

Pledge 8

Complete Oneness in God

천일국 주인 우리 가정은 참사랑을 중심으로 성약시대를 맞이하여 절대신앙 절대사랑 절대복종으로 신인애일체 이상을 이루어 지상천국과 천상천국의 해방권과 석방권을 완성할 것을 맹세하나이다

Our family, the owner of Cheon Il Guk, pledges, having entered the Completed Testament Age, to achieve the ideal of God and human beings united in love through absolute faith, absolute love, and absolute obedience, and to perfect the realm of liberation and complete freedom in the Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven, by centering on true love.

THE FAMILY PLEDGE IS A BLUEPRINT for life in the Kingdom of God. God created every human being with the hope and expectation that they would achieve complete unity with Him and completely fulfill His purpose of creation. Despite the Human Fall, God has been longing for the day when humanity could participate in His Kingdom. For this purpose God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who calls us to follow him into the Kingdom. There we shall all become God's children and Christ's brothers and sisters, sharing his divine nature. (Rom. 8:19, 29; 1 John 3:2) However, in keeping with the theme of this book, we add to this traditional understanding by declaring that people will enter the Kingdom of God *as families*.

The beginning of the third millennium A.D. marks the dawn of the Kingdom age. Yet the celebrations on January 1, 2000 came and went, and today the world is full of uncertainty, confusion and peril. The grace now descending from heaven is not perceptible to just anyone. Jesus taught that the Kingdom does not arrive in an instant, but like the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31-32) it grows slowly, modestly taking root and spreading its branches in the midst

of the former age. At first few people notice it, but in the end it fills heaven and earth. We need not be alarmed at the confusion of the present time, which are but birth pangs. Rather, let the Spirit guide us to understand the hidden work of God. Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:8) As with any great work of God, entering into the Kingdom will require a faithful response to God’s call, for “The Kingdom of God does not come with signs to be observed.” (Luke 17:20)

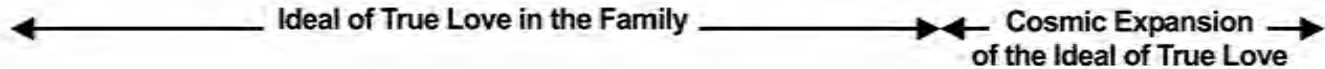
The Family Pledge illuminates the Kingdom life, not as an ideal for some indefinite future, but as a state of existence to be grasped right now. Our task is to orient our lives to take advantage of this abundant grace and meet God’s expectations.

Structure of the Eighth Pledge

The eighth pledge brings together quite a few concepts. Hence, it is helpful to begin by diagramming its structure. (Figure 12) The fulfillment of the Kingdom of God is, first, an event in *time*, the promised descent of the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:1-2) Second, it is a realm—a *space*—where Kingdom life is freely available to all. The Book of Revelation describes it symbolically as a walled city illuminated within and full of heavenly delights. (Rev. 21:12-23, 22:1-5) Third, the Kingdom is *God’s*. God’s Spirit transfigures all its inhabitants. The Bible alludes to this symbolically: “His name shall be on their foreheads,” (Rev. 22:4), and they have “the right to the tree of life.” (Rev. 22:14) Fourth, the Kingdom is *people*, who enjoy complete oneness with God. They live by the heavenly law in true families, having “washed their robes” of sin. (Rev. 22:14) They restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve were supposed to obey the commandment not to “eat” (Gen. 2:17), and form a true family within that Garden realm. The freedom and responsibility with which God endowed Adam and Eve remain a constant in the Kingdom of God, where God’s creation is perfected according to His original blueprint.

FIGURE 12: STRUCTURE OF PLEDGE 8

	TIME	PEOPLE	GOD	SPACE
Pledges	Completed Testament Age	Absolute Obedience	Ideal of God	Realm of Liberation and Complete Freedom in the Kingdom of God in Heaven
Centered on True Love		Absolute Love	United in Love	
Our Family	[New Testament Age - Old Testament Age]	Absolute Faith	and Human Beings	Realm of Liberation and Complete Freedom in the Kingdom of God on Earth



These four elements of the Kingdom of God—time, space, God, and people—are the subject of the eighth pledge. Its time is the *Completed Testament Age*, which arrives to fulfill all the divine promises of the Old Testament Age and the New Testament Age. Its space is the *realm of liberation and complete freedom in the Kingdom of God*, both in the spirit world and on earth. It reveals God through *the ideal of God and human beings united in love*. Its people practice *absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience*.

True love is the center of the Kingdom of God, represented by the shaded center row. All four elements of the Kingdom are realized in families that are *centered on true love*. In terms of time, true love is the key distinction between the Completed Testament Age and the Old and New Testament Ages that preceded it. Absolute love is the center of absolute faith and absolute obedience; it is the “thing hoped for... the thing unseen” for which we have faith (Heb. 11:1) and the heart’s motivation for our obedience. True love is the substance and perfection of the ideal oneness of God and human beings. Finally, true love links people’s earthly life with their eternal destiny in heaven.

These four kingdom ideals are firstly family ideals and secondly social ideals, represented by the bottom line in the figure. The family, as the primordial institution of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:24), is also the primary institution of the new Eden. The state of complete unity with God in love exists mainly in the family, where love is found in its greatest intensity, intimacy and variety. Individual unity with God, even the most ecstatic spiritual union, pales in comparison.

Then, starting from loving family relationships, true love will expand without limit into all manner of social, political and economic relationships in the Kingdom. The cosmic expansion of God’s ideal of love creates the *realm of liberation and complete freedom*. Father Moon describes this expansion in simple terms of how people treat one another:

Ideal families are the bricks to build the Kingdom of heaven...
When people who experience their grandparents’ deep love in their family come out into society—for example, the streets of

New York—they will feel very intimate toward the elderly people there, and the elderly people will treat them as their grandchildren... When children who have received love from their parents go outside and meet people their parents' age, they will feel very close and will try to talk with them and help them. When people who have a beautiful relationship with their brothers and sisters in their family go into society, they will easily get along with people and have close relationships with their neighbors. They will feel natural even in relating with the opposite sex, regarding them as brothers and sisters without any sexual desire or unsound ideas. The Kingdom of heaven is built of families where you are able to experience such loving relationships centering upon God...

We go to the Kingdom of heaven as a family: as a couple and as parents with the children we give birth to. We go there as a clan with sons and daughters and grandchildren. We will one day go there as an entire nation. Then this land will become a heavenly country. The Kingdom of heaven is forming in this way today.¹

The Completed Testament Age

The word “testament” comes from the Latin *testamentum*, which means a covenant. We commonly think of the Old Testament as a scripture, but that is its secondary meaning. The Old Testament was rooted in the covenants of Abraham and Moses. Likewise, the New Testament was founded on the new covenant established on the redemption of sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. (Matt 26:28) The Old Testament Age was the period of 2,000 years from Abraham to Jesus, when the covenants of Abraham and Moses were in force. Similarly, the New Testament Age extended through the last 2,000 years since the advent of Jesus Christ, when we lived under the grace of the new covenant.

A testament comes with a promise. Hence, each age has a definite providential goal, to fulfill God's promise to human beings. This means, basically, to send the Messiah and establish the Kingdom of God.

The Old Testament promoted the ideal of Israel as the Kingdom of God. When the Israelites failed to live up to that ideal, they were sent into exile for a time, still nursing the hope of one day establishing the Kingdom. After returning to their land, they languished under Gentile sovereignties, yearning for the day of liberation and the coming of God's promise. (Isa. 61:2) This crystallized as the hope for the coming of the Messiah in the Last Days.

Jesus came to fulfill the hope of the Old Testament Age. The Divine Principle teaches that when John the Baptist baptized Jesus at the Jordan River and a dove descended upon him, it symbolized the moment when all the accomplishments of the Old Testament Age were bequeathed to Jesus,² as Jesus said, "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John." (Matt. 11:13) Jesus then commenced his ministry, with the goal of fulfilling the messianic hope of the Old Testament Age. That is, if Israel had united with Jesus, they would have established the ideal of God's Kingdom on earth.

When Jesus went to the cross and could no longer work with Israel to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, he inaugurated the New Testament Age, but only as a spiritual kingdom. Among the Old Testament promises, the prophecies of the redemption of sins were fulfilled while the hope of an earthly Kingdom was deferred. Jesus came as the Lamb of God, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 53 as one who took on himself "the chastisement that makes us whole." But the Old Testament promise of an earthly Kingdom remained, postponed to the days of the Second Coming.

Thus, the Book of Revelation prophesies of the day when "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15) Despite the efforts of some theologians and churchmen to downplay these eschatological hopes and domesticate the New Testament message for the sake of sustaining a mundane social order, these hopes have persisted, periodically firing up fervent messianic expectations.

At the Second Coming of Christ, therefore, God inaugurates the Completed Testament Age, whose purpose is to fulfill the unfulfilled promises of the Old Testament Age and the New Testament Age. In particular, it should fulfill the promise of the Kingdom of God on earth, as Christians have been praying for 2,000 years, "Thy

Kingdom come, on earth.” Father Moon made a prophetic proclamation of the opening of the Completed Testament Age on January 1, 1993, seven years before the beginning of the new millennium. With the millennium’s arrival, he declared the year 2001 to be Year One of the *Cheon Il Guk*—marking it the beginning of the substantial realization of God’s Kingdom on earth. Hence, although most people do not realize it, the world has entered the Completed Testament Age. The words of the Family Pledge, *having entered...* indicate that we are already living in this new era and participating in its unfolding.

Tribulations and Birth-Pangs

According to the Divine Principle, Jesus presided over the end of the Old Testament Age when John baptized him at the Jordan River. Likewise, the end of the New Testament Age should be marked by a ceremony in which a Christian leader, of the type of John the Baptist, bequeaths a blessing to the returning Lord. This could have taken place at the end of the Second World War, when Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation. Had Korean Christians welcomed Father Moon in 1945, the Completed Testament Age would have begun at that time. Had they received him and supported him with devotion, God could have established the Kingdom directly upon the foundation of world Christianity.

However, Christian leaders in Korea rejected and spurned Father Moon. Not wishing to begin the Completed Testament Age on a shaky foundation, he went off alone and embarked on a 40-year “wilderness course” to lay a firm foundation for victory. Step by step over 40 years, he built up a movement and established a record of accomplishment and recognition comparable to what was expected in 1945.

Meanwhile Christianity, which had reached its peak of worldwide influence, began its decline. Flush from the defeat of Germany and Japan, the world was filled with hope and expectations of a new peaceful world order based on the triumph of Christian and democratic values. The United Nations was founded to give substance to that hope. Yet three years later, in 1948, a period of tribulations began. The Berlin blockade and the commencement of the Cold War, the neutering of the United Nations, religious strife at the birth of the

State of Israel, the partition India and the rise of Apartheid in South Africa dashed all hopes for an enduring peace. Korea was divided into North and South and would suffer the tragedy of the Korean War.

These external troubles were soon followed by internal tribulations. Affluence in 1950s America masked a growing feeling of meaninglessness that exploded in the youth revolt 1960s. Church attendance declined and the divorce rate skyrocketed. Prayer was taken out of the schools. Empty churches were converted into restaurants and dance halls. In only 40 years, the cultural landscape in America shifted to such an extent that Christianity had become a minority faith in a culture dominated by secular values. In Europe the situation is even worse. All these difficulties ensued as the consequence of Christianity's failure to receive the coming Lord.

At the same time, Father Moon went through tribulations of his own as he and his small band of followers carried the cross of God's providence. He endured prison six times as he worked to re-establish the lost Christian foundation. His holy wedding in 1960 took place on only the most fragile of foundations, surrounded by shouts of opposition. Step by step the scope of his work expanded, until by August 1989 (the ceremony of *P'al Jeong Shik*) he had secured an impregnable internal foundation and overcome the realm of the fall. Outward accomplishments soon followed, beginning with his meeting with President Gorbachev in 1990 that led to the opening up of the Soviet Union, a dramatic meeting with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung in 1991 that led to an opening of peace initiatives between the two Koreas, and the international Blessing of 30,000 couples in August 1992. As discussed above in relation to the sixth pledge, that marked the first time that the Blessing could be given as a free gift to people of all religions, races and nations.

The New Testament Age was founded on the blood of Jesus on the cross, memorialized in the Eucharistic wine, the "blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matt. 26:28) The Completed Testament Age is founded upon the Blessing, sanctified by holy wine, which offers membership in God's family and cleansing of the Original Sin. Therefore, soon after Father Moon had laid the groundwork upon which God could

bestow the Blessing as a gift to all the people of the world, in 1993 he declared the opening of the Completed Testament Age.

Now that the world has entered the new millennium, the time has come to build the Kingdom of Heaven, the *Cheon Il Guk*, as the substantial Peace Kingdom. Now humanity's age-old desire for peace, as foretold by the prophets of old, will come to pass. It will not happen by divine fiat, as if by magic. Rather, it will grow like the proverbial mustard seed from a small sprout to a tree whose branches touch everyone in the world. Moreover, we who are alive in this age should establish it by our own efforts within our own spheres of activity. That way God intends to give us the dignity of co-creators and 'tribal messiahs.'

Our Responsibility as People of the Completed Testament Age

The biblical concept of covenant ("testament") balances divine promises with human responsibilities. In each providential age, God set up particular obligations to justify the people of that age. In the Old Testament Age, God was true to his covenant promise as He led the Israelites out of Egypt and established them in Canaan. For their part, the Israelites were to keep the Mosaic Law, and "not turn from it to the right or the left." (Josh. Obedience to the Law and offerings at the Temple were the human portion of responsibility in the Old Testament Age.

In the New Testament Age, Christ has afforded us the grace of redemption of sins by his blood shed on the cross. We received that grace through faith. (Rom. 3:24-25) Living by faith is not cheap; it has meant walking the same path as Jesus, facing afflictions and even death. (2 Cor. 4:11) Confessing, "Jesus is Lord" in the Roman Empire could mean facing a martyr's death. Even in today's comfortable circumstances, a true Christian is challenged to live by faith even at great personal cost, as Paul said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?" (Rom. 8:35) Self-sacrifice in order to maintain the standard of faith has been the human portion of responsibility throughout the New Testament Age.

What is the nature of human responsibility in the Completed Testament Age? The biblical description of the New Jerusalem as a

mystic city descending from heaven has given many Christians the mistaken notion that the Kingdom of heaven will appear supernaturally, entirely the work of God without any human effort. Nothing could be further from the truth! The Divine Principle teaches that God gave human beings the exalted status of co-creators. To qualify as a co-creator, each person is responsible to shape the course of his or her own life in such a way as to resemble God's life. Each person is responsible to cultivate his or her heart of love to resemble God's love. The starting point for this is in the family.

Jesus is "the way" (John 14:6); and today many Christians ask the question, "What would Jesus do?" How can we live like Jesus? Do we know Jesus' mind and heart well enough to know what he would do in our situation? Does Jesus need our help for anything? Can we love Jesus in the realistic way we would love a father or an elder brother or a husband? In fact, Jesus left us with some basic instructions for our walk of faith, yet we continually make compromises. He commanded us, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), but it is a hard thing to do, or even to know what it means. To access Jesus' true heart is not a simple matter. Hence, people living in the New Testament Age have found it very difficult to reach the true standard of resemblance to God.

Fortunately, at the beginning of the Completed Testament Age, God has sent His Son once again as the Second Coming of the Lord. We have the opportunity to meet him, to sit at his feet and receive his words. Moreover, we can experience living with him and attend his family directly, or learn from others who have done so. By attending him and participating with him in building the Kingdom of God, we grow close to him in heart.³ By imitating his way of life and seeking to match his standard of love, we come to resemble him, and thus to resemble God.

As the True Parents, Father and Mother Moon are manifesting God's true love in all its aspects: *vertical love* as patriots for the nation, saints for the world and divine children of God (Pledge 2), *horizontal love* as a loving couple and as parents to their children (Pledge 3), *universal love* as they sacrifice time and energy for church members more than for their own children and for non-members more than for members, doing whatever it takes to break down the barriers to world peace (Pledge 4), *cosmic love* as they

make conditions to unify the spirit world and even liberate the inmates of hell (Pledge 5), and *divine love* as they offer the Blessing that eradicates Satan's lineage and engrafts people into God's family. (Pledge 6) Furthermore, in the True Parents and their family we see the beginnings of a culture of heart, carrying the *original lineage* and *living for the sake of others* (Pledge 7). And not least, they have been seeking to recover their original hometown in North Korea (Pledge 1) as a model for all people to untangle and clear up all the problems of the past and as a prelude to building a new world without any stains.

Look! The Family Pledge is the complete blueprint for manifesting God's true love, based upon the model of True Parents' own life! Even families who never have the chance to meet the True Parents and attend them directly can accomplish the same thing by fulfilling the Family Pledge. Indeed, a family in far-off Africa that has never met Father Moon but makes every effort to fulfill the Family Pledge may be closer to God's ideal of true love than an American family that sees Father Moon frequently but doesn't fulfill the Family Pledge. Fulfilling the Family Pledge is the key to accomplishing our portion of responsibility in the Completed Testament Age.

The Spiritual Character the Completed Testament Age

Each age has its characteristic spirituality. The Old Testament Age was the age of the Law, whose purpose was to restrain evil. God appeared as a King and Judge, dealing with people who struggled to honor Him despite their wayward and self-centered hearts. By keeping the law, doing good works and avoiding evil, people could meet the legal standard of what is required to have a relationship with God.

The New Testament Age has been the age of faith. Believers practice living faith in order to connect internally to the Spirit of God. Yet keeping faith is a struggle, both against the world and against the proclivities of the flesh. (Rom. 7:19-24) Believers who sacrificially devote themselves in faith are filled with God's grace. They experience God as their Father and a sense of belonging to God's family. Yet at the same time, they remain conscious of their sin, and recognize that they are God's only by adoption. (Rom. 8:15, 23) They are comforted that God has forgiven their sin and treats them

as sons and daughters, yet they know that of the flesh they are still of the fallen tribe.

The Completed Testament Age opens the possibility of complete oneness with God. All people can become God's direct sons and daughters, not by adoption but by blood. Sons and daughters by blood naturally resemble their parents. Therefore, people will resemble God and manifest God's love in everything. That was humankind's birthright at the time of creation, when "God created man in His own image." (Gen. 1:27) Once every trace of the Human Fall has been eradicated, it will be our birthright once again.

The most complete image of God is manifest in the family. That much is evident from Gen. 1:27, which continues, "... male and female he created them." This verse teaches that husband and wife sharing love *together* are truly God's image. In the true conjugal relationship, God's love for the husband and the wife is reflected in the love they have for God and is expanded in the love they have for each other. This is the true family: joined in both vertical oneness with God and horizontal unity as husband and wife. The couple's love further expands through their children; the family's love expands to friends and relatives and illuminates the larger community. Thus, true families living according to the Family Pledge are the embodiments of God as they add their light to the expanding realm of God's Kingdom.

The core of any family is the parents. People living in the Completed Testament Age feel in their bones that God is their real Parent. They experience God's love in all the ways that people customarily experience a good parent's love. They know that God's parental love is about more than mercy, forgiveness, and support. Like all parents, our divine Parent wants to be proud of His sons and daughters' accomplishments. Like all parents, our divine Parent frets when His children mistreat each other, and feels good when a more able son unselfishly helps a weaker sibling. Like all parents who sometimes need their sons and daughters' help, our divine Parent sometimes needs our help.

Therefore, people in the Completed Testament Age rarely pray to God asking for help. Do adults enjoy asking their parents for help? They feel ashamed to be so dependent. Likewise, instead of prayers and supplications, our communication with God should be to report

about our daily life. In talking with God, we express our hopes, confess our weaknesses, state our goals and assess how far along we are in fulfilling them. We will talk with God just as we do with our own parents. Then, even without asking, God will gladly give encouragement and powerful support.

In the past, when people's relationship with God was centered on their individual needs, each person saw a God who cares about "me." God loves each person uniquely, and in humanity's fallen state there was so much emotional neediness. That relationship changes in the Completed Testament Age, when people participate in the fullness of God's love in true families. People brought up in the abundant love of true families are not needy. Coming from a place of fullness they will, to paraphrase the words of an American president, "ask not what your God can do for you, but what you can do for your God." They will see that their God, whom they formerly thought of as existing mainly for them, has bigger headaches—over the situation of the nation, humanity and all creation. Feeling that God's problems are also their problems, they will want to help God.

Likewise, believers' relationship to the Messiah also changes. In the New Testament Age, people commonly have looked up to Christ as their Savior. Believers have understood that they could do nothing worthwhile by their own will, but only by letting Jesus Christ take charge of their lives. This attitude of faith honors Jesus for saving us, which we by no means could do by ourselves. It also defeats the devils of pride and self-will. However, it leaves an evident distance between Jesus and us.

This relationship has begun to change in the Completed Testament Age. People are being elevated, on the foundation of Jesus' sacrifice, to stand upon that higher ground where they can work together with Jesus. We participate in the task of building the Kingdom alongside Jesus, who is our elder brother. Father Moon declared,

Ladies and gentlemen, at the dawn of the Completed Testament Age, the time has come for each family to take up the messianic mission of completing the work of salvation all over the world. After restoring your family, the next step is to restore your community, tribe and nation. We call this process, "Tribal Messiahship."⁴

We become “messiahs” to our clans and communities. Working together with Christ, we take ownership within our own spheres of the task of Kingdom-building.

The Kingship of God

In the Completed Testament Age, God assumes His rightful place as the veritable King of the universe. In previous ages, God’s kingship had been largely conceptual. Some understood the kingdom as manifest in the laws of the church. Other believers took it as a voluntary yoke and submitted to it; even as countless others ignored it. Some religionists have viewed God’s kingship as limited to the realm of their religion, while placing other religions outside God’s realm. How can God, who is the Creator of the universe, be satisfied with such deficient honor? The true kingship of God encompasses the whole of heaven and earth. It touches and governs the heart of every person, and establishes a universal law for everyone to follow. Father Moon conducted the Coronation Ceremony for the Kingship of God on January 13, 2001. In the coming decades God’s kingship will gradually grow more apparent, as the world moves into the new era of peace and unity.

Therefore, in the Completed Testament Age, we can expect that churches will occupy places of honor. Why? True love will have the highest value, higher than money, power or knowledge. Therefore people will flock to religion, holds the keys to finding and practicing true love. Religious teachings will therefore regain their place at the center of education. Religion will grow in prestige as religious leaders transcend old barriers and become powerful facilitators of peacemaking and social renewal.

However, the honor of any church, denomination or religion is crucially contingent upon whether that church, denomination or religion submits to the kingship of God. God is the Lord whom all religions worship. Therefore we have a paradox: for a religion to submit to God requires that it deny the viewpoint that it is an end in itself. It will no longer be permissible for any religion to assert that it is the only way to salvation. God will not accept such claims; He will withdraw His grace and support from those who make them.

A true religion is an educational institution in God’s dominion. It respects other religions and acknowledges that God is also working

through them. It does not fret when an adherent converts to another faith, any more than a college is concerned over a student who transfers to a different university. Even today, the world is moving into an era when denominations and religions, while maintaining their distinct doctrines, rituals and institutions, are coming into basic agreement about fundamental values, which they hold in common. Interfaith marriages are further reducing the distance between religions. There must be harmony and accord between all the institutions in God's Kingdom.

Yet the central institution in the Kingdom of God is the family, not religion. After all, the family is the primordial institution of Eden. (Gen. 2:24) Religion only came into existence after our first ancestors were expelled from Eden (Gen. 4:26) as a means of "re-binding" human beings with God, whom they had lost. To this day, religion has focused on salvation of the individual. It has emphasized the individual's responsibility to meet God's expectation of faith and character. However, religion has been largely ineffective in saving the family. It has been powerless to stop the rampant plague of divorce and family breakdown in modern society. Father Moon recognizes the value of existing religions in training people in self-control and morality, but only as a preliminary step to forming true families:

What does God intend to do through religion? He intends to discipline the body. You probably think that by believing in religion you will be saved, that by believing in Christianity you will go to heaven, or that by believing in Buddhism you will enter paradise. But it is those who are united with God's love who will enter heaven. To enter heaven, Adam's family should have been a family whose center was the love of God.⁵

God's kingship is not based on political power or military might, like the kingdoms of this world. (John 18:36) God's kingship is a kingship of love, manifesting primarily in true families. As discussed in Pledge 3, it appears as the authority and respect granted by love in the family, and it spreads its benevolent governance outward into the community and nation on the foundation of true family life. The realm of God's kingship expands as more and more families throw

off the attitudes and lifestyles of the fallen world, receive the gift of the Blessing, and are re-created as true families. When such families become prevalent, the democratic process will naturally work to make the nation's laws and policies conform to the sovereign will of God.

Absolute Faith, Absolute Love and Absolute Obedience

The Book of Revelation speaks of the First Resurrection, the 144,000 believers who will stand with Christ and overcome the tribulations of the Last Days. While some commentators analyze Revelation as referring to people and events in the Roman Empire of long ago, many more see it as pointing to the future, to the days of the Second Coming of Christ.

Countless Christians have longed to be among this select group. Actually, there is no limit to God's love, and He does not turn away any qualified person. For example, Jesus healed the Syro-Phoenician woman whom his disciples rejected because she was not among the chosen people. (Matt. 15:22-28) Rather, the number 144,000 can be seen as symbolic of people from all denominations and churches; e.g., 12 tribes (denominations) times 120 clans (churches of 100 members or more). The key issue is who will qualify for the First Resurrection.

Revelation 14 describes who these people are: They bear the name of God, sing a new song praising God and are not defiled with women. They bear the truth on their lips and are without fault in their faith. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. The chapter also gives solemn warnings. They must believe and fear God in the midst of persecution. They must not become entangled in Babylon, meaning to lose their souls in the enticements of materialist commercial culture. Moreover, they should not worship the beast; this can be taken to refer to the sin of sexual promiscuity by which the Serpent beguiled Eve.

In a word, Scripture tells us that the believers who qualify as members of the 144,000 have absolute faith—faith that is unchanging and resolute. They have absolute love, not fallen love that yields to the desires of the flesh. They also have absolute obedience,

willing to follow the Lord wherever he goes and do whatever he requires.

Contrast this Kingdom ethic with the prevailing values of secular culture. Where all religious values are open to question, where everyone is encouraged to clarify their own values and find their own God, there is no absolute faith. Neither is there absolute love. People these days misidentify love with their feelings and passions, which are always changing; hence they fall in and out of love continually and are unable to sustain lasting marriages. "Obedience" is almost a dirty word in a society where individual freedom is prized above all. It has become a mark of weakness and viewed as showing a lack of individual integrity. The ideal of modern secular man (or woman) is epitomized in the Frank Sinatra song, "My Way." It depicts an individualist who chooses to believe or not, who loves whomever he or she likes, who does whatever he or she wants, and who is sovereign over his or her own destiny.

Which is more attractive, the ethic of modern individualism or the ethic of absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience? Individual freedom seems sweet, but it has resulted in a rootless and opportunistic culture that is corrosive to family life. America's affluent lifestyle promises instant gratification, but it doesn't build character or teach sacrifice, virtues that enable people to build lasting families that can nurture true love. Jesus' prophecy that in the Last Days, "most people's love will grow cold," (Matt. 24:12) well describes the situation of family breakdown in America today. The ethic of absolute faith, absolute love, and absolute obedience is 180 degrees opposite the way of the world. It does not seem very attractive, yet its fruit is exceptionally tasty and nourishing.

Absolute, Eternal, Unchanging and Unique

As human beings are created in the image of God, human life should be in accord with God's life. God is the absolute being; therefore, we should take after God's absoluteness. Otherwise, it is meaningless to think that we are taking after God's image.

Furthermore, God provides us with absolute love; therefore, we can love others with love of the same quality. As John wrote, "We love, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) If we cannot love people in the true sense, then our relationship with God is false. The

scripture goes on to say, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:20)

Resemblance to God: this is the starting point for comprehending the divine ethic of absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. Father Moon further clarifies that God is “absolute, eternal, unchanging and unique.”⁶ We should likewise be absolute, eternal, unchanging and unique.

“Absolute” means the one real existence, with no relationship to relativity. As God is absolute, human beings should become absolute in order to have a relationship with Him. This is the sense of the First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exod. 20:3) Jesus likewise declared, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matt. 6:24) Because God is absolute, people enmeshed in a web of good and evil circumstances and mixed loyalties can hardly expect to reach God. Therefore, we must humble ourselves and repent. We must seek to divide the good and evil within ourselves by becoming aware of our sin and cutting off our fallen nature. Because this is a necessary prerequisite to meeting God, Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8)

Next, an absolute being is eternal. God is the great “I Am” (Exod. 3:15) “who was and is and is to come.” (Rev. 4:8) Conversely, in Buddhism, the eternal nature of what is ultimately real is framed by the impermanence of all phenomena. Thus we read in the Diamond Sutra:

By detachment from all appearances, abide in Real Truth. So
I tell you, thus shall you think of all this fleeting world:

A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
A flickering lamp, a phantom, a dream.⁷

Likewise, the prophet Isaiah declared, “All flesh is grass... but the word of our God stands forever.” (Isa. 40:6-8)

The eternal God looks only upon affairs connected with eternity. Likewise, we should focus our lives on eternity—looking to the condition of our eternal spirit. With this in mind, Jesus taught, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matt. 6:19-20) The Qur’an puts it similarly: “Wealth and sons are the adornment of the present world; but the abiding things, the deeds of righteousness, are better with God in reward, and better in hope.”⁸

An absolute being is unchanging. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Heb. 13:8) Likewise, the faith that God prizes most is unchanging faith. He tested the faith of Abraham, and the faith of the Israelites in the wilderness, to see if they were steadfast. Habakkuk, a victorious prophet, described a faith so firm that even hunger and thirst would not shake it:

Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labor of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls—
Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation. —*Hab. 3:17-18*

Finally, God, the absolute Being, is a unique existence. “The Lord is one.” (Deut. 6:4) A Buddhist text declares, “There is no division within Suchness; just simply one single is this Suchness, not two or three.”⁹ The Qur’an also praises God’s uniqueness:

He is God, the One!
God, the eternally besought of all!
He never begets or was begotten.
And there is none comparable to Him!¹⁰

Since God is one, it stands to reason that there is only one principle by which to relate with Him. This would be the standard of faith and practice that God Himself sets up for people on the earth and in the spirit world. God began to set up such a standard through the chosen people of Israel, and then, at the right time, He incarnated as only begotten Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The verse, “I am the

way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,” (John 14:6) is a statement of God’s uniqueness. Despite the humanistic notion that everyone can find their own way to God, in truth no one can find the true God without knowing Christ, the “one mediator between God and men.” (1 Tim. 2:5)

Since God is one, how can we explain the multiplicity of religions? After the Human Fall, human beings descended into such ignorance and spiritual depravity that God had to establish conditional ways by which people could take the first steps out of hell. As a concession to human weakness, God set up easier standards; to require perfect faith would have been too difficult. For example, Jesus declared from the absolute standard divorce is a serious sin, but that God had allowed divorce in the Law of Moses “because of the hardness of your hearts.” (Matt. 19:8-9) Even among devout believers, not all those who confess Jesus Christ with their lips truly know him in their hearts or live up to his standard of faith. As noted in our survey of the regions of heaven (see Pledge 5), there are people of other religious confessions whose faith and manner of life for the sake of others is more in conformity with Christ than the faith of some Christians.

Thus, in the process of restoring humanity from a very low cultural level, God set up various religions suited to people’s diverse needs. Still, in line with the principle of God’s uniqueness, all the major world’s religions declare that theirs is the best way, even the only way. “Muhammad is... the Seal of the Prophets.”¹¹ “The best of paths is the Eightfold Path.”¹² Each religion set up its truth as the unique standard of faith and practice for all its believers.

The Qur’an offers some wisdom about living faithfully to one’s truth in a world of multiplicity:

For each We have appointed a divine law and a traced-out way. Had God willed He could have made you one community. But that He may try you by that which He has given you, He made you as you are. So vie with one another in good works. Unto God you will all return, and He will then inform you of that wherein you differ.¹³

Even though the object of faith may be partial and relative, following the path God has laid out gives proper honor to God’s

uniqueness. It is training for the day when the Kingdom of God is established based upon the one God and the one truth that can transcend and embrace the truths of all existing religions. In that day, our faith, love and obedience will be absolute.

The Trinity of Absolute Faith, Love, and Obedience

Absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience are always found together. They form a trinity of virtues. They stem ultimately from the mind of the triune God—its faculties of divine intellect, divine emotion and divine will—manifesting the Trinity of the Son (God’s Word), the Father (God’s Heart) and the Spirit (God’s power).

Faith is an orientation of the mind towards an ideal, “the assurance of things hoped for.” (Heb. 11:1) Thus faith is based on the truth, which is the Word of God. When we live by absolute faith, our minds are completely united with the Word.

Love is an orientation of the heart to live for the sake of one’s beloved. It derives from God’s Heart—the Heart of the Father. God created the universe and human beings especially to be the objects of His unlimited love. When we live by absolute love, we can experience oneness with heavenly Father’s Heart. We can also form true relationships with our spouse, our children, and all people, loving them with divine love.

Obedience is an orientation of the will to practice a way of life that manifests goodness. It derives from God’s faculty of volition, by which the Holy Spirit invests everything for the sake of creation and restoration. At the creation, “the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2), acting to bring God’s creative Word into being. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit poured down on the disciples with tongues of fire and transformed them from cowering and weak disciples into courageous witnesses for Christ, ready to obey the Master’s call. Likewise, when we practice absolute obedience, our will becomes one with God’s will and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to accomplish great things.

God created the universe and guides the affairs of humankind out of the plentitude of His faith, love and obedience. They are always found together, like the Trinity itself. Therefore, God’s expectation for human beings includes faith, love and obedience as a

triad. A person of faith who lacks love, or a person full of loving-kindness who lacks faith, or an obedient person whose faith is shallow—such people fall short of God’s standard.

God’s Faith Meets Human Faith

Human beings erect faith, love and obedience in response to God’s faith, love and obedience. Through manifesting these virtues, people connect with God and can achieve God’s purpose for their lives. There is always a reciprocal relationship: Our faith in God meets God’s faith in us; our love meets God’s love for us; our obedience to God and His laws meets God’s obedience to His own principles.

Take, for example, God’s covenant with the chosen people in the Old Testament. God demonstrated faith with the Israelites: despite their murmuring, He remained faithful to His covenant promises and gave them the land of Canaan as a possession. God also tested the Israelites’ faith in the wilderness and worked miracles through Moses to strengthen their faith. Furthermore, God loved Israel. When the Israelites were suffering as slaves in Egypt, He heard their cries and had compassion on them. (Exod. 3:7-8) God declared His love for Israel as His “special treasure.” (Exod. 19:5) In return, the Israelites were enjoined to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut 6:5) and “love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lev. 19:18) Third, God set up the Sinai covenant as the standard of obedience. The covenant was a legal framework whereby God bound Himself to certain promises, while the people for their part pledged to obey its commandments. The ceremony of ratification, where blood was sprinkled on the altar and on the people (Exod. 24:6-8), symbolized this two-fold bond of obedience.

The same reciprocity of faith, love and obedience is found in the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus Christ for the New Testament Age. Christians are justified by faith. (Gal. 2:16) Yet our faith has its source in God’s faith: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2-3) Christians are confirmed through their love. Jesus Christ showed the ultimate standard of love, laying down

his life for his friends (John 15:13); likewise, Christians are to love one another: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35) Finally, the new covenant is based on Jesus' obedience to His Father on the way of the cross, when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Not my will, but Your will be done" (Luke 22:42) Christians ever since have been presented with the choice of obedience, about which Paul wrote, "You are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-17)

Nevertheless, neither in the Old Testament Age nor in the New Testament Age have people's faith, love and obedience even compared to God's faith, love and obedience. No one's faith in God has even approached God's faith and expectation; people disappoint God time and again. No one truly loves God as God loves human-kind; nor do we love each other with a love approaching God's love. Neither has God's obedience to the providential will that He set up for the benefit of human beings been matched by people's obedience to that will. In other words, God has not found people of absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience.

God: The Standard of Absolute Faith, Love and Obedience

It is difficult to comprehend what makes faith, love or obedience "absolute." The path to understanding begins with God. God always acts with absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. God's absolute faith, God's absolute love and God's absolute obedience precede any human notions of faith, love and obedience. They existed before the foundation of the world, continue today, and will remain to eternity.

God's Absolute Faith

John's Gospel begins, "In the beginning was the Word." God set up the Word as His ideal of creation before any visible creation came to exist. God had faith that creating by the Word would result in a creation that could fully express His purpose. What is that purpose? It is to see the Word become flesh, "full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

God labored for billions of years to create the universe, all the time keeping absolute faith. When God created the stars, He was looking billions of years into the future—to the day when on some lonely planet there would be a population of beings of grace and truth who manifest His Word. When the time was right, God created Adam and Eve to be the fulfillment of the Word. God performed this great labor of creation with absolute faith.

Even after the first human beings fell and rebelled against God, disappointing Him greatly, God continued to carry on in faith, looking toward the day when His children would return to His bosom and fulfill the ideal of His Word. Even as God was expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, He expressed His faith in their future salvation, prophesying that a seed of Eve would bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15) With that faith, he labored through thousands of years to raise up the chosen people, preparing to send Christ, the incarnate Word.

Compared with God's standard of faith, who among the saints of history had a faith that could rightly be called "absolute"? God continually tested the faith of Abraham, Moses and the Israelites, but they came up wanting. Moses in his anger broke the tablets (Exod. 32:19) and struck the rock twice (Num. 20:11). Even faithful Abraham took Hagar as a concubine because he couldn't believe in God's promise of offspring through Sarah (Gen. 16:2; 17:17). St. Paul confessed that his knowledge of God's will was dim and imperfect. (1 Cor. 13:9-12) What's worse, throughout Christian history faith became entangled with intellectual doctrines, leading to disputes and even violent conflicts within God's family.

God's Absolute Love

The Bible speaks of God's absolute love: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." (John 3:16) When did God begin loving the world? God's love must have arisen prior to the creation, as "all things were made through him." (John 1:3) According to the Divine Principle, God's intention in creating the universe was to create a counterpart whom He could love absolutely, who could perfectly manifest His divine love, and through whom He could love the world. God's entire creative activity can be viewed as that of the divine Lover seeking His beloved.

Anyone can experience God's love to some degree, but it is not God's absolute love. We are accustomed to receiving God's compassionate and forgiving love, but that is not the love God seeks. Even as God loves us, He has an aching emptiness in His Heart for the person who can be His perfect companion. As any lover with his beloved, they should be able to share the most intimate secrets and know each other's minds and hearts. Viewed from this understanding, the only person in history to know God's absolute love was Jesus Christ. God could truly love Jesus as His own Son, who called Him "Abba, Father."

Jesus was the second Adam, who came to restore the first Adam's failure. (Rom. 5:12-19) Therefore, had the first Adam not fallen, but had attained perfection, he would have realized the ideal of absolute love as a type of Christ. Moreover, this absolute love was not meant for Adam alone, but for Adam and Eve as a couple. Their full expression of absolute love was to be both vertical in loving God and horizontal in perfect love for each other. We call this the ideal of True Parents.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the spiritual True Parents, in whom we can see the active love of God, saving us from sin and giving us rebirth. God's absolute love is not satisfied in remaining with a single partnership, but wants to expand everywhere and embrace everyone. Therefore, the ultimate goal of God's absolute love is to elevate all families in the love of Christ, to be reborn as God's children, cleansed of sin. Then we can live in absolute love and become true parents ourselves.

God's Absolute Obedience

Why does God put up with rebellious human beings, sinners who spurn God's helping hand repeatedly? (Acts 7:51-52) Why does God continue to save us, even at the cost of his only begotten Son, when we are hardly worth the effort? Why doesn't He just destroy the human race and start over? Here we can find God's absolute obedience to His own Word. God had made it a principle that the universe exists in freedom. God refuses to contravene His principle in order to safeguard the purpose of the universe as a realm of freedom where true love can flourish. Despite endless frustrations and setbacks, God continues on the path of obedience.

The obedience of God the Father can be seen in that excruciating moment when, in obedience to what was required to secure salvation, He offered up the life of His beloved Son. The almighty God certainly had the power to rescue Jesus from the fate of the cross, but He determined to send Jesus to the cross in obedience to the principle that He had set up concerning the salvation of humankind, that sin requires a sacrifice.

We can see the same obedience in the Garden of Eden, where God refrained from intervening in the human fall. God did not act arbitrarily to contravene His own principle, though He certainly had the power to do so. God was obedient, in order to protect the principle by which He created human beings with free will, a portion of responsibility for their own growth to maturity, and the birthright of dominion over the angels. God obeyed that principle to safeguard His ultimate purpose for human beings, even though it meant watching tearfully as Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's temptation and fell into a degraded and miserable existence.

God obeyed His own principles in dealing with the champions of faith. When God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for want of 50 righteous men, Abraham reminded God of His principle of justice, "Far be it from You... to slay the righteous with the wicked... shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25) God heeded Abraham and offered to spare the cities for ten righteous men. At another time, God threatened to destroy the Israelites after they made the golden calf, but God relented when Moses pleaded with Him to spare them by repeating God's own words concerning the purpose of Israel's election, an argument that God could not deny. (Deut. 9:25-29)

Throughout history, regardless of any disappointment, God continues to give and give. When His giving doesn't yield the desired results, God gives again and again. We have defined true love as living for the sake of the other. Obedience is the form that true love takes in practice, because true love respects the freedom of the other. St. Paul wrote, "Love is patient... Love does not insist on its own way... Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Cor. 13:4-7) True love, through its patient endurance, teaches obedience.

Absolute Faith, Love and Obedience as True Family Values

Jesus through his words and through his life laid out a blueprint for becoming one with God. He published his blueprint based upon God's original concept of absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. He lived his life from that concept as well. Yet a blueprint is not the same as the original concept. A designer's concept might be a handwritten drawing, but a blueprint expresses the concept in finished form, ready for the construction workers to follow. From the same concept can come many blueprints, varying according to circumstances.

The handwritten concept for the creation lies deep in God's Heart. Based upon this concept, in every age God has revealed to His champions a blueprint fitting their situation. Thus for Jesus, fulfilling absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience meant he had to walk the way of the cross. He set up this blueprint, which believers have followed to this day.

Today, on the foundation of Jesus' sacrifice, we can move from the individual level to the family level of fulfillment. In these new circumstances, Father Moon is teaching God's concept of absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience through a new blueprint: true family values.

The starting point for this blueprint is the family of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God intended that Adam and Eve form a true family by practicing absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. Absolute faith was to be Adam's mindset as he grew to maturity, trusting in God even though he was not fully aware of God's plan for him. In faith he should have rejected the serpent's doubting words. Then, Adam and Eve were to fulfill absolute love as an original couple, loving each other with God's true love. Absolute obedience was to keep God's commandment not to "eat the fruit." Had Adam and Eve kept such faith, love and obedience, they would have preserved the purity of their love while its fruit was not yet ripe.

Instead, Adam and Eve fell. They were disobedient, they lost faith, and they violated love. Since the loss of faith, love and obedience caused the destruction of the family; they must be regained in order to restore the family.

God has trod the thorny path of restoration ever since, gradually rebuilding humanity's faith, love and obedience through religion and morality. Yet religion mostly focuses on building faith, love and obedience at the individual level. This is so because individuals should regain faith, love and obedience first; then with these inner qualities they may be ready to form true families. Thus, justification by faith has been a matter for the individual, and Christian love has been construed primarily as love of neighbor. However, today as the world enters the Completed Testament Age, the focus of faith, love and obedience can move to family life.

Example of the Biblical Patriarchs

The Bible gives a glimpse of faith, love and obedience as true family values in the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Despite the rough customs of their age, they are model families for us today.

When Abraham departed from Ur of the Chaldeans and set out for an unknown land, his wife Sarah accompanied him. She did not try and dissuade him, even though she would have to give up her comfortable life for the hardships and uncertainties of the journey. Sarah demonstrated absolute faith time and again, as when on a journey to Egypt she willingly posed as Abraham's sister, even though she risked being taken from him. (Gen. 12:10-16) Abraham and Sarah loved each other, a love deepened by their shared faith. On account of Sarah's faith as much as Abraham's, God blessed her with a son in her old age and made her a "mother of nations." (Gen. 17:16) "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who had promised." (Heb. 11:11)

Isaac was an intelligent boy; he knew what Abraham was intending to do when they journeyed on the trail up Mount Moriah. A rabbinic midrash on Genesis 22 depicts Isaac's obedience as every bit as resolute as Abraham's:

On their way to Mount Moriah, Abraham and Isaac met Satan disguised as an old man. "Where are you going, Isaac?" asked Satan.

"To study God's wisdom," said Isaac.

"Do you intend to study after you are dead? For your father intends to sacrifice you."

"If God wishes to accept me as a sacrifice, I am glad to do His will."¹⁴

Isaac demonstrated perfect filial piety in his obedience to his father. Abraham, for his part, felt so close to Isaac that to kill him was worse than killing himself. By successfully passing through this trial, father and son became completely one in heart. Thereupon Isaac could inherit the entire divine mission from his father.

Jacob's reconciliation with Esau demonstrates love—in this case, brotherly love—as a true family value. Jacob had treated his brother Esau shabbily in the past, but in his maturity he wanted to make amends. He was willing to risk his life to meet his brother, who still smoldered with anger and thoughts of revenge. Esau had a force of 400 men. Jacob was walking into a death trap, yet his love for his brother was stronger than his fear of death. Their reconciliation demonstrates the power of love to mend a broken family.

Our families should cultivate the faith of Sarah, the love of Jacob and the obedience of Isaac. But how can we go further and attain absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience—the standard that was lost by the first family in the Garden of Eden?

Cultivating Absolute Faith

Conventionally, faith has been one-directional. We trust God and have faith in God, but we don't usually think that God is seeking to have faith in us. God is ever faithful, but human beings are notoriously changeable and unreliable. God has sought in vain for those whom He could trust. (Jer. 5:1)

Faith becomes absolute when our relationship with God becomes a real partnership. Instead of depending on God's help, have we ever thought about how we could help God? Certainly, God will help those who seek to help Him, for "Those who honor me I will honor." (1 Sam. 2:30)

Father Moon's prayers demonstrate the quality of absolute faith. Knowing God's many disappointments throughout history as His saints faltered under their burdens, Father Moon reassured God not to worry about him. Even in a North Korean concentration camp, he pledged to maintain his faith through any suffering:

I never prayed from weakness. I never complained. I was never angry at my situation. I never even asked His help, but was always busy comforting Him and telling Him not to worry about me. The Father knows me so well. He already knows my suffering. How could I tell Him about my suffering and cause His heart to grieve still more? I could only tell Him that I would never be defeated by my suffering.¹⁵

The content of this prayer is not simple. To attain the heart-felt sincerity to offer such a prayer requires climbing the ladder of faith from the bottom to the very top.

Let us begin with what traditionally comprises faith. Hebrews defines faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) We understand that faith is assurance of God’s care and support in the midst of difficulties and conviction to follow the path of God’s will in the face of all obstacles. Faith gives people the strength to deny worldly circumstances because their inner compass is fixed on a higher Reality. Thus, when Jerusalem beset by the Babylonians and the people were in a panic, the prophet Habakkuk declared, “he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:4)

God is invisible; therefore our relationship to God necessarily begins with, “the conviction of things not seen.” However, through faith we can gain some knowledge of God. God has two invisible qualities that become known to a person of faith: God’s truth and God’s love.

Truthful Faith

God gave Adam and Eve the commandment as the object of their faith. Therefore, we cultivate faith in God by studying and living by God’s Word. However, as long as the Word remains outside us, our faith in the Word is not absolute. Jeremiah prophesied of the day when “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts.” (Jer. 31:33) Faith in the Word becomes absolute when there is no gap between the Word and our internal understanding of it. Muhammad likewise said, “None of you truly believes until his inclination is in accordance with what I have brought.”¹⁶ Father Moon says that we should have “one mind” with God.

What is God's will for us today? Surely, it is a simple matter of studying the Scriptures to know what God desires of all people generally. However, it is another matter entirely to know God's will for this specific time and place. Such detailed knowledge of the will of God is not easy to come by. Consider Saul of Tarsus. He firmly believed it was God's will to destroy the early Christians, a heretical sect in his eyes. He might have continued in that way of faith if God had not intervened on the Damascus Road.

Speaking of the last days, Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8) He was not suggesting that the tribulations of the last days would be so severe as to cause all believers to lose faith in God. As a rule, persecution makes believers more zealous in their faith, not less. Rather, Jesus foresaw that believers would be beset by confusion over the direction of God's will. Many would believe, but their faith would not be right faith. Today's churches are divided on many issues of theology, morality, and public policy. Moreover, the flow of the providence may call upon believers to take on new duties. This calls for a prayerful and open mind:

We should not be strongly attached to conventional concepts, but rather should direct ourselves to be receptive to the Spirit, in order that we may find the new truth which can guide us to the providence of the new age. When we come across this truth, we should ascertain whether it leads us to become one with Heaven's guidance. We should examine ourselves as to whether or not genuine, heavenly bliss springs forth abundantly from the depths of our soul. Only in this way can we, the seekers in the Last Days, discover the path to true salvation.¹⁷

Trusting Faith

True faith is more than intellectual; it is grounded in a person's affective connection to God. "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10) Hence, a second measure of faith is the degree to which we can experience God's love. For if we truly know God's love, then we can trust God with our life.

Absolute faith requires such trust. To have confidence in a spouse or a friend, we first need to know that their heart is true. God has already shown us His love and faithfulness many times over—as when he gave His beloved Son to die for our sins. Knowing this love of God is an important step to having absolute faith. Then, no matter how difficult the challenge ahead, we will absolutely trust that God is with us, to protect us and see us through to victory.

Still, “this people's heart has become calloused” (Matt. 13:15), and hence we have difficulty trusting that God’s love is really for us. Therefore, Father Moon teaches us to “plow the field of the heart.” Plowing a field requires loosening hard soil and clearing away stones. These “stones” may include possessions, social status, worldly aspirations, stubbornly held concepts, and fallen natures.

Paul could have strong faith because he was willing to give up everything of his former life. He regarded his former status and possessions as “rubbish.” (Phil. 3:8) He also said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20) Paul had removed all the stones in the field of his heart, having completely taken out his old self. He had cut any attachment to his former brothers in Judaism, uprooted from his mind the teachings of the rabbis, and put aside any concerns for family and acquaintances. Therefore, he could embrace his new faith in Jesus Christ fully and without any reservations. To attain absolute faith, we likewise must first take out the old self and reach the “zero point,” becoming fresh clay for the Potter to mold as He wishes. (Isa. 64:8)

Zealous and Trustworthy Faith

Absolute faith is attained when God can have as much faith in us as we have faith in God. Ask yourself: How much can God trust my family, and me in particular? How much does God look to me as a helper and a trusted supporter as He pursues the divine will?

The second pledge spoke about becoming a family that represents heaven and earth before God’s throne. It envisions that my family stands before God as if it were the only family in the universe. What an awesome responsibility! If God likes what he sees in my family, He can accept all humankind on its account.

Therefore, God wants to put His entire faith in my family, hoping that we will fulfill His expectation.

The sixth pledge spoke about becoming a family that represents, or embodies, the will of God. We are “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20), solving problems and spreading God’s blessings to our communities. Here, too, God wants to trust us to be His mouth and hands and feet, toiling in His stead.

Why does God seek families in whom He can have faith? According to the Divine Principle, God endowed human beings with the status of co-creators. This means that the creation is not complete without us doing our part. Specifically, we have a portion of responsibility to complete ourselves, join as families manifesting the unity of masculinity and femininity, and then take our rightful place as the crown of creation. In complete human beings joined as true families, the myriad masculine and feminine elements of creation find their harmonious center.

The fall of Adam and Eve meant that people had not fulfilled their portion of responsibility. Consequently, the creation was fractured; its order thrown out of kilter; its ownership stolen by Satan. It was the human beings, Adam and Eve, who allowed this disaster to happen. Therefore, only human beings can repair it. If God could have done it by Himself, He would have fixed the problem long ago.

Therefore, God has been constantly calling for people who would take responsibility for the providence. In each age, God set up a dispensation for his chosen ones to fulfill, with success or failure resting squarely on their shoulders. Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, David and Elijah were among those central figures who took responsibility for God’s will in the Old Testament Age. The New Testament Age has its share of saints, from Saint Paul to Martin Luther and John Wesley. They understood the meaning of Jesus’ statement, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

Now God wants to trust those who would bear the cross of God’s struggles in our time. For example, Father Moon talks about God’s three “headaches”: conflict among religions and denominations, the immorality among youth, and the spread of materialistic worldviews. He has dedicated his ministry to resolving them. Likewise, anyone who feels God’s displeasure over a situation in his or

her community and fights to change it for God's sake is someone in whom God will take an interest.

On the other hand, even though a person may be zealous in his personal faith, unless he is zealous to support God's larger dispensation, God has little reason to believe in him. Individualistic faith cannot be absolute.

A life dedicated to fulfilling God's will is a challenging and exciting life. Here are a few of Father Moon's aphorisms describing the faithful heart of a true soldier for God:

I always ask myself, "What am I doing now for the will of God?"

I am leading a serious life centering on God's will. I feel as if God and I are in a tug-of-war with Satan and the three billion people on earth.

Those who embrace the will of God are not free from anxiety until the will is realized.

We must yearn after God's will day and night. If we were to cease doing so, everything would perish. Therefore, we should always live in a state of alarm.

Those who are acceptable in the Kingdom of heaven are those who have such an unchanging heart that they cannot abandon the will of God even if they are offered the highest position of worldly glory.¹⁸

Absolute Love

True love is the core true family value. All eight pledges declare that our family is "centered on true love." True love in family life has many aspects. First, it means to live for the sake of others. Second, it requires the unity of mind and body. When the body submits to the mind, which is ever seeking for a higher purpose, then people are capable of living unselfishly. Third, true love derives from God's unconditional love, which has the nature to give, give and give again without remembering what was given. Fourth, true love is expressed through the Four Great Realms of Heart as parental love, conjugal love, fraternal love and children's love.

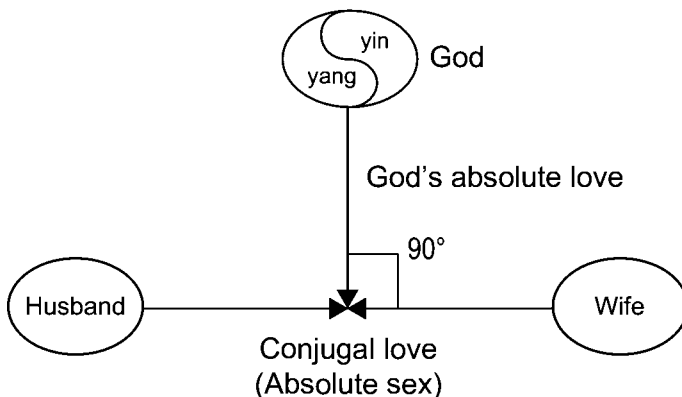
What, then, is “absolute love”? It is a specific type of true love—true conjugal love. Absolute love between husband and wife is the human expression of God’s love with His beloved.

The Divine Principle understands God to be a being of dual characteristics, the harmonious union of masculinity and femininity. God created man in His image as male and female. (Gen. 1:27) Therefore, of all God’s creations, a harmonious couple practicing absolute love bears the greatest likeness to God. Having the greatest likeness, there will be greatest resonance.

Father Moon teaches that at the moment when a husband and wife join as “one flesh,” the love within God (between God’s dual characteristics) and the love between the man and woman meet and vibrate together. God beholds His perfect image and pours out His love upon them. God is fully present in true conjugal love—hence it is absolute. It is absolute love and—in Father Moon’s unique terminology—it is “absolute sex.” It is also the foundation for God’s spirit to enter a child conceived in that union. (Figure 13)

God’s love flows into a loving couple as naturally as water descends from the mountains to the valley below. This, at least, is an understanding from Chinese thought, where the mountains are the realm of 神 (신, *shin*), the spirit or heaven. Mountains are yang, representing the man, while the valley is yin and represents the woman. The descent of God’s love is as natural as the fertilizing rain, or the husband giving his seed to his wife.

FIGURE 13: ABSOLUTE LOVE



In the same vein, there is a mystical Jewish tradition from the Kabbalah that the divine *Shechinah*—God’s motherly aspect—is especially present when a husband is having intimate relations with his wife. At that moment, God’s blessings shower forth abundantly upon the couple.¹⁹ Again, among the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) there is a teaching that a Temple Marriage sealed by the Holy Spirit qualifies the couple to participate in the First Resurrection.²⁰

As our relationship to God is absolute, so is the relationship to our spouse. Just as there are not two gods, there is no place in the husband’s heart to love any other woman and no place in the wife’s heart for any other man. (Hos. 2:16-20) The sexual union, “absolute sex,” is the sign of love’s absoluteness.

For a husband and wife living in absolute love, God is especially present in the act of marriage, and particularly in the place where love is consummated. Hence it is the most private place, and with modesty we keep it covered. Scripture teaches that the human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which should not be defiled. (1 Cor. 6:19) The parts of the human body that are visible to all, for instance, the face, represent the outer precincts of the Temple. The sexual organ, which is kept hidden, is the Holy of holies of our body. In the Temple in Jerusalem, the Holy of holies was the innermost sanctum, where the Ark of the Covenant and the tablets of the Ten Commandments were kept. No one was allowed to enter the Holy of holies except the high priest, and only once a year for the rite of the Day of Atonement. Likewise, only one person—the spouse—is allowed to enter the human body’s Holy of holies. However, she can enter far more often than once a year!

Ezekiel records that when the priesthood became corrupt and placed idols inside the Temple’s sacred precincts, God could no longer abide there and left the Temple. That meant that the Temple’s protection was taken away, and it was laid bare to destruction by the Babylonians. Anyone who takes seriously the sacred character of love will likewise maintain the purity of his or her holy temple. The holy place of love must never be defiled. The husband gives the key to his holy place to only one person: his wife. The wife gives the key to her holy place to only one person: her husband. If anyone else were to enter that place, it would be defiled and God could no longer

abide there. Even if the husband and wife resumed their sexual love, it would no longer be absolute love.

The four qualities of absolute, unique, unchanging and eternal apply to absolute love. Just as God is unique, so is our spouse. For a man, his wife is the only woman in the universe, and through her he can come to know the world of women. For a woman likewise, her husband is the only man in the universe and the doorway to the world of men.

Despite our mistakes and shortcomings, God's love for us never changes. Absolute love has the same unchanging character. It does not change with the ups and downs of the partner's moods. It remains the constant heartbeat of the true family's life. An absolute couple accepts the good times and difficult times in their lives like the round of the seasons. Persevering through the rough times only deepens their abiding affection.

As our relationship to God is eternal, so is our love for our spouse. Absolute love continues beyond the grave into the eternal spirit world. It may seem incredible, but many Blessed couples keep up some form of married life even after one spouse has died. Widows experience the caresses of their departed husbands at night. Some see their departed spouse in dreams or visions. Death has lost its sting for such couples. Few remarry.

It cannot be overemphasized that absolute love is possible only in marriage, and only when God dwells in the union. When God's love fills a marriage, there is no shame, no scheming, no ulterior motives, and no deceit. It is love that is completely in accord with the conscience. It is a sacred love in which sexuality celebrates an eternal and absolute bond.

Many couples marry with high hopes, only to find themselves fighting and falling out of love after six or seven years. This means their love was not absolute. How can we make the foundation for God's love to fully dwell in our marriage life? There are three conditions: 1) God's Blessing, 2) absolute faith, and 3) purity.

The Blessing: The Lineage of Absolute Love

Marriage needs God's sanctifying Blessing in order to fulfill its original purpose in the order of creation. This is because as long as the effects of the Original Sin taint the love between husband and

wife (Ps. 51:5), the ideal of true love is unattainable even in the best of marriages.

The problem of Original Sin is chiefly the corruption of lineage. Since husband and wife bring to their marriage the elements of love they received as children from their parents, they should have good parents as their root. However, ever since Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's temptation and fell, Satan has usurped the position of the false father of humanity. (John 8:44) The human race's family tree grew from Satan's lineage at its root. As a result, Satan's love has been passed down through history, tainting the love flowing in every family with elements of his selfishness, arrogance and rebellion.

This is the tragedy of tragedies. The act of sexual love, which God created to be the most holy and glorious experience in human life, became instead Satan's hook to catch people and drag them to hell. Each beautiful new baby, conceived in Satan's lineage, contains the spiritual "genes" of its eventual downfall.

God has been centrally concerned about solving this fundamental problem. When he called the chosen people, he gave them the ritual of circumcision, signifying symbolically God's dominion over the sexual realm of life. Nevertheless, circumcision does not uproot the Original Sin. Only the Messiah can do that. Therefore, Jesus declared, "You must be born again." (John 3:7) To be born again means to cut off Satan's lineage and be engrafted into God's lineage. We are like false olive trees that need to be engrafted onto Jesus Christ, the true olive tree. (Rom. 11:17)

However, the rebirth that Jesus provides on the individual, spiritual level is but the first step. It bestows on us the honor of God's adopted children. (Eph. 1:5) Adopted children are members of their heavenly Father's family, but they do not share their Father's inner characteristics. In particular, they retain the taint of sin, and they still have the blood of Satan's lineage in their veins. In the Completed Testament Age another engrafting is required, this time on the family level to bring human beings into God's direct lineage. As the direct sons and daughters of God, we should not only belong to God's family, we should also share God's qualities of absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. Only God's direct sons and daughters, who have no taint of Original Sin and no connection to Satan through lineage, can possess absolute love. The ceremony

of Blessing was established for this purpose, as was discussed in detail under the sixth pledge.

Faith: The Foundation for Absolute Love

Absolute faith is a second prerequisite for absolute love. Without faith it is hardly possible to practice true love. What passes for love in this world is passion without faith, relationships without God.

Consider Adam and Eve growing up in the Garden of Eden. Through keeping faith in the commandment they were being prepared to realize absolute love as a God-centered husband and wife. But when they broke faith, their love was corrupted.

Faith in God's word is a necessary foundation for a husband and wife to love each other. In traditional wedding vows, the bride and groom pledge before God to be faithful to one another. They vow to love and cherish one another "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, 'till death do us part." The degree to which they are faithful to their promise made in front of God may determine whether their marriage survives rocky times. Faith in God lays the foundation for mutual faithfulness.

In a similar way, the Divine Principle discusses laying the "foundation of faith" as the precondition for the "foundation of substance." Substance, *실체* (*shilchae*) in Korean, means a being's God-given nature and character. The substance of a rose includes its color and fragrance. The substance of a human being is his or her original, divine nature. Had Adam and Eve kept God's commandment, they would have matured into people of substance (*shilchae*) with divine spirituality, naturally capable of true love. However, the Fall derailed them from the track of growth. Our first ancestors became like faded roses emitting a fetid odor. As fruits of the fall, all human beings lack *shilchae*, the character and nature required for absolute love. To remedy this, God established religion. The course of religious faith fosters the regrowth of our *shilchae*.

Faith in God is a strong line of defense, guarding the couple from infidelity. No secret act is hidden from God's eyes. Faith in God serves as a compass, guiding a husband in wife to discover the best in each other. In the midst of a quarrel, if they can only step back and view each other through the eyes of faith, they could see how much God loves their partner and appreciates his or her good

qualities. Faith in God can anchor a marriage by revealing its higher purpose. As the French aviator and author Antoine Saint Exupery wrote in *The Little Prince*, “Love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction.”

Purity: Preparation for Absolute Love

Sexual purity before marriage is essential preparation for absolute love in marriage. Premarital sexual experiences dull the heart and soul to the high and noble emotion of absolute love. Because there is no commitment, sex outside of marriage functions very differently from sex within the marriage bond. The affection and bonding of uncommitted sex only masks underlying emotional insecurity; it sets up unspoken obligations that the young people are not prepared to meet; it can create a false sense of intimacy; it lead to feelings of guilt for using another or the shame of being used. The inevitable break-up leaves in its wake heartache, guilt, pain, rage, and loss of self-respect. It can lead to lasting mistrust of the opposite sex. Later, when these young people enter into the world of marriage, they are haunted by images of past partners and plagued by the inevitable comparisons. The break-ups of previous relationships only prepare them for divorce.

Moreover, uncommitted sex corrupts the soul. It leads men to devalue women as sex objects, and thus devalue themselves for using them. It compounds self-centeredness and coarsens behavior. In a survey of University of California students, about half admitted to lying in order to get sex, and one-fourth of the men who were involved with more than one person at a time said that their sexual partners did not know. In a separate survey of male students tested for AIDS, 25 percent said that they would not tell their sex partners if they were HIV positive.²¹

God warned Adam and Eve not to eat the “fruit” for their sake, to keep them on the path to true love. God warned them, because He knew that illicit love would damage their spirit and make a true marriage impossible. After they fell, the Bible reveals that their later married life was characterized by shame (Gen. 3:7-8), mistrust (Gen. 3:9-10), mutual accusation (Gen. 3:12) and domination (Gen. 3:16). After they lost their purity, they could never recover absolute love.

Today's young generation indulges in free sex with many partners. What motivates such activity? Sex for recreation, sex to be popular, sex to gain self-esteem, sex to rebel from parental constraints—whatever the apparent motives, the root of free sex is Satan's seduction of Eve. Satan tempted Eve, telling her that she didn't need to be responsible, that she should cast off God's commandment, that she could enjoy the fruit's delicious taste, that she could be like God, and many other lies. Young people engage in free sex from the same motives. The cause is clear enough. Free sex is rooted in Satan's illicit relationship with Eve, which Eve then multiplied when she tempted Adam.

Today's rampant free sex is a phenomenon of the last days, when Satan is unleashed to work his deceptions on the earth for the last time. (Rev. 20:7-8) We cannot allow this trend to continue. Father Moon warns us that if it does, the HIV epidemic, which now afflicts more than 40 million people, could ultimately infect and kill two-thirds of the world's population. There is no time to waste! We must spread the message of purity and absolute sex to the world's youth.

Absolute love in the family is first and foremost of the laws of the Kingdom of heaven.²² Teenagers maintaining their purity and couples practicing absolute sex: the culture of the Kingdom of God is built on this rock-solid ethic.

Absolute Obedience

Individualistic Americans do not like the word "obedience." It is too often abused to justify submission to an oppressive authority and exploitation for the benefit of the person in charge. However, for people of faith who already are striving to put God at the center of their lives, the issues of oppression and exploitation are irrelevant. God is a God of love, and believers trust that God would never ask them to do anything that was not for their ultimate benefit. Still, people who have negative experiences with the tangible authority figures in their lives—especially with their parents—may project these images of oppressive authority onto God. Worse, some religious leaders have misused their sacred position to exploit and abuse people who trusted them as God's representatives.

Nevertheless, the commandments of God, our heavenly Parent, are unfailingly good. (Ps. 19:7-11) For people of faith, the rightness

of God's commandments is not at issue. Rather, the challenge of obedience lies in doing what we know is right. Does our behavior match our faith? Many people claim to have faith, yet their behavior is indistinguishable from that of non-believers. James chided such people, saying, "Faith without works is dead." (Jas. 2:26)

Obedience is difficult because it often requires sacrifice. St. Paul taught,

I appeal to you... to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

—*Rom. 12:1*

He said this with all sincerity, and demonstrated that standard of obedience in his own life, braving persecution, imprisonment and shipwreck. Obedience requires self-denial. Jesus, who "learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb. 5:8), gave a hard saying on this point:

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and
take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his
life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and
the gospel's will save it.

—*Mark 8:34-35*

Many Christians have fulfilled this commandment literally, dying a martyr's death in the service of Christ. What do you think God felt as He watched these faithful believers perish? Surely God's eyes were full of tears, agonizing with His children as they walked their difficult course, yet He was also grateful to them for making the ultimate sacrifice as an historical offering to advance the Kingdom.

The religion of Islam, whose name means "submission," recognizes obedience as the key determinant of a person's righteousness. The Qur'an declares, "Whoever submits his will to God, while doing good, his wage is with his Lord, and no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow."²³ The inevitable sacrifices and trials that ensue are to be welcomed as marks of true submission. Obedience extends even to *jihad*, when that doctrine is understood in its original meaning. The prophet Muhammad taught *jihad* as risking one's life in the defense of faith, at a time when the small Islamic community was struggling against insuperable odds. Foreseeing the martyrdom that would be necessary for the faith to

survive, he once said, “Surely, the gates of Paradise are beneath the shadow of swords,”²⁴ by which he meant the shadow of the enemy’s sword falling on one’s neck. He never held the perverse teaching of some modern-day clerics that sanctions the killing of innocent nonbelievers.

Korean has two different words for obedience: *순종* (*sun jong*) and *복종* (*pok jong*). The former denotes the easy sort of obedience that a wife gives her husband or an employee to his boss; it is light because there is some latitude and calculation as to how those duties are fulfilled. *Pok jong*, on the other hand, describes the strictest sort of obedience, as in extreme circumstances where obedience is at the risk of one’s life. It also describes submission that is painful, even shameful to carry out. The Family Pledge uses the word *pok jong*. It calls us to pay serious attention to God’s commands and strive to fulfill them even at the point of death. Isn’t that what Jesus required in the passage from Mark quoted above?

It might seem more difficult to live under the yoke of obedience than to be faithful to God as an independent individual. Nevertheless, the road of individualism is more hazardous; one is liable to depart from the path of God’s will and lose everything.

Jesus gave other “hard sayings” to emphasize the strictness of absolute obedience:

No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. —*Luke 9:62*

If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. —*Luke 14:26*

He meant that strict obedience requires denying every bit of individualistic thinking—private plans, personal viewpoints, loves and hates. Father Moon explains,

To follow your own thinking leads you to stand in the position of having a second subject. The second subject is Satan, so you become Satan’s object. If you insist on your own thinking as your foundation, it sets the condition for Satan to dominate you.²⁵

Yet this does not mean that we cease to think for ourselves. Far from it! The most serious thought and committed action is needed to fulfill our obedience.

Here are some more of Father Moon's sayings on obedience and suffering that further illustrate the absolute quality of *pok jong*:

How complicated is the procedure to restore a dead person to life? Since you don't know the particulars of this difficult procedure, obedience is the wisest way.

Those who take on the responsibility for God's will should never wish to be at ease. God gives you training more severe than Satan would give, so that Satan will never be able to defeat you.

God always sent those whom He trusted through the steepest way. Many people whom He loved were sacrificed.

Don't complain against God. Your complaint could become a sin.

Trial and pain are not my enemies, but the material which can determine great value.

Only those who have triumphed over the suffering of hell can enter the Kingdom of heaven.

When the standard of a man's mind is different from the standard of God's will, he suffers pain and internal conflict in his life. Therefore, religion has pioneered the way of sacrifice and endurance. No one has accomplished a good purpose without endurance.²⁶

Despite its severity, the way of obedience is no excuse to neglect oneself. Self-denial does not justify mistreating oneself or permitting others to be mistreated. It is not an excuse to neglect our health, as we need strong and healthy bodies to do the Lord's work. (1 Cor. 9:25-27) The same applies to obedience at the level of a family. Among the early Christians, many neglected their families to follow the new faith. St. Paul would have none of it: "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Tim. 5:8) Obedience to God is not an excuse to shirk family responsibilities.

Obedience to God's Will may require enduring difficult circumstances, but not forever. Jesus, Paul and other heroes of faith gained victory through their courses of sacrifice. Obedience glorifies God: "Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience." (2 Cor. 9:13) Obedience purifies the soul, (1 Pet. 1:22) and as Paul wrote, "Obedience... leads to righteousness." (Rom. 6:16) Furthermore, obedience helps others, as Christ did by his obedience: "By one man's obedience many will be made righteous." (Rom. 5:19) Obedience teaches living for the sake of others, the core ethic of true love.

The Inner Work of Obedience

In the Orient, mastering the requirements of duty is considered a great virtue. It is not a simple or mindless matter, but requires effort to cultivate strength of character. According to Confucian philosophy, the superior man achieves a state of inner equanimity, even as he meets the duties of his position in the outer world. He is the master of himself precisely because he can deal with whatever circumstances and challenges his duty requires. Thus Confucius wrote:

The moral man conforms himself to his life circumstances; he does not desire anything outside his position. Finding himself in a position of wealth and honor, he lives as becomes one living in a position of wealth and honor. Finding himself in a position of poverty and humble circumstances, he lives as becomes one living in a position of poverty and humble circumstances. Finding himself in uncivilized countries, he lives as becomes one living in uncivilized countries. Finding himself in circumstances of danger and difficulty, he acts according to what is required of a man under such circumstances. In one word, the moral man can find himself in no situation in life in which he is not master of himself. He puts in order his own personal conduct and seeks nothing from others; hence he has no complaint to make. He complains not against God, nor rails against men. Thus it is that the moral man lives out the even tenor of his life, calmly waiting for the appointment of God, whereas the vulgar

person takes to dangerous courses, expecting the uncertain chances of luck.
—Doctrine of the Mean 14²⁷

A second perspective on the inner work of obedience is to reach what Father Moon calls the “zero point” of totally denying the self. This is similar to the Buddhist teaching of “no-self” (*anatta*). Buddhism recognizes that self-sacrifice for a spiritual goal can be subtly perverted into spiritual pride or self-righteousness. Therefore, a sincere Buddhist makes every effort to overcome the ego, that he may enter into the ego-less state of enlightenment. In the words of Buddha:

He who has no thought of “I” and “mine” whatever towards his mind and body, he who grieves not for that which he has not, he is, indeed, a monk.²⁸

The same teaching is repeated in Hinduism, in the Bhagavad-Gita:

They are forever free who renounce all selfish desires and break away from the ego-cage of “I,” “me,” and “mine” to be united with the Lord.²⁹

and by the Taoist sage Chuang Tzu:

The man of the Way wins no fame;
 The highest virtue wins no gain;
 The Great Man has no self.³⁰

A person who makes himself an offering totally surrenders himself to God’s will and has no consciousness of his own will. He does not resist his fate, even if it means death. Thus, Isaac exemplified complete self-denial when he entrusted himself to his father’s hands to be sacrificed on Mt. Moriah.

A person who offers himself does not complain about his situation; thus the saying, “An offering has no mouth.” Instead of complaining, he regards every trial as bonus that enlarges the scope of his offering. Developing such a selfless mind to offer oneself, not just once but again and again, is the training of a saint.

A third aspect of the inner work of obedience is to develop perseverance. Particularly when faced with trials and difficulties that seem to have no end, most people eventually reach the end of their strength and fail. There is a limit to what an individual can endure,

no matter how strong he or she may be. The key to perseverance lies in our relationship with God. As Isaiah wrote,

Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength.
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint. —*Isa. 40:30-31*

God is the inexhaustible power source. God continues to give and give, despite countless disappointments. However, we should also know the motive behind God's perseverance and investment in us, if we are to do likewise.

Jesus Christ suffered mocking, scourging and a horrible death by crucifixion. Surely he experienced excruciating pain as nails were driven through his hands. But his deeper anguish, revealed when he wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44), was over the people's unbelief. It meant that he could not consummate God's desire for the Kingdom of God on earth in his lifetime. Jesus then realized that sacrifice was the only course left to redeem sin, and resolved to go the way of the cross. Thus it is written that Jesus "learned obedience through what he suffered." (Heb. 5:8) Yet the reason he determined to submit to the cross was his love for sinners and his love for God.

Likewise, God's motive for persevering through all manner of difficulties and setbacks is His heart of true love. Out of His love for humankind God perseveres, fighting back the tears of disappointment and pain. God weeps over those who sinned and betrayed His trust—Adam, Judas, John the Baptist—and God weeps over those righteous saints, prophets and martyrs who suffered and died in their love for Him.

Therefore, when we pray to know God's heart, and Jesus' heart, we may find ourselves in tears, weeping uncontrollably. We can experience God's painful reality that lies behind His love and investment in us. Experiencing God's pain and Jesus' pain can evoke tremendous inner strength. We don't suffer alone; our suffering for the will of God merges with God's suffering over His course to save humankind. We connect with God's power source—true love—and are thereby empowered.

Obedience and Love in a True Family

When God calls someone to a mission, He showers the love and comfort of the Holy Spirit upon him, moving his heart and eliciting obedience. True love is the central motivation for obedience. The person called feels it is a great honor to obey God, who loves him so. There is no coercion or bullying. He happily volunteers to obey the call of true love, saying with the prophet Isaiah, “Here I am! Send me.” (Isa. 6:8) God’s true love continues to sustain him throughout his trials, keeping him on the path of obedience, as Paul describes:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—*Rom. 8:35-39*

Obedience in the family is the same. We are captivated by words true love coming from our spouse. We just have to listen, believe and obey. Who can judge a request when it comes from true love? On the contrary, when a wife judges her husband from the place of true love, he will humbly listen. Likewise, when parents raise their children with true love, they will follow the parents’ directions not only by the force of their words, but also because they are attracted by their example. True love elicits willing obedience.

However, what happens when obedience to God seems to conflict with loving one’s spouse and family? Some Christian traditions require celibacy, in part because celibate priests, monks and nuns can devote 100 percent of their energy to serving God. As Paul said, “The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided.” (1 Cor. 7:32-34)

In families where “interests are divided,” the wife may object to her husband when he forsakes a well paying job to do the Lord’s work. The husband may plead with his wife not to leave home for a tour in the mission field. “I love you; I’ll miss you; don’t go!” he begs with tears in his eyes. A son might experience a conversion to a vibrant faith and spurn the religion (or irreligion) of his parents, and they in their anger might disown him. When the will of God sows division within a family, it brings judgment upon that family. It is seen to be far away from the standard of a true family. Experience with such situations led Jesus to say,

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

—*Matt. 10:34-37*

Yet, there is no division between love and obedience in a true family. In a true family, God is the head. Therefore there cannot be any conflict between God’s desire and family members’ desires. Even though the family members may struggle to obey God’s directions, they accept it as a shared burden. Jesus was describing the standard of a true family when he said, “Who are my mother and my brothers? ... Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (Mark 3:33-35)

Several times in the history of the Unification Church, Father Moon called the wives to go out for three years to the mission field, leaving their husbands and children behind. When such a faithful woman goes out on a mission in obedience to God’s call, she carries a second cross—the cross of love. In addition to the cross of the mission and its hardships, she carries the cross of longing for her children and her husband. Her loved ones left at home are likewise going through a course of obedience as they carry the burden of her absence. These families may attain the standard of absolute obedience, centered on absolute love.

In such families united in the service of God we can recognize a higher standard than what is possible for a celibate priest or an unmarried youth. The obedience of a single person may be devoted and single-minded, yet it is one-dimensional. It does not have the quality of absoluteness, which only love confers.

In God's plan for Adam and Eve, the goal and purpose for their faith and obedience was true love. Their minds were to be full of faith in order to go over the hill of love, and they were to practice obedience to the commandment to defeat the serpent's temptation that threatened to corrupt their love. Obedience teaches self-control and sacrifice, both important prerequisites for a life of love. In short, absolute obedience aims for absolute love. On the foundation of their obedience, Adam and Eve were to grow to maturity as people who could truly love God, truly love each other, truly love the creation, and thus build a true family.

The same principle applies today, as God is schooling us. The starting point is faith: we believe in God and understand true family values. Next comes obedience: we submit to God's will and practice true family values. By faith and obedience we are molded into people of sterling character who can love truly. We can build true families where faith, love and obedience are linked together. These families' faith, love and obedience are meant to reflect God's faith, love and obedience. When faith, love and obedience are the same in all directions—up and down, right and left, front and back—then they become absolute.

The Ideal of God and Human Beings United in Love

We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. —*2 Cor. 3:18*

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in me; that they may be made perfectly one. —*John 17:22-23*

As fallen human beings, we only dimly know God. We do not experience the fullness of God's love enveloping our bodies and lifting our souls to heaven. At most, we catch glimpses of His glory and flashes of His grace. We gaze at Jesus, who confidently stated that God was fully present in him, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) But looking at ourselves through the mirror of Jesus Christ, we cannot help but notice a gap. As we behold him, that gap appears to be a great chasm.

Jesus lifts us up in the Spirit, and continues to pray for us as he did in John 17, that we might become perfectly one with him and one with God. Yet that oneness continues to elude us. People of every religion devote themselves to meditation, prayer and fasting in hopes of attaining union with the divine, yet few succeed in reaching the goal. Neither has the church achieved unity; today's Christian family is riven by division and discord. How can humanity enter into the perfect oneness that Jesus promised?

The path to complete oneness, once hidden, is now revealed in the new dispensation of the Completed Testament Age. The surprising truth is this: it takes a family to achieve complete unity with God. An individual by him or herself cannot achieve it. As the Human Fall occurred through the corruption of the family, so unity occurs through realizing the ideal of the God-centered family. As God's essence is love, perfect oneness can be attained only when human love resonates 100 percent with God's love, vertically and horizontally. Love to this extent can only be realized in a true family.

Knowing this truth, we discover a new and more profound meaning of Jesus' prayer for his church in John 17, "That they may be one just as We are one." In Ephesians 5, marriage is likened to the unity of Christ and the church. Thus, the key to oneness with God and Jesus is oneness in the family. God's oneness exists in the unity of the divine family: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Likewise, human beings become perfectly one with God when their marriages and families are perfectly one and filled with God's true love.

We already discussed how a true family takes after God's absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. At this level, it enters into perfect resonance with God's true love. Loving each other as husband and wife, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, the family members represent

the unity within God—unity of the dual characteristics of yang and yin, and unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Abiding in such love, they are transformed into God’s likeness and take after God’s glory. Here divinity and humanity, heaven and earth, relate in perfect harmony. Here is the ideal of God and human beings united in love.

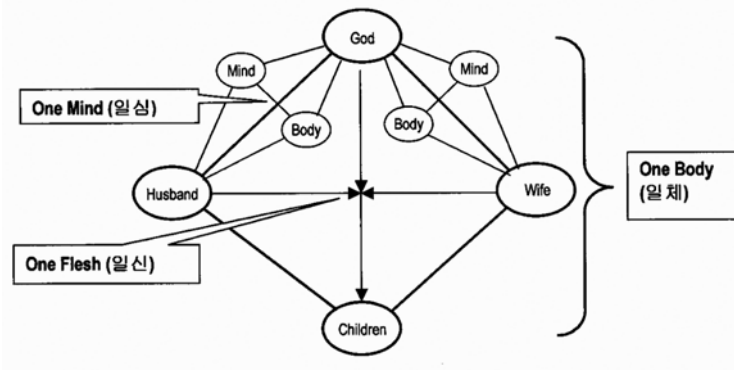
One Mind, One Flesh, One Body

In the Family Pledge, the phrase 신인애 일체 이상 (*shin-in-e il-chaе i-sang*) should be parsed “ideal (이상) unity (일체) of God (신) and human beings (인) in love (애).” The focus of this phrase is 일체 (*il chae*), a word that literally means “one body.” More accurately, *il chae* denotes the unity of the whole family. In the language of the Divine Principle, *il chae* is the unity of the Four-Position Foundation: God, husband, wife and children united as one—in a true, God-centered family.

Father Moon has elucidated this family unity through the teaching of 일심, 일신, 일체 (*il shim, il shin, il chae*): One Mind, One Flesh, One Body. One Mind, 일심 (*il shim*) means that the husband and wife have each individually attained unity of mind and body. One Flesh, 일신 (*il shin*) describes their oneness in conjugal love. One Body, 일체 (*il chae*) then describes the resulting unity of the entire family. (Figure 14)

One Mind

The first step is One Mind (*il shim*): unity of mind and body. The term comes from the concept in the Divine Principle that the body is a “second mind,” e.g., it has a mind of its own.³¹ Therefore, unless our mind and body become as one mind, we are torn in two directions. This is the conflict between the spirit and the flesh poignantly described by St. Paul, “I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am!” (Rom. 7:22-24)

FIGURE 14: ONE MIND, ONE FLESH, ONE BODY

Thus, both husband and wife should be mature individuals who conduct themselves according to the directions of their conscience. They live centered on the higher mind, ever restraining bodily desires not in accord with the Spirit and the will of God. They are guided by faith and self-controlled in their behavior.

Conflict between mind and body wrecks marriages. A loving wife suddenly finds herself confronting her husband's sinful nature as he rages in abusive anger or burns with lust for another woman. The next day he is back to his caring, responsible self, but her bruises still hurt. A husband who always admired his wife for her faithfulness and service for the church is shocked by her spitefulness towards the pastor's wife. Later she returns to her better nature, but the damage to her reputation remains.

One Flesh

When a husband and wife marry, they should become One Flesh (*il shin*), as called for in the Scriptures (Gen 2:24). One flesh means conjugal union, but it is not merely a union of bodies. True oneness in love is centered on the spiritual, but a marriage between two people who have not achieved unity of mind and body is actually a collection of four beings: the husband's mind, the husband's body, the wife's mind and the wife's body, all pushing and pulling in different directions. True conjugal union is the joining of a man and woman who each have achieved the wholeness of One Mind (*il shim*). Then they can become completely One Flesh (*il shin*).

Conversely, it is precisely at the point of becoming one flesh that the unity of mind and body is most completely achieved. Sexuality is God's good creation, designed for the optimum fulfillment of love and joy. In a marriage with a good sex life, there is no frustration from unsatisfied bodily desires. Conversely, the celibate priest or monk continually struggles to repress his sexuality, which seeks expression in one way or another; hence he cannot possibly attain complete unity of mind and body. This is why Paul said, "it is better to marry than to burn with passion." (2 Cor. 7:9) In conjugal love, the self-control practiced by a mature husband and wife finds its natural release and fulfills its purpose.

After all, moral laws and rules of etiquette are not ends in themselves. Their purpose is to prepare the conditions that sustain true love. In the bedroom, lovemaking doesn't observe rules of decorum. It is spontaneous, unlimited and travels the shortest distance. Father Moon jokes that when a man comes home sweaty and grimy from work, his loving wife shouldn't insist that he bathe before lovemaking. Love doesn't mind dirt and smell. Is this a hidden reason why God placed the sexual organs so near to the places of urination and defecation? The holiness of love transcends the senses. Becoming One Flesh has this quality of absoluteness.

One Body

The conjugal union of husband and wife in true love reflects and magnifies the unity among God's dual characteristics of masculinity and femininity. God resonates with its joy and adds His love to their love. When God comes down and participates in their union they attain One Body (*il chae*). From that point forward, they form a true family united with God, living and acting together as one.³² This is the concept of the Four-Position Foundation.³³

How is a family One Body? Any Four-Position Foundation, in this case a family, exists in three dimensions and revolves around God. In the above diagram, God is a point, having zero dimensions. The man as an individual and the woman as an individual each form a relationship with God, represented in the diagram as one-dimensional diagonal lines. Thus, in the religious life, an individual establishes vertical faith and prays to the one God as the sole Subject; by this he or she attains One Mind. When the husband-wife

relationship is added, and the two become One Flesh, they form a triangle in a two-dimensional plane. The couple's relationship can move about freely on that plane, what Divine Principle terms "circular motion." Finally, the couple's relationship with God creates movement in three dimensions. As One Body (*il chae*) they form, as it were, a sphere. This means their love can cover the entire cosmos.

In the spirit world, a God-centered family is literally observed to be One Body. Here is how Sang Hun Lee, reporting from the spirit world, describes this complete unity, first of husband and wife and then of father, mother and child:

When [husband and wife] are in love and united with each other, there is no distinction of subject and object. They become completely one body. More than that, God's love covers their love, so that the only thing visible to us is resplendent light...

Even though they are three distinct people—father, mother and child—they do not appear separately when they are united in love. Their union could appear as the father's figure, the mother's figure, or the child's figure. However, once they start to talk to each other, they appear again as different people. The formation of the four-position foundation means that if we are united centering on God, we will be one body with God. Therefore, there don't appear here four separate existences, although they seem that way on earth.³⁴

From the human point of view, all the family members are united with God in heart. Their minds are one with God's mind. They do what God would have them do. Their deepest desire is to do God's will. And God's participation guarantees that they will continue as an eternal family.

From God's point of view, a true family provides God with a body, by which He can act in the physical world and exercise His dominion of love. God by Himself has no body. Yet God can have a body through His sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, when they are united in a true family as One Body. A true family is the perfect vessel in which the God of love can dwell. There, God can perfectly resonate with the various types of

love flowing through the family. In that family God can fulfill His purpose of creation.

Yet ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, no family has attained the state of One Body. There has not been one family in which God could abide; not one family with whom God could completely share His love in all dimensions. Heavenly Father has always wanted to share love with His children and grandchildren. But Satan kidnapped and corrupted the entire human race, leaving God with no grandchildren to love.

God also wanted to experience love with His spouse (Eve), by loving her spiritually through Adam. But Satan snatched Eve away. God could love Jesus as His son, but Jesus had no wife whom God could love as His spouse. Hence, without a true family, God's love remains incomplete. In the true family that attains One Body, God can love His son, His wife, His children and His grandchildren.

God thus perfects His love through sharing it with the human members of the family. The family members perfect their love by centering on God. The wife perfects her love through her husband, and the husband through his wife. Parents develop their love through raising children, and children grow their love through loving their parents. The whole family displays God's love to other families and to the creation. A true family lives in this wonderful reality, as One Body.

In true love, everyone has equal power, equal participation, and equal ownership. Each family member both leads and follows, according to the flow of love. In some respects the husband is in charge, as head of the household. The wife is boss in the kitchen. At their child's birthday she becomes the princess, and her parents shower her with presents. Even God is an equal. Like any grandparent, God enjoys catering to His grandchildren's every whim! This is what the Divine Principle terms the Three-Object Purpose, and what the third pledge terms the Three Great Kingships.

We may call this family a "Genesis 1:28 family." In Genesis, God gave Adam and Eve the Three Great Blessings: "Be fruitful and multiply... and have dominion." To be fruitful means to attain unity of mind and body as an individual of true love (see John 15:5); that is a person of One Mind. To multiply means to join with a spouse in conjugal love as One Flesh. To have dominion means to exercise

God's loving and creative rule over the creation as the visible representative of the invisible God. God exercises dominion over His Kingdom through families that have attained One Body.

Experiencing the Ideal of Divine-Human Unity

To experience *the ideal of God and human beings united in love* is the epitome of true family values. God's personality contains the aspects of emotion, intellect and will. God embraces divinity, humanity and the material world. Our family's experience of God's love can include any and all of these.

The Feeling of Oneness in Love

Do our feelings of love have the emotional quality of God's love? God's love is transcendental and all-embracing; it differs from fallen love that is exclusively for one object. At the same time, God's love differentiates into various sorts of loving feelings according to the type of relationship: love for a husband, love for a father, love for a son, love for a wife, love for a mother, love for a daughter, love for an elder brother, a younger sister, a friend, and so on. We love them all—immediate family, more distant relatives, friends and co-workers—with a love appropriate to their position.

Godly love has no limits. It doesn't regard anyone as a stranger or an enemy. Abraham was known for his hospitality to strangers. (Gen. 18:2-8) Moses commanded Israel, "You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exod. 23:9) Jesus worked among the dregs of Jewish people, ministering to those whom society scorned. As discussed in the fourth pledge, the love practiced in the family naturally extends to people of similar ages beyond the family: we treat other youths like our own children, other adults like our own siblings, and the elderly like our own parents. Live in complete oneness with God, and our love naturally expands like this.

Another emotion of complete oneness is to experience God dwelling in me. I can see what God sees, hear what God hears, feel what God feels, and think God's thoughts. Dwelling in this state, I regard every human being as my own child. Then I begin to see God in each one of them, as God is in me. I see each person as having priceless value.

Third is the experience of spiritual freedom. Paul wrote, “Where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is freedom.” (2 Cor. 3:17) Formerly we were weighed down by cares and anxieties, but now they melt away. No longer carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders, our burden is shared in the loving web of relationships that extends to heaven. We feel free to act, knowing that whatever we do in love will be accepted in love. Furthermore, we feel free to break out of any boundaries that formerly blocked our path. We are connected to everyone and everything in the cosmos, giving and receiving with all. As long as we are in the state of oneness of love, there is nowhere we cannot go, nothing we cannot do.

Fourth, we can have an emotional experience of God’s heart. This can be overwhelming. As the Divine Principle explains, God’s heart has been full of grief ever since the human fall. He feels like a parent whose children were kidnapped and their minds corrupted. They no longer recognize their parents, and worse, they’ve become criminals. Meanwhile, Satan is laughing at God for having made such weak and defective creatures. God sometimes feels so oppressed by the situation that He can hardly bear it. God can barely look at His miserable children without turning away in sorrow. Every day tens of thousands more fall into sin, caught in a whirlpool that drags them deeper and deeper into the mud. A person who is immersed in the heart of God may find him or herself weeping uncontrollably for hours on end. Father Moon exhorts,

Become the true sons and daughters who experience the grieving heart of Heaven and bow before it. Pray always, "Father, please let us feel the sorrow that penetrates deeply into heaven and earth. On that foundation, we will become a sacrifice for all people." Shed tears and mourn. Become the unification members who can connect with the heart and situation of the Father. Then go forward, holding up the flag that you will struggle to alleviate that grief.³⁵

The Mind of Oneness in Love

How do people who live in complete oneness with God think? First, they know God’s ideal of creation, and measure all human motives, activities and outcomes against God’s ideal. Second, they

understand God's principles. The heavenly law, which governs all human affairs in the realm of spirit, is foremost in their minds. Third, they know God's providence and believe in His victory. Even though practical considerations may lead in other directions, they maintain a bedrock frame of reference in God's ideal of creation, God's laws and principles, and God's will.

Next, they have a public mind. Their thinking is oriented to how they can serve others rather than how they can benefit themselves. A son thinks more about how he can be filial toward his parents than about freeing himself from their discipline; a father thinks more about how he and his family can serve the community than about getting rich; a mother thinks more about how she can raise her children to be community-minded citizens and patriots than about helping them climb to the top of the social ladder.

Moreover, they have a big mind. God's interests extend throughout the entire universe. Likewise, people in complete oneness live in a boundless world. They have a lively intuition that takes in data from many quarters, which others simply overlook. They are not satisfied by conventional ideas and ways of doing things. They would rather think "outside the box." They have big dreams and big plans. Knowing God's ideal, they do not assume that things must remain as they are. Their thinking proceeds from faith that God will aid them in overcoming obstacles that otherwise seem daunting.

In addition, they have conviction, born of the deliberation that stems from a serious spiritual life. Having build up the habit of meditation and prayer, when faced with a question they will pray and seek an answer from God. They understand that "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain." (Ps. 127:1) Therefore, they do not decide a matter recklessly. Once they are confident of God's approval, their conviction can be absolute.

Finally, they have a mind to understand people. God, who loves all His children, imparts a keen sense of what each one needs. Hence they naturally receive insights into the problems of others whom they are trying to help. Hidden issues are revealed to them through intuition given by God, who is "piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and

intentions of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12) With this comes the ability to help others in the most appropriate ways.

Unity in Action

People living in oneness with God have a righteous character. Feeling a strong sense of brotherhood with all people, they give of their means and their labor to end the scourges of war, poverty, hunger, exploitation and disease everywhere in the world. If they have more wealth than they need, they will generously give it to those in want. They enjoy volunteering for service activities. They make friends with people of all races, all classes, and all religions, looking down on no one. Peace and equality spring up automatically in a nation whose citizens live in oneness with God and give with willing hearts.

People living in families that pursue the ideal of oneness with God in love have a strong moral compass. Knowing God’s fundamental law of absolute love and the damage done by impure love, they are strict with their children’s moral upbringing. They also take part in deciding their children’s selection of a marriage partner. Eschewing modern permissive values, they stand firmly for morality and work to improve society’s moral climate.

Finally, people living in oneness with God in love are dedicated and sacrificial. Whatever they do, they give 110 percent. True love casts out fear (1 Jn. 4:18); therefore they are courageous and willing to sacrifice for a noble purpose. God’s champions in every age have shown such sacrificial spirit. This spirit is born of God, who has been investing and sacrificing throughout history to restore fallen humankind and build His Kingdom.

Representing Heaven: A Confucian Insight

Additional insight into living in a state of *the ideal of God and human beings united in love* comes from the related Confucian ideal of 天人仁合一 (*cheon in in hab il*),* which roughly translated means, “a person 人 (*in*) becomes one 合一 (*habil*) with heaven 天 (*cheon*) by a loving heart and character 仁 (*in*).”

* Chinese terms are rendered by transliteration according to their Korean pronunciation.

The key term in this teaching is “loving heart and character” 仁 (*in*), more familiar to Westerners by its Chinese equivalent, *jen*. This central Confucian virtue describes the heart and character of a person who loves others according to the norms of family relationships. *Jen* comprises both the heart of love and the strength of character to live by the norms for love’s proper expression.³⁶ Thus, a father with *jen* cares for his children and is attentive to their needs; a wife with *jen* is affectionate to her husband and faithful; a son with *jen* is deeply attached to his parents and filial toward them. A person with *jen* is helpful, generous, compassionate and faithful in all his or her dealings with others. He or she has the ability to create harmony between people, as signified by its ideograph 仁, a combination of human being (人) and two (二). Confucian ethics values the family as the school to mold such people of loving heart and character.

This teaching affirms that through developing such a loving heart and character, a person becomes “one with heaven.” He becomes a sage, a holy person, a divine spirit (e.g., a good ancestor in Korean traditional thought), or a person who embodies the spirit of grace. Confucianism does not have a personal God; its concept of heaven is naturalistic. Heaven means the transcendent authority that governs the natural world and human affairs, and dispenses salvation, blessing and truth. A person can relate to heaven by cultivating a loving character. This gives him the ability to govern his surroundings through the practice of love and righteousness. In so doing, he embodies the subjective power of heaven in the affairs of earth.

This Confucian teaching, “A person becomes one with heaven by a loving heart and character,” contains some aspects of the Family Pledge’s *ideal of God and human beings united in love*. Yet because it lacks the Pledge’s fundamental insights about God and the centrality of marriage, it can only speak of “becoming,” not ideal unity. Nevertheless, it stresses an important aspect of that unity, namely that such people represent God on earth through their loving character and actions.

Oneness with All Things

The idea that a human being is an independent existence is an illusion, born of ignorance. This illusion disappears when we live in a state of oneness with God and all of existence. We were not born of ourselves, but arose from the love and labors of our parents. We exist on the bounties given to us by the world of nature. Our bodies are built of atoms that were produced billions of years ago in far-off stars. We are truly connected with everything in the cosmos.

Nature expresses the truth of life and love in myriad ways. For example, the dynamic love between husband and wife is echoed in the lightning and thunder of a rainstorm. The plus and minus charges come together with explosive force; this is love at the level of atoms. The delicately balanced workings of the cells and organs in our bodies illustrate the harmonious interrelationships of a well-ordered society. Each cell has the consciousness to deal with its environment and work for the purpose of its organ, manifesting love at the level of the cell. The sacrificial quality of parental love is seen in the spawning of salmon; they give up their lives to swim up river great distances and lay their eggs, all to give their offspring a chance to thrive in their ancestral stream; this is love in the realm of fish. The fidelity of husband and wife is seen in the strict monogamy of the crane. The male and female form a bond that outlasts death; this is love at the level of birds.

Consider in this regard the Buddhist teaching of interdependence, summed up by the phrase 一切同根 (*il chae tong geun*). Literally it means: the individual being (一, *il*) and the entire universe (切, *chae*) arise from the same (同, *tong*) cause (根, *geun*). A human being and a rock each arose from the same web of cause and effect, and each participates equally in the life of the whole. The whole universe is one life, of which each human being is but one part. A person should think, "I am but one link in the cosmic net that connects every existence. My spirit is in contact with the rocks and trees and stars, and they also know me. Thus, it is a cognitive error to think of myself as a separate ego. My true reality is as a participant in the oneness of all."

People need some occasion to leap into oneness with all life and experience their interconnectedness with all things in the universe.

Attaining complete oneness with God in love provides such an occasion. We come to realize that we are not lonely vagabonds, tiny specks in the vast sea of matter. Instead, we are one with the whole. We belong, members of the symphony of life that pulsates everywhere and in everything. We are linked in time as well, to the distant past and to the undetermined future. We belong to God, to God's family and to God's creation.

Amazing Grace

Ever since the Human Fall, human beings could not see or know God directly. At most, people could study and follow God's Word, which He gave for humanity's education in the ways of true love. People recite, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:37-39) Yet, when God came to earth in human form in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, then people could truly see what love is. Tragically, however, during his short life not one person made complete oneness with Jesus. His disciples fell away, and he died alone, except for one thief who believed. As a result, faithful Christians could only "see in a mirror, dimly" (1 Cor. 13:12); they have been unable to know God's love in its completeness.

Today, Christ has once again come to earth as the True Parents. Their ministry spans over 50 years, and their life covers all of human experience, most especially family life. Our generation is privileged among all the people who ever lived in history, to have the opportunity to observe and follow the returning Christ in the flesh. Through them, we witness the complete love of God in action.

First, we witness God's love in restoration. Following in Jesus' footsteps, our True Parents shed their blood, sweat and tears to make restitution (indemnity) for the world's sins and brokenness. Through many painful steps, they have been breaking down the walls that have long divided men and women, parents and children, East and West, North and South, black and white, Christian and Muslim.

Second, in the True Parents we see the example of true love as a way of life. In their marriage and family, the True Parents have created a model for us to follow and imitate in our families. It is a model of giving, self-sacrifice and unconditional love, even extend-

ing to their enemies. Indeed, their family tradition is notable for placing guests and strangers ahead of their own family members.

Finally, we witness God's love as blessing. Our True Parents have blessed all humankind, good people and evil people, of all religions, nationalities, races and cultures. The Blessing is offered freely as a gift, yet its value is priceless. It engrafts all people into God's family. It restores humankind to its true lineage. Our love was distorted by the fall, becoming like crumpled paper. Now through the Blessing God is able to restore human love to its true glory.

This is the profound background of the pledge that our family can *achieve the ideal of God and human beings united in love*. Setting up the conditions that today enable us to attain this ideal was no simple matter. Only the True Parents could do it. Because they loved us and sacrificed for our sake, today we can enjoy this priceless benefit.

The most holy God has come down to earth, and we unworthy human beings are being elevated to heaven. How can we ever adequately appreciate this precious grace? Do tears of gratitude flow down our cheeks? We can demonstrate our filial devotion by making our bodies like dust, humbling ourselves before the Lord of love, and letting God work His good pleasure through us.

The Realm of Liberation and Complete Freedom in the Kingdom of God

Ever since Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden and prevented from eating of the tree of life (Gen. 3:24), it has ever been humankind's hope to return to that blessed realm. That return is prophesied in the final chapters of Revelation, where the redeemed are invited to enter the New Jerusalem. There they will partake of the tree of life, whose leaves are "for the healing of the nations." The curse placed upon humankind after their expulsion from Eden will be removed, and all will behold the face of God. (Rev. 22:2-4) The prophet Isaiah also described the glories of this realm as God's "holy mountain," a place where, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." (Isa. 11:6-9) In verses such as these the Bible described *the realm of liberation and complete freedom* (해방권과 석방권) *in the Kingdom*

of God (천국) using symbolic language. Today the Family Pledge makes it plain, for the sake of this generation that is to establish it.

The Kingdom of God is a realm where people enjoy God's ideal of true love. A "realm" (권, *gwon*) can denote a physical territory, the objects under a certain authority or governance, or a space where a certain quality or situation obtains. The realm... of the Kingdom of God includes all these meanings. First, it is the spreading out of families living the ideal of true love. Second, it is a people under God's authority, in whom God's reign becomes manifest in daily life. Third, it is the territory on earth where God's children gather to build a God's nation of peace and unity, the *Cheon Il Guk*.

Liberation (*he bang*) and Complete Freedom (*seok bang*)

Shortly after Jesus began his public ministry, he stood in a synagogue and proclaimed the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.—*Luke 4:18-19*

Jesus indeed liberates us from Satan's prison, from captivity to sin. (Rom. 7:23) But the liberation afforded by the redemption of the cross is only spiritual. Jesus knew that Isaiah was prophesying of national liberation at a time when Israel was still in captivity in Babylon and the inhabitants of Jerusalem lived in poverty. He knew that establishing God's Kingdom would entail the end of the evil systems of this world: dictatorships, colonial oppression, crime and unjust laws. Jesus' goal extended that far, as he proclaimed in that first sermon. He knew that the liberation he brought through his sacrifice on the cross was but a first step on the way to complete liberation. Therefore, he promised he would return. Paul gloried in the cross and Christian freedom, yet longed to be freed more completely, looking to the future when he could enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21)

The Family Pledge uses two terms, the *realm of liberation* (해방권, *he bang gwon*) and the *realm of complete freedom* (석방권, *seok bang gwon*) to describe both this stage-by-stage process and the glorious liberty that is the Christian hope. The *realm of liberation* began with the spiritual liberation that we received through the redemption of the cross and is to be perfected through expanding that realm to encompass the family (through the Blessing), and thence the society, nation and world. The *realm of complete freedom* refers to the complete liberty that is Eden, the realm where God's original purpose of creation is fulfilled. It is the realm of God's direct dominion.

Adam and Eve, had they not fallen, would have established a true family and achieved the ideal oneness of God and humankind in love—One Mind, One Flesh, One Body. Living in true love, they would have enjoyed complete freedom. As theirs was the only family in existence, it would have expanded naturally and without opposition into a society, nation and world of liberty, creating the *realm of complete freedom (seok bang gwon) in the Kingdom of God*.

After the Human Fall, however, Satan occupied the world. To restore this situation after the Human Fall, God has worked step by step to liberate humankind, yet always against a hostile and satanic environment. First God has been liberating individuals through religion. Next, through setting up the Blessing, God expanded liberation to the family. A blessed family is the smallest unit of the Kingdom of God, where people can enjoy life in the *realm of liberation (he bang gwon) in the Kingdom of God*. This realm expands from one true family to many true families who comprise a greater realm of true love. Yet it is still a “church militant” and a “liberating church,” struggling by sacrifice and loving one's enemy to win over a hostile world. Ultimately, however, we will enter the *realm of complete freedom* where the Kingdom can flourish of itself, a “church triumphant” beyond any challenge from the satanic world. This is one of five distinctions between liberation (*he bang*) and complete freedom (*seok bang*) as Father Moon uses these terms.

A second way to distinguish between them is this: we enter the realm of liberation in the midst of the course of restoration, as a condition that permits it to be completed. This occurs at the time of

the Blessing, when we are reborn into God's lineage. However, according to the Divine Principle, this rebirth occurs at the top of the growth stage of the growing period (the sixth level out of ten levels to completion), because Adam and Eve fell and contracted the original sin at the top of the growth stage.³⁷ Afterwards there still remains a course to grow through the perfection stage of the growing period and attain the tenth level, the realm of direct dominion. This is the realm of complete freedom, where we become a true family of God's ideal.

Third, liberation occurs as a group, through the ceremony of the Blessing. Through the Blessing we cut off Satan's lineage and are engrafted into God's lineage, a once-and-for-all change from Satan's family to God's family. It is by the grace of the Blessing that everyone who participates in the ceremony enters the *realm of liberation* of the Kingdom of God, all at once. However, we are not yet at the level where we can fully manifest the perfection of the Kingdom.

After the Blessing, the course to grow through the perfection stage and attain God's ideal of a true family normally takes seven years or longer, and it requires that we attend the True Parents and support God's providence. How well we devote ourselves to this is entirely up to us. Hence, while we enter the realm of liberation as a group—perhaps as part of 30,000, 360,000 or 40 million couples—at the ceremony of our Blessing, we enter the realm of freedom family by family as each individually completes its particular course and attains the complete freedom of God's dominion.

Fourth, liberation purges us of the original sin, cutting the primary shackle that chains us to Satan's dominion. This shackle had been fastened to every human being at the ankles, wrists, neck, and most especially at the sexual organ. Having cut this heavy chain, we enter the *realm of liberation* where we are free to marry with blessing of God and create a family in which God can dwell.

Nevertheless, although we are free of original sin, there are still remnants of sin and fallen nature that cling to us. Our bad habits of thought, word and deed stay with us. The sins of our parents, grandparents and ancestors down through the generations continue to plague us. Moreover, once we pass into the spirit world, memories of our sins and mistakes during earthly life continue to weigh

heavily. Only when these are cut off, can we enter *the realm of complete freedom*.

In other words, humanity has suffered in the dungeons of Satan's prison, leaving us blind to truth and insensible to true love. The Blessing opens the gate to Satan's prison, allowing us to walk out into the bright sunshine of God's Kingdom. We are liberated; nevertheless, we are not yet fully free. We are not able to fully function in the Kingdom because we are unaccustomed to anything but prison life. We still have to go through a course of rehabilitation to cut off from old ways of thinking and living and to recover our full faculties.

Let's illustrate with an example from the Bible: Abraham and Sarah faithfully carried God's providence, and in heaven they are a Blessed couple.³⁸ Nevertheless, during his earthly life Abraham also had a relationship with Hagar, who was younger and more passionate than Sarah, and they had a child, Ishmael, whom Sarah insisted be cast out of their home. We can imagine that memories of this latter relationship remained with Abraham and Sarah in the spirit world, creating a thorn in their family life. Furthermore, Hagar is also in the spirit world, breathing resentment against Sarah and still coveting Abraham's love. As long as that situation persists, Abraham and Sarah may dwell in the realm of liberation, but their life is not completely free. There would have to be a heavenly rite to release the four of them: for Hagar to release Abraham to love Sarah and no other; for Abraham to release any residual longing for Hagar's passionate love; for Ishmael to forgive Sarah for casting him out; for Sarah to forgive Hagar for interfering with her marriage. Once released, they could enter *the realm of complete freedom in the kingdom of God in heaven*.

Finally, returning to the prison analogy, *seok bang* can also mean *pardon*. A convict normally gets released from prison when he finishes the term of his sentence, but the governor can pardon him at any time and without giving any reason. In this sense, liberation (*he bang*) comes after we finish our course of restoration through indemnity, while *seok bang* is a pardon that frees us even though we have not paid the price and do not deserve to be freed.

During the course of restoration, God follows a strict principle as He guides us on the path to liberation. Certain conditions have to be

fulfilled, based upon Satan's prior claims over us. This is the so-called "formula course." Completing those conditions is like finishing a prison term; we are released once we fulfill all the requirements of the law. Even after we receive the Blessing and enter the realm of liberation, we are not free from the requirement to atone for past sins. Those who we sinned against—or who our ancestors sinned against—do not give up their claims without some payment.

How can we receive pardon? We now have a Governor in heaven who desires to pardon us. The old prison warden, Satan, has been relieved of his post. In these last days, Satan is cast out from his former position as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31) and "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15). This is the result of the Coronation of God's Kingship that occurred on January 13, 2001, and the subsequent coronations of Jesus Christ and the True Parents in 2003-04. We are living in a new age when God is able to exercise His authority over all creation, and His will is to pardon us and create a new world of hope.

"Love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8) God's bright and warm love now penetrates to the darkest and chilliest corners of hell. It has the power to dissolve away old grudges and melt the hardest of hearts. Everyone has an original heart that can be touched by love.

Not only that: through the pardon of *seok bang* the record of our former sins is entirely expunged. Even the dispensation for the forgiveness of sins still left a record of a person's former misdeeds, that we would glorify God who in His great mercy forgives sinners. However, in the "new heaven and new earth" that is the Kingdom of God, even the scars of former sins should no longer be there to remind us of the past. God wants to behold the citizens of His Kingdom as new people, without blemish and able to realize their original inborn potential, as He promised, "Behold, I make all things new." (Rev. 21:5)

God is our Father; His loving heart is to completely forget about our former sins and embrace us as his children. It is a theological error to think that God always insists on meeting out punishment on the guilty. Rather, it is Satan, the Accuser, who was always bringing people's sins before God and demanding that debts be paid to the

last penny. As long as Satan had authority over this world, human beings could not escape his claims on us. Now, however, in the age of *seok bang*, God is fully sovereign. Hence he can offer pardon without having to listen to Satan's accusing voice. The fact that Father Moon could proclaim the realm of *seok bang* means that we now live in an era of amazing grace.

The Liberation of God

Are human beings the only beings in need of liberation? God made the creation subject to human beings. Because their human masters fell into sin, the things of creation also suffer under a regime of oppressive domination. This is evident in the pollution of air, water and land; the rape of natural resources; the loss of habitat for wild creatures; the oil befouling the oceans and choking its life; the loss of protective ozone; and the buildup of carbon dioxide that is changing the world's climate. The creation is crying out for liberation with far more urgency than when Paul wrote that it was "groaning in travail" and foresaw the day when "The creation itself will be set free from its bondage." (Rom. 8:21-22)

God is also in need of liberation. Does this sound strange? Traditional theologies err when they envision that God, the King of kings, sits high on His throne, enjoying sovereignty over the universe. In fact, God is a God of love: God prizes love above all else. What enjoyment does the God of love gain from sovereignty over the universe when His beloved children are prisoners of sin? If God were to use His power to destroy sinful humanity, the world would be empty, and God's entire creation would be a failure. Love binds God to care for His creatures. God would rather tend to sin-sick humanity than dwell in glory.

Therefore, after the Human Fall, God left His throne and became a God of grief, suffering and lamentation. When He appeared among humankind in the form of Jesus Christ, it was as the Lord of suffering.

God has endured heartbreak and misery as humanity, insensate to His pleading, sank deeper and deeper into sin. How can we describe God's bitterness and pain? It is as if your daughter was kidnapped and raped and then sold into slavery in a foreign land. Worse, she believes that you are dead, even though you continue to

search for her everywhere. This has been God's life for thousands of years. Father Moon said,

Eve was to have become the future wife of God, because once Adam became one with God, and God's spirit dwelled within him, Adam would be the embodiment of God Himself. From this perspective, Satan violated God's wife. We have not subdued the one who hurt God. So God has been persevering with a hope to restore His ideal of creation in the midst of deep sorrow. Think about it. Could you just steal God's wife for your own sake and have children who do not care about heavenly Father at all? Yet this is the reality of the fallen world today, and the current relationship between God and Satan.³⁹

Even the almighty God cannot compel love, which must be freely given. Since human beings made the choice to leave God, it remains the responsibility of human beings to return to God. God cannot interfere with this human responsibility. Hence the paradox: the task of liberating God and restoring Him to His throne lies with human beings.

To liberate God has been the greatest concern of Father Moon's life. It is not a simple matter. First it requires the establishment of a true family that cannot be accused by Satan. That family has to achieve the ideal oneness of God and humankind in love, and become the object that can fully reciprocate God's love and fulfill the deepest longing of God's heart. To increase the scope of God's freedom, the territory of the Kingdom of God should expand to a clan, a tribe, a society, one nation, and many nations. Finally, when all the families of humankind sing songs of true love in the springtime of the Kingdom, God will be completely liberated.

Jesus, too, needs to be liberated. He sits at the right hand of God, yet still he suffers. Jesus gave everything for our sake, even his life. Shouldn't we offer something in return? Love, if it is to thrive, should flow through a complete circuit of give and take. Yet Jesus' *agape* love was given without regard to a response from the object of his love. It is a noble love, yet being unrequited, it is filled with frustration and regret. No one desires to give and give without receiving anything in return. Yet that has been Jesus' situation, as

human beings continually disappoint him, spurning his blessings and ignoring his words. He was bitter over the stubborn rejection he encountered from the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem. (Matt. 23:37-38) He is bitter still, as many of his followers continue to grieve the Holy Spirit by their hypocrisy, cruelty and lack of charity. (Eph. 4:30-32) Jesus would wish to be liberated from this unrequited love and enter into a truly mutual relationship with believers. The key to the liberation of Jesus, as with the liberation of God, lies with human beings.

A Jewish mystical tradition understands the necessity for God's liberation. The Baal Shem Tov, 18th-century founder of Hassidism, said, "Pray continually for God's glory that it may be redeemed from its exile." God went into exile with His people, and they are in exile still, away from their homeland. More generally, he taught, "Man is a part of God, and the want that is in the part is in the whole, and the whole suffers the same want as the part."⁴⁰ He inferred that God suffers because mankind suffers.

These mystics also understood that we human beings are responsible to liberate God from His suffering. We should engage in the work of *tikkun* (repair), by which the "holy sparks" of God, which had shattered into millions of pieces, are reunited with their Source. The collective labor of fervent believers does this work of repair, whose significance, the Baal Shem Tov declared, "is as when a king's son is rescued from captivity and brought to his father."⁴¹

Even so, Jewish mysticism developed this line of thought in a way that was so spiritualized that it proved ineffective in changing the Jewish reality, much less in liberating God, whose heart only grew heavier over the desperate plight of the chosen people in the 20th century. Nevertheless, the Kabbalistic concept of *tikkun* relates to a great truth. There was indeed a "shattering" of the oneness of God's world. It occurred at the fall of Adam and Eve.

Father Moon said, "As a result of Adam's fall, the history that began in oneness was broken into innumerable pieces. The history of salvation has been the process of arranging and connecting all the pieces."⁴² These pieces have proliferated as different religions, cultures, races, nations and tribes in conflict with each other. They fight because each falsely believes itself to be superior to the others. Thus they alienate themselves from the God of unity. Humanity's

brokenness is manifest as a conflict between mind and body in each individual and between husband and wife in every family. The Human Fall shattered the unity in every family and the original oneness of humanity and God. That breakdown proliferated through all levels of human existence.

Tearing Down Barriers

In this condition of brokenness and alienation, people erect high walls to protect themselves from others whom they believe to be their enemies. They are walls of enmity, fear, suspicion, arrogance, prejudice, narrow-mindedness, and every ideology that justifies denying others their full humanity. These walls are stronger and higher than prison walls. Consider the convict who is released from a long prison sentence. He returns home only to find that townspeople are suspicious of him and no one will give him a job. His former friends spurn him, and even his wife has remarried. As a result, he drifts back into the criminal underclass. Despite having been released from physical jail, he still finds himself walled in on every side.

Or consider a husband who has an affair. To justify it, he builds a wall between himself and his wife, convinced that she doesn't love him or give him enough attention. When his wife finds out that he is cheating on her, she reinforces the wall and builds it higher. Even though the husband may break off his affair, that high wall remains a serious obstacle to reconciliation. It may take years of effort to slowly chip away at the accumulated lies, mistrust and sense of betrayal.

Religions have been God's wall-breakers. By teaching forgiveness and love of enemy, Christianity has helped people tear down many walls. The broad realm of Christian freedom is found where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) Islam is also a religion of unity, as the Qur'an teaches:

Hold fast, all together, to God's rope, and be not divided among yourselves. Remember with gratitude God's favor on you, for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became brethren...

Let there arise out of you one community, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: those will be prosperous. Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs: for them is a dreadful penalty.⁴³

Nevertheless, Christianity and Islam each erected high walls against each other. They look down on each other as infidels, even though both are faithful to the same God. They make war on each other, each side believing they are fighting in the name of God. These walls discourage people from journeying beyond the world of their own religion.

There are no barriers in the Kingdom of God. God's love is impartial, as Jesus taught, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:44-45) By loving our enemies, we can tear down the barriers between people, between races, between nations, and between religions. Father Moon said,

God is not the lord of boundaries. Satan, the devil, first made them. Satan and his followers are dwelling wherever there are boundaries... God did not create boundaries among various different cultures, traditions, races, etc. God desires one unified world, a world without boundaries.

God does not have even the concept of boundaries. Therefore, He does not tell us to take revenge on our enemies; if He did, it would imply that He had such a concept. By loving our enemies and bringing oneness amongst us, boundaries will naturally come down.⁴⁴

Hence, our task in expanding the realm of liberation and complete freedom in the Kingdom of God is to break down barriers everywhere.

Liberating the Spirit World

The walls erected on earth are further reinforced in the spirit world. There the accumulated deposits of people's earthly beliefs

and prejudices become fixed in the environment. Heung Jin Moon reports:

The spiritual world is the world of mind. Once you are set in your mind and in your habits, it is not easy to change. Therefore it is very difficult for religious people of different backgrounds to travel to each other's regions. In the spiritual world thought is reality itself, so differences in thinking are manifest as high walls, or as steep cliffs with wide holes or many falling stones, making it difficult to move from place to place.⁴⁵

The spirit world has been a veritable prison, with high walls erected around its different communities of spirits, keeping them in. Only dwellers in the highest spiritual realms are able to travel between its different regions. For this reason, most spiritual testimonies describe "heaven" as a realm where the people are pretty much alike, because they cannot see beyond the walls. Some people think that only those who live and believe as they do will enter heaven. Yet if they only see others of their own kind, it means they are dwelling in one small region of a great prison-house, hemmed in by high walls. Is that place truly heaven? Or is it hell?

God did not create the countless boundaries that hem in the regions of the spirit world. God's concept is that people of different cultures, religions, races and traditions will mingle freely and see themselves as members of God's family. Their diversity should only add to the variety and charm of life in the Kingdom of heaven.

If God did not create these boundaries, then who did? The human beings whose spirits inhabit those regions did. God abhors these boundaries as manifestations of Satan's rule, yet He cannot destroy them unilaterally. That responsibility lies with human beings.

Since the spirit world only manifests the fruits of earthly life, any initiative for changing the situation in the spirit world must come from people on earth, as Jesus said, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 18:18) People on earth must tear down the barriers between religions and cultures, e.g. between Christian culture and Islamic culture. We can overcome them by

living in another culture and loving people of another culture. On this score, Father Moon has been promoting international and interreligious marriages. A family that can embrace two different religions, or two different cultures, and digest their differences in the warmth of its love, is a crucible for melting down the walls that divide humanity. Through such families, the walls in the spirit world are broken down as well.

In the eighth pledge, our family commits itself to this task of liberation. We will tear down all boundaries and transform the spirit world into a single realm of heaven. This is the *realm of liberation and complete freedom in the Kingdom of God in heaven*. Love and harmony abound there, and conflict is unknown. God's true love streams into this realm, embracing all its inhabitants and filling them with warmth and light. They are people who live beyond boundaries and have no enemies. In perfect liberty they travel anywhere they choose, from the bottom of hell to the throne of God.

Entering the Realms of Liberation and Complete Freedom

Humanity has entered a new age, the *Completed Testament Age*, when the Kingdom of God becomes manifest on the earth. Like the mustard seed in the parable (Matt. 13:31-32), the *realm of liberation of the Kingdom of God* is already growing, although it may be unnoticed by the world. As Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:20-21) The Kingdom of God begins in true families, members of God's family through the holy Blessing, who dwell within the mundane world and progressively transform it.

Why does the realm of liberation begin with true families? First, the key factor in bondage or liberation is love. When love can flow freely, there is liberation. When love is blocked, there are boundaries. The corruption of love in the family at the Fall brought humanity into bondage; therefore, new families, blessed by God, are arising and taking responsibility to restore the family ideal. Their mission is to tear down the remaining boundaries that still constrain humankind; their method is to love their enemy.

The realm of liberation has nothing to do with power, wealth or knowledge. Only true love brings true liberation. As we have

learned, the Blessed family is the place where true love settles, takes root and bears fruit. The realm of liberation grows as these families, who achieve the ideal of oneness with God, expand their influence to tribes, peoples and nations. Blessed families, centered on true love, are the cornerstones of the Kingdom of God. This is the central message of the Family Pledge.

Nevertheless, the realm of liberation is only the prelude to an even greater grace: the realm of complete freedom (*seok bang*). This realm opens through the sovereign rule of God, bringing to an end the world of sin. Freedom (and pardon) is entirely by God's sovereign authority, as He acts to replace the old world of sin and punishment with the new order of heaven's unlimited grace. God bestows this freedom upon Blessed families who were already growing within the realm of liberation. His grace brings pardon, renewal, perfection, and liberty.

Ultimately, God's fervent wish is to live in a world where all traces of humankind's sad history since the Fall are forgotten, and people with new hearts live out their lives as if the Human Fall had never happened. This will be the result of *perfecting... the realm of complete freedom in the Kingdom of God*. It is the Garden of Eden, where "the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4) and God is "all in all." (1 Cor. 15:28)

The Dispensation to Open the Realm of Liberation

Although the details are beyond the scope of this book, Father Moon has been fulfilling many conditions to establish both the realm of liberation and the realm of complete freedom. First, through the Blessing, he has been restoring families to the original ideal of God—as true families. Beginning in August 1992, Father and Mother Moon began offering the Blessing freely to all human beings without condition. Over the next seven years, the providence of the Blessing expanded to cover the earth—over 400 million couples. By giving the Blessing to the worst criminals and the highest saints in the same ceremony, he made the condition to breach the wall dividing heaven from hell. By blessing the founders of the world's religions in the spirit world and their followers on earth, and educating them in the Divine Principle, he has made a breach in the walls that have separated the world's religions. These and many

other conditions laid the foundation to open the realm of liberation, which was promulgated when the eighth pledge containing these words was added to the Family Pledge on February 2, 1998.

The Dispensation to Open the Realm of Complete Freedom
(Seok Bang)

While the dispensation to open the realm of liberation concerned the unity of the world's families centered on the Blessing, the dispensation to establish the realm of complete freedom has been focused upon establishing God's sovereignty. A key condition was the Coronation Ceremony of God's Kingship, conducted on January 13, 2001, which proclaimed God's sovereignty over all worlds. Next, on December 22, 2003, before an assembly of over 3,000 people in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ was crowned the King of Peace in the land that had rejected him 2000 years before. Then in ceremonies held in America and Korea during 2004, in the presence of clergy and members of the U.S. Congress and the Korean National Assembly, Father and Mother Moon received crowns as the King and Queen of Peace for the present age. These events symbolized the establishment of God and Christ's authority on earth and God's direct dominion over human affairs.

On April 5, 2004, Father Moon proclaimed the realm of complete freedom (*seok bang gwon*), and the words were added to the Family Pledge on April 18. On May 5, the final condition for the opening of this realm took place with the declaration of 쌍합십승일 (雙合十勝日, *Ssang Hab Shib Seung Il*), the "Day of Double 5 and Victory of the Number 10." That day was the cosmic turning point when the sovereignty of God supplanted Satan's rule throughout all creation. Since then, we have been living in the "Era After the Coming of Heaven." Now, no other power can interfere with the steady advancement of God's Kingdom, as God exercises His full authority on the earth.

As mentioned previously, according to the Divine Principle, the Blessing, which opens the gate to the realm of liberation, occurs at the top of the growth stage, signified by the number 6. Thus it took 6 years between the opening of the Blessing to the world and the proclamation of the Completed Testament Age in 1993 to the opening of the realm of liberation in 1998. The realm of direct

dominion is signified by the number 10, the number of perfection beyond the growing period. Hence, on the day that marked the victory of the number 10, the world entered into the realm of God's direct dominion—the realm of complete freedom (*seok bang gwon*). Ever since, as our hearts turn to God and our hands engage in His work, we witness the inexorable advancement of God's Kingdom, as God administers His full authority to pardon us, cleanse us, and renew us as His unblemished children.

- 1 Sun Myung Moon, *Collected Sermons* (Seoul: Seunghwa, 1984-), vol. 41, p. 300.
- 2 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 209.
- 3 This is the meaning behind the cryptic sentence in the Divine Principle: "Jesus came as the bridegroom to all humanity. All devout believers should become his brides, awaiting the time of his return. After these brides celebrate the marriage of the Lamb with Jesus, their bridegroom, they are to live in the Kingdom of heaven in oneness with him as his wives. Therefore, the Completed Testament Age following the Second Advent of Jesus is the age of the heifer, or the age of the wife." (*Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 210)
- 4 Sun Myung Moon, "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age," *True Family and World Peace*, p. 43.
- 5 Sun Myung Moon, "True Family and I," *True Family and World Peace*, p. 78.
- 6 Sun Myung Moon, "First Jardim Declaration," April 3, 1995.
- 7 Diamond Sutra 32, A.F. Price, trans., *The Diamond Sutra* (Boston: Shambhala, 1969).
- 8 Qur'an 18.46, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, trans., *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*.
- 9 *Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines* 31:1, Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines and its Verse Summary* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1983), in *World Scripture*, p. 52.
- 10 Qur'an 112, Pickthall.
- 11 Qur'an 33.40, Pickthall.

- 12 Dhammapada 273, Narada Maha Thera, trans., *The Dhammapada* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Vajirarama, 1972).
- 13 Qur'an 5:48, Pickthall.
- 14 Genesis Rabbah 56, Joseph Gaer, *The Lore of the Old Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951).
- 15 W. Farley Jones, ed., *A Prophet Speaks Today* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1975), p. 157.
- 16 40 Hadith of an-Nawawi 41, Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, trans., *An-Nawawī's 40 Hadith* (Damascus: Holy Koran Publishing House, 1977).
- 17 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 108.
- 18 Sun Myung Moon, *The Way of God's Will* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1980), pp. 4-20.
- 19 *Zohar*; Genesis 101b.
- 20 See *Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974), article 131.
- 21 See Seuk, Devine and Wilson, *Cultivating Heart and Character* (Chapel Hill: Character Development Publishing, 2000), pp. 333-344.
- 22 Sun Myung Moon, "Coronation of God's Kingship." January 13, 2001.
- 23 Qur'an 2:112, Arthur J. Arberry, trans., *The Koran Interpreted*.
- 24 Hadith of Muslim, 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqī, trans., *Sahīh Muslim*, 4 vols. (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1977), quoted in *World Scripture*, p. 627.
- 25 Sun Myung Moon, "Total Indemnity," *God's Will and the World*, p. 593.
- 26 Sun Myung Moon, *The Way of God's Will*, pp. 132-36, 147, 151, 156, 163.
- 27 Lin Yutang, trans., *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York: Random House, 1938), quoted in *World Scripture*, p. 408.
- 28 Dhammapada 367, Narada Maha Thera, trans., quoted in *World Scripture*, p. 638
- 29 Bhagavad Gita 2.71, Eknath Eswaran, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita* (Petaluma, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1985).
- 30 Chuang Tzu 17, Burton Watson, trans., *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), quoted in *World Scripture*, p. 639
- 31 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 17.
- 32 This is the theological basis for the terminology "True Parents of heaven and earth" (천지부모님) used by Unificationists to describe the reality that God dwells within the earthly True Parents.

- 33 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 25-27.
- 34 Sang Hun Lee, *Life in the Spirit World and on Earth*, pp. 60-61.
- 35 Sun Myung Moon, "Let Us Experience the Sorrow of God," March 2, 1958.
- 36 *Jen* has sometimes been misunderstood to mean primarily a person's good character capable of fulfilling the family's ethical norms. Recent Confucian scholarship has rediscovered that in the philosophy of Confucius and Mencius, the affective aspect of *jen* as heart and feeling was equally important.
- 37 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 175.
- 38 Abraham and Sarah were blessed by Father and Mother Moon in 1998 at Madison Square Garden.
- 39 Sun Myung Moon, "The Ideal Spouse," February 4, 1969.
- 40 Baal Shem Tov, "Instructions in Intercourse with God," in Martin Buber, *Hasidism and Modern Man*, p. 198.
- 41 *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.
- 42 Sun Myung Moon, "God's Fatherland and One World," Kona, Hawaii, December 9, 2002.
- 43 Qur'an 3.103-5, A. Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Qur'an* (Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al-Kitab Al Masri, 1938), quoted in *World Scripture*, p. 187.
- 44 Sun Myung Moon, "Breaking Down Boundaries and World Peace," August 18, 2000.
- 45 "Message of Heung Jin Moon from the Spiritual World," January 1, 2002.

