

Reclaiming January 1 for a Heavenly USA? (Solar vs. Lunar Calendar in the UC)

Alan Jessen
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This year, on January 1, True Mother, Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon, had a midnight prayer and gave a motto, an event which was live-streamed. This may be an indication of her reinstating in some way the observance of the New Year by the solar calendar.

Why is this important?



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Consider Romania. For 45 years under communist rule, Christmas was forbidden to be celebrated as a public holiday. By law, there was no mention of Christmas, no days off for Christmas, no "Merry Christmas," or even Santa Claus. The Romanian communists tried to detract from Christmas by making grandiose plans for January 1 as a public holiday. Communist doctrine was taught in schools from kindergarten through college. Religion was considered the opium of the masses.

Despite this, they could not remove Christmas from the hearts of the people and on December 25, 1989, when dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was no more, the Romanians broke out in joyful cries of "Cracium Fericit" or "Merry Christmas," and shouted out at the top of their lungs.

When I finished reading about this, I asked myself, what public holiday, what tradition do we Unificationists in America have that could sustain us under such conditions for two generations?

Think about what easily recognizable annual event we have as a tradition that can serve to unite us as one family at one time across America; that affords parents an opportunity to reinforce our values of putting God in the center of our lives; and, that serves best to create lasting spiritual impressions for our young ones?

During the years True Parents lived in America, that day was God's Day -- celebrated on January 1st.

We recently finished our 2019 Holy Week in Korea -- a combination of Heavenly Parents Day, True Parents Birthday and the sixth Foundation Day. Although I never attended these events in person, I can observe that True Mother has done a fabulous job of creating a world class hyo-jeong culture experience. It is overflowing with dance, music, high-spirited celebrations, meetings of our global leadership, and opportunities to recognize and involve world-level leaders on issues of global peace.

Yet in America -- as elsewhere in the world outside of Korea perhaps -- I wonder how deeply this "livestream" experience penetrated the minds and hearts of our families (and youth)? Looking back to the years of experience of God's Day in America with True Parents, it had that special power, that magic, that

I am sure was felt in Korea.

Would it not be possible to have both?

What if we celebrated Heavenly Parents Day internationally in Korea by the heavenly calendar and also fulfilled Rev. Moon's original vision for True God's Day by celebrating it on January 1st according to the solar calendar and proclaiming it as God's Day in America?

Looking back to what Rev. Moon intended for God's Day, he made it the most important day, the most sacred moment, when the clock would strike midnight and we would welcome a new year. We would fast, repent, reflect, and set new determinations, wish each other "Happy God's Day," celebrate together. As a collective community experience, this tradition has disappeared in America since it became observed according to the lunar calendar. Its spiritual rejuvenating power hollowed out.

In *The Tradition – Book One*, on the significance of Holy Days, it [states](#): "[W]e traditionally celebrate five major Holy Days each year -- Gods Day, Parents Day, Children's Day, Day of All Things and True Parent's Birthday. God's Day is celebrated on the first day of the year according to the solar calendar. However, the other Holy Days are observed according to the lunar calendar." (p. 83)

Father is quoted: "We must look forward to an official holiday. *Only by establishing a good tradition in this way can we have our offspring establish the same tradition of life.* On official holidays we must share everything with one another and live joyfully while God rejoices..." (My italics for emphasis)

He [continues](#): "Each country has its own holidays. For example, in the West many days such as Father's Day and Mother's Day are celebrated. Yet no one had ever proclaimed or celebrated a day for God. Religious leaders have made many proclamations, but none mentioned this obvious omission, which should be the most important holiday -- God's Day." (p. 100)

If God's Day was intended to be the "most important holiday," can that be accomplished by it shifting every year according to a calendar foreign to a country's life? Ask an adolescent in the U.S. when is Mother's Day and you might get the right answer: the second Sunday of May, followed by Father's Day on the third Sunday of June (and we hope that in time Parents Day would be widely recognized on the fourth Sunday in July). These are cultural holidays that connect all citizens regardless of race or religion and provide annual opportunities to celebrate, establish traditions and reinforce values centering on the family. Notice also that these days are on the weekends, when it is assured that most people are not working.

I believe Father had the same thing in mind for God's Day. It has a vertical dimension, obviously, but his words also speak to the idea that God's Day would become an annual day to reinforce the ideal of living God-centered lives where God is put first. How beautiful! It flowed easily from there that as each year was dedicated to God on the first day, so too would each month and week as we gathered for morning pledge at 5:00 am.

These traditions helped form our distinctive culture -- the Culture of Heart -- that we are trying to express and model as we build the universal family centering on True Love (Pledge #4). Anyone who practiced these traditions can testify to their spiritual power. Sadly, they are becoming lost and are not generally being inherited by the next generation.



["National Prayer to Open the Era for a Unified, Heavenly Korea," True Mother's New Year Speech, Cheongshim Peace World Center, January 1, 2019](#)

Midnight Prayer on December 31 worked. Celebrating on January 1 worked. People already had the day off and could gather in their communities to "share everything with one another and live joyfully while God rejoices." It was a clean and pure offering; while the world partied, we celebrated with God. It was a tradition that strengthened us on every level -- even protecting us (and our children) from getting sucked into the culture of the world.

Let's be honest: a floating mid-week holiday in February does not naturally work in America. It seems to me it can't accomplish the goal as originally intended. From another perspective, today's celebration of Heavenly Parents Day as part of Holy Week in Korea could be considered a religious holiday for Unificationists -- and a beautiful one -- yet I doubt it will grow into a cultural holiday that could serve as a new tradition to elevate a day for God, transforming the culture in America and bringing people of faith together in pursuit of that goal.

Traditions are part of and help shape a culture. Tradition "consists in the passing down of beliefs and practices from one generation to the next." So what do we want to pass down? Do we want our dads and children watching football bowl games on New Year's Day rather than making a holy offering to start the new year?

Good traditions are hard to start. It is much easier to keep an existing one than start a new one.

In True Mother's Anthology, Book 1, she has a chapter on "Tradition and Inheritance" where she addresses the challenges (p. 137). She calls us to "stand and live in the same realm of heart as your parents." How do we accomplish that? Traditions help. True Mother says, "While I am still alive on this earth, I will develop True Father's legacy and establish a tradition so that it can shine in the future." I believe the God's Day tradition in America brings us to stand (literally) in the same realm of heart as True Father as he prayed to comfort and liberate God's heart and claim the year, month, week, and day for Heaven's will.

Father studied Jesus' life deeply. He spoke incessantly about walking a sacrificial path as necessary to indemnify the past and create a new culture. In his speech "[What We Should Do in Our Lifetime](#)," Father said: "Jesus lived such a life. Jesus walked his life with Heavenly Father in all circumstances. This kind of path is the only one by which we can deeply implant the heavenly tradition in the satanic world and thereby allow them to inherit our historical accomplishments."

I believe our mission to save America will benefit from a visible cultural tradition that represents our True Parents heavenly tradition; one that can stand the test of time and allow their historical accomplishments to be inherited. Consider how this might help deepen our tribal messiahship work. What if we could reach out to our newly blessed tribe members and invite them to our vibrant God's Day celebrations? We would not be competing with their existing religious practices, but introducing them to the vision of Cheon Il Guk; a natural God-centered way of life.

Father clearly intended for us to stand out, to correct the "obvious omission" of not proclaiming or celebrating a "day for God." Such a cultural day will help us fulfill our role to lead a post-denominational movement in America that will unite Christianity and all believers -- One Family Under God celebrating God's Day "with one another and living joyfully while God rejoices."

True Mother is unleashing our individual identities, creativity and responsibility by changing the names of the Family Federation to include "for a Heavenly USA" or a "Heavenly Korea," etc. This is a beautiful, empowering new direction.

Let us seize this opportunity to boldly take ownership for America as the Elder Son Nation and advocate for creative changes where necessary. There is no conflict. For victory in Tribal Messiahship to save America, we can do both.

Alan Jessen lives in Cedar Falls, Iowa, with his wife Margaret. They have two children and four grandchildren. He has a degree in economics and is a self-employed business owner. He has served as State Pastor for 14 years and three years as a member of the National Council.

Photo at top: Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon gives her New Year 2019 speech at Cheongshim Peace World Center.