

A New Way of Thinking About "Church"

Lorman Lykes
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"All things reach perfection after passing through the growing period (the realm of indirect dominion) by virtue of the autonomy and governance given by God's Principle. Human beings, however, are created in such a way that their growth requires the fulfillment of their own portion of responsibility, in addition to the guidance provided by the Principle." (Chapter 1, *Exposition of the Divine Principle*)

Have you ever wondered how long it would take before you uttered the words, "I'm perfect?"

The quotation above succinctly explains the process of reaching the top of the completion stage, which in Unification terminology means reaching perfection as a child of Heavenly Parent.



Lorman Lykes

I would venture that many Unificationists have dismissed the notion of personal perfection at best as far-off in the future and even as an unobtainable. How can Unificationists bridge the gap between the reality and the elusiveness of this lofty ambition?

In attempting to answer this question we must acknowledge that perfection is an ambiguous concept to define. Even though it is at the center of Divine Principle's understanding of spiritual growth, it carries with it the ethos of Christian theology and secular psychology.

For Unificationists, a reasonable length of time has passed in which a consensus of agreement should have occurred to define clearly and conclusively the meaning, scope and parameters of the presumed goal of our physical life on earth.

What's more, with a clear definition and understanding of perfection, it would provide for the individuals who exemplify a model of perfection an opportunity to pave the way for others to follow, encouraging them that it is possible.

I am not aware of any individual who has declared or been designated a perfect individual that adheres to Unificationist doctrine. Therefore, I have concluded that after more than 45 years of Rev. Moon's ministry and teaching in America, no one is perfect except True Parents.

It's Time for Unificationists to Leave the Growth Period

To be frank, since 1954 the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, a/k/a, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, a/k/a, Heavenly Parent's Holy Community, has been unsuccessful in educating its members despite 21 day, 40 day, 120 day workshops and a plethora of educational books, tapes, videos, etc., to achieve the goal of direct dominion for its members.

I am not judging the institution for what seems to be an obvious problem for all organized religions who have high hopes for their members' spiritual attainment. If my observation is correct however, then by identifying the institution's level of performance in obtaining the goal of direct dominion for its members versus the number of certified perfected direct dominion members, it points out two or three possible criteria by which the institution can be evaluated.

First, an inconsistency in the order of priorities for the stated mission of the institution. I just read True Mother's message at the 8th Anniversary of True Father's Holy Ascension, on the topic, "What is the mission of the chosen people." She said, "Our Creator gave humankind a special responsibility to fulfill. That responsibility is to reach perfection in oneness with God." She said the mission of blessed families is to teach that, "From the outset, God the Creator has been our Parent, and His dream is to realize the

Kingdom of Heaven on earth and live here together with us." From this statement, the immediate question is, what is the operational program of the institution that can facilitate members achieving their "special responsibility?" Since this is "the" mission of the chosen people, then it should be a top priority of the institution and its leadership.

The second possibility is that despite considerable effort and attention by the institution to facilitate spiritual growth toward the goal of oneness with our Heavenly Parent, the process and practice of this perfected state has eluded them. Not to sound hypocritical, but I personally was responsible during my term of leadership in the Unification movement for the education and edification of members who struggled with the process of perfection. I had face-to-face encounters with members who were brought to tears when explaining their frustration with forces they believed were blocking their efforts toward perfection. It was not a joking matter for them to believe that you can be in contact with God on a personal basis only to be denied by forces you cannot control.

Comparably, some evangelical Christians, who initially are inspired by its pronouncement that to be born again as Christians one must believe the blood of Jesus is their only way to salvation and true happiness, become disheartened and seek answers elsewhere. Whether it's by a born-again transformation or a spiritual pathway through the three stages of growth, the objective is basically the same -- the sonship and daughter-ship of God. What is similar in this context is that being born again and Unificationists' concept of perfection is rooted in achieving oneness with our Creator, but neither prioritizes an agenda to achieve the concept literally.

But there is a major difference. Born again adherence requires believers to recommit to the process generation after generation to be perpetuated by the grace of God; while Unificationism sees a one-time transformation passed on generation to generation. The issue for Unificationists, however, is how, who, where, and most importantly, when is this going to happen? What is ironic is that neither faith has proclaimed obtaining oneness in its membership. Are Unificationists diluting themselves like Christians?

Third, and probably the best explanation for why perfection has not been achieved by Unificationists, is that the path to enlightenment has been pursued for centuries by gurus, saints, prophets, and scholars in almost every religion, philosophy, and sect from Buddhism and Taoism to Judaism and Christianity, with the same result -- lack of empirical evidence. Why should Unificationism be any different? (My next article on this site intends to examine the empirical evidence for direct dominion)

Nonetheless, I believe the Unification Movement is different because of one great overwhelming principle: Ockham's Razor or the law of parsimony (problem-solving). The idea is attributed to English Franciscan Friar William of Ockham (c. 1287-1347), a scholastic philosopher and theologian who used a preference for simplicity to defend the idea of divine miracles. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and the Divine Principle have given Unificationists the solution to the perfection question that is so simple that it has been overlooked. Instead of contemplating the perplexing question of what perfection is and how to obtain it, people should strive to trigger the special responsibility they have which is unique to all of us on the path to perfection.

Before a serious discussion on this premise can be undertaken, it is necessary to better understand what the "special responsibility" is, so members have a clear understanding of the path before them.

It's Time for the Movement to Leave the Church Period

Father said many times that "church" was like a hospital that we go to for a cure. Then we are expected to be released just like a cured patient in a hospital. Can you imagine living in a hospital with sick people and not being able to leave once you are cured? Why would you do that? You want to leave so you can live as God wants you to. Where would you go once you were cured? Back to your home, your tribe and your community. You would be the antidote to cure others and be the example they need to follow. Everybody needs to go to the church hospital who is sick with the virus of separation from God. In that hospital you get the cure -- love from God. You also get trained how to stay well and healthy. People who leave the hospital don't have to be doctors and nurses. The doctors and nurses are specialists who know how to treat people -- they stay behind.

The church is like a hospital that treats and cures unloved patients who have been suffering with symptoms of neglect, insecurity, ignorance, confusion, loneliness, hunger, poverty, injustice, war, racism, addiction, and suicidal thoughts. The people who don't suffer from these things can now leave and build a community where no one can get sick again -- everyone starts living in a healthy loving community, a place that welcomes everyone. The mercy of these individuals can attract more people than rallies and seminars because people will see, feel and follow their hearts, not their words. But to do this it takes a strong community that shows mercy and empathy out of appreciation for being healed by loving people infused by God's love -- and the cycle continues.

The church should remain a hospital for those afflicted by the fallen world's sicknesses, but a new

community should emerge that is not a church structure. Community is the evolution from church into the Kingdom. The scenario I describe isn't a fairy tale; it's happening already in new communities being formed around the world but without Unificationist Principles



Dr. Hak Ja Han's address marking the 8th Anniversary of the Holy Ascension of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, Sept. 4, 2020, Cheongshim Peace World Center, South Korea.

Prepare Now for the Next Great Awakening of Heart (*Shim Jung*)

When I moved to Maryland, one of my first assignments was to visit churches. I remember visiting a huge church in Bowie. I couldn't meet the minister of the church, so I started talking to its members. I asked, "This is such a big new building that you have here; how did it get started?" They responded, "Rev. Johnson started by having meetings in his house." "When was that?" I inquired. "That was ten years ago." Amazing! From a house to 20,000 members in ten years. Why? Answer: Community spirit. The heart of community built Rev. Johnson's congregation. What can it do for the Unification Church?

I believe Rev. Johnson was not a great "pied piper" who knew how to influence people to follow him. Rather, he understood his "special responsibility." As a humble man in his living room caring for a few lost souls, he learned how to have unconditional love for them. I don't know how he learned it: maybe he had a mentor, maybe he took Jesus' words seriously, maybe God taught him directly. Nevertheless, the "special responsibility" was manifested in his ability to give unconditional love to others.

Unconditional love isn't just about the way we see others, it's about the way we see ourselves and the world around us. Jesus's words say it succinctly, "Love others as you love yourself." The first and most difficult step on the path to perfection in love is self-love. Why is this so important? Because God is dependent on our self-love as our Heavenly Parent who communicates with His/Her children. Synchronization of love needs the receivers to be on the same frequency as the sender. Remember, 1 John 4-16 says: "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."

When we fulfill our special responsibility, God dwells in us, period. This is what Rev. Moon had been showing us by example throughout his ministry. If God dwells in Rev. Moon, God is waiting to dwell in all willing members. This is what it means to be transformed in the direct dominion. This is the definition of perfection that inspired you from your first lecture of the Divine Principle.

If these sound-like fanciful words you've heard before, you have. But that was before Foundation Day in 2013. Things have changed now, and True Mother is trying to get the message to us that we have to change our attitude about how we see church, thus the name change. By pursuing the vision of the Heavenly Parents' Holy Community, we have several hurdles to overcome.

First, what is a community? What is holy? And most important, who are we as the perfect people -- are we qualified to live there? If we can't believe in perfect people, how can we believe in a Heavenly Parent's Holy Community where they are supposed to dwell? You need loving people to be the foundation of a loving community. You can't have one without the other. In a loving community the connection of everyone involved is important. In today's society the importance of everyone's contribution has to be considered, especially those who have been historically omitted or left out of the conversation, i.e.,

women in the Bible.

An example is Noah's wife. As Noah's spouse, didn't she have some feelings and inclusion for the matters of God? But no one even knows her name. This illustrates how the representation of everyone's feelings is important in the proper heartistic development of a community that represents God. This is a time to seriously consider the real implications of living with God as a community and not just building another institution of man. That is why the next few years are so important for the Unification Movement. This is the transition period from church to community, but it must start now -- not on paper, not in a lecture, meeting or conference, but in our minds as a possible reality. And in our hearts as the truest ideology.

My final point is the one I started with: "How do we bridge the gap between the reality and the elusiveness of this lofty ambition?" Sometimes the simplest solution is also the hardest to accept -- we need training in unconditional love.

We will start all over again as reborn Unificationists. Remember how we learned to be missionaries, fundraisers and lecturers to build the church? Now is the time to train to be citizens of the HPHC by training in unconditional love. Where will it start? In our homes; they will be the new training ground for the Kingdom. Each home can be a hospital for the family within and/or to care for the lovesick from outside.

But in reality, some families may not be ready to take on that responsibility. In that case, support should come from what is still the Unification Movement for those who are still in need of care and self-love. In the past, the church depended on Divine Principle lecturers to spread the word and raise up an army of "heavenly soldiers" to campaign for peace and freedom. That battle was won. Today we need men and women who learned the lessons of love personified in the heart of God. They can be the spiritual mothers and fathers for the next generation of people who have mastered true love to live in God's community.

Soon everyone should be able to graduate from the church and be in the community of God's love. We should be able to say with confidence, "I'm in the direct dominion. How do I know? Because God told me so." Heavenly Parent's Holy Community is not a place. It is a state of mind where Heavenly Parent and the true self meet in a holy oneness of peace and happiness within and all around them. The Home Church providence of the 1980s was just a practice exercise for the future that was to come. This time it won't be practice.

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