

Living in the Fallen World

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In the 1970's the Unification Church was growing by leaps and bounds. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the exposed corruption of the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower had warned about in his final speech in 1960, young people from all over the world began searching for the true meaning of their life. Backpackers from England, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, South America, Asia and nearly every country in the world began visiting the United States on a spiritual pilgrimage. These young people basically gave up whatever life course they were on in an attempt to stop the corruption in the world and bring peace to a confused and

troubled planet.



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After joining whatever spiritual community they had come in contact with, they began to devote their entire life to working with their new found "brothers and sisters" to make the world not only safe for Democracy, by in sync with the will of God and the universe. Earth Day was initiated, ecology became a common word and everyone seemed to be "going green" in everything from their diet to the environment. For example, one twenty something doctoral student, unwound himself from his studies, drove his ten year old (1967) Chevrolet to San Francisco and joined the Unification Church. He began working with other new members in the group, encouraging still others to join their movement. As the movement flourished, businesses were started to support the community. They sold home-made sandwiches business to business; they began a carpet cleaning company, sold flowers all over the western states and Alaska and even began a Jewish

delicatessen and a catering company. In 1982 many of those members were united in marriage by Rev Moon and from this point on things began to change. As single members, those people could dedicate their lives 24/7 for their cause, but after they got married, they began to have children, and bills, rent and medical insurance were on their plates; their lives began to change dramatically.

Probably, the most dramatic change was that most of them could no longer work full time for the movement. Even in movement-owned companies, things were different (one member only attended church once a year because Sunday was a big sales day for his company). Many members made great sacrifices to continue to work directly with the movement—one member commuted from the Midwest to the East coast for 3 ½ years in order to maintain his leadership position. This may seem dramatic, but many members followed this course. Another member took a series of jobs with minimum salary and no benefits so that he could take significant time off (up to six weeks without pay) from work in order to attend the movement's activities all over the world. The closer to the leaders of the movement you were, the more stressful and demanding this became.

An insight—many of the members may be considered a little bit "weird," but this author has found that they are still the most sincere, dedicated and loving human beings in the world. They all shared so many similar experiences, and because of this there could be deep heart-to-heart conversations, whereas one could seldom share such deep spiritual insights with one's birth family and relatives, or the closest friends from childhood.

Still another challenge lay ahead for those who took jobs outside of the movement, for they had to work with people who may have thought little about a true passion and vision for building a better world. Educators had to work with people who had no inkling of what "character education" really meant. Their only concerns were the test scores and the special education money that they would get for their schools. Especially hurt by this were the music and art teachers who were seen merely as teachers who would give the 3R teachers their needed breaks. Here again, the reason of course is that there are no standardized tests in art and music. One music teacher felt like her principal merely wanted her to tell the kids to "sit down, shut up and sing," so they didn't make any noise to disturb the "important" classes. One principal

ran screaming into the class of her music teacher who was teaching her students about native African drums because they “had the gall” to make noise on the very day that students were taking their standardized tests. The question is what goes on in the mind of someone who does not know the Principal—what is the motivation for their behavior?

Racism and sexism are alive and well in 21st century America—and it goes all ways. One member worked in an office where he experienced both racism (because he was white), sexism (because he was a male) and partisanism (because he supported the minority political party). Even within ethnicities—black people may look down on others who have darker skin or less education. Hispanic is too wide a word since Puerto Ricans may hate Mexicans or vice versa. Even German Jews have long looked down on Russian Jews and they may all look down on Sephardic Jews.

Yes, the virtues of love, life, and lineage, honesty, courage, and morality are certainly not shared by everyone. Every football game would not be complete without hundreds of beer commercials albeit along with the attachment to “drink responsibly.” Condoms and Cialis are both regularly advertised all over the airways and those family oriented Mormon ads seem to have become a thing of the past.

One school system was “exposed” by an investigative reporter because volunteers were teaching about “pure love.” Although the volunteers had been invited several times, after the expose, they were no longer allowed in the school system.

A new enthusiastic custodian was so grateful to be in America and to have a job after spending a year in a relocation camp in the Ivory Coast during his emigration from Liberia (even long before the Ebola breakout). His co-workers warned him to slow down because he was working too fast and causing them to look bad.

Christians are encouraged to witness to their co-workers. After the shock of working in the fallen world wears off, we may need to remember that the movement’s Principle is a guide book for life and we must learn to apply it in every situation. As Kabril Gibran once said, “anyone can experience God on the mountaintop—the real challenge is to come back down and experience the Godliness of others in the marketplace