more concretely to realize God as an active, pulsating, engaging, *real* existence. We should give Him the chance to manifest Himself more and more in everything we do. His nature should finally be revealed to us, and the nebulas of self-doubt will disperse forever. Our divinity should no longer be a question without an answer. Then the next person who asks us “Do you believe God exists?” we can answer “NO, I don’t believe that God exists, I *know* He does.”³⁸

³⁸ Chris Seidel, “Bridging the Gap between Ideal and Reality: A Personal Perspective,” *Unification News*, April, 1999.

Recommended Readings

- Gullery, Debby. *Small Steps to Bigger Love: A Practical Guide to Marriage as a Spiritual Practice*. Debby Gullery, 2015.
- Leal, Bento. *4 Essential Keys to Effective Communication in Love, Life, Work—Anywhere!* CreateSpace, 2017.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *Blessing and Ideal Family*. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1993.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *Exposition of the Divine Principle*. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1996.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *The Life and Mission of Jesus Christ*. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 2001.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*. The Washington Times Foundation, 2010.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *The Holy Scripture of Cheon Il Guk: Cheon Seong Gyeong*. Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, 2014.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *The Holy Scripture of Cheon Il Guk: Pyeong Hwa Gyeong*. Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, 2014.
- Moon, Sun Myung. *The Holy Scripture of Cheon Il Guk: Chambumo Gyeong*. Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, 2014.
- Seidel, Dietrich F., and Elisabeth M. Seidel. *Beloveds, Forever Together: Letters of Eternal Love*. Lulu, 2017.
- Seidel, Dietrich F., and Jennifer P. Tanabe. *Eternal Life in the Spirit World*. Lulu, 2017.
- Spurgin, Nora. *Circles of Angels: How You Can Call Your Own Circles of Angels to Energize Your Life*. HSA Publications, 1999.

- Tanabe, Jennifer P. (ed.). *The Words of David S.C. Kim: Let Us Learn from the Past*. Lulu, 2010.
- Tanabe, Jennifer P. *The Ideal Family to Be or Not to Be: Testimonies of a Life of Faith*. Lulu, 2010.
- Tanabe, Jennifer P. *Let Us Work Together for Good: David S.C. Kim's life of Service to God*. Lulu, 2011.
- Tanabe, Jennifer P. *Contemplating Unification Thought*. Lulu, 2013.
- Tanabe, Jennifer P. (ed.). *Unification Insights into Marriage and Family: The Writings of Dietrich F. Seidel*. Lulu, 2017.
- Wilson, Andrew (ed.). *World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon*. Universal Peace Federation, 2007.

Dr. Dietrich F. Seidel was born in Austria near Vienna during World War II. His experiences of the pain of war and its impact on his family instilled in him a desire to contribute to the establishment of a peaceful world. After graduating from the Vienna University of Technology he moved to the United States to study religion at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York. While there he was introduced to his future wife, Elisabeth, a native of France. His doctoral studies in theology at the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto led them to move to Canada where their two children were born.

Dr. Seidel returned to UTS as a professor in 1987. For the next 12 years he not only taught courses in theology and marriage and family but also gave a number of deep and inspiring sermons, several of which are included in this book.

The spiritual guidance contained in this volume is not limited to a particular religion. Dr. Seidel's focus is to bring God into our lives, into our marriages and our families. This collection contains valuable spiritual guidance based on his understanding that love for God is the foundation upon which a successful life, harmonious family and peaceful world is built.

Visit Dietrich Seidel's website
at
www.dietrichfseidel.com

