

Reflections on the Cheon Il Guk Constitution

Graham Simon
April 28, 2014

The Applied Unificationism blog welcomes the spirited discussion of the new Cheon Il Guk Constitution with two articles by Graham Simon and Gordon Anderson (UTS Class of 1978). Because of the importance of this topic, I feel motivated to frame this discussion a bit. While the Unification Movement aspires to restore a physical nation, at this time this "Constitution" is in reality governing a religious organization and a spiritual community. It might be more appropriate to call it a "CIG Charter" and to compare it with the laws of governance for other religious communities around the world. In any case, I invite readers to consider views with which they may or may not agree in the spirit of "true love."

*Sincerely, Richard Panzer
President, UTS/Barrytown College*



The Cheon Il Guk (CIG) Constitution was officially proclaimed on Foundation Day 2014 and was intended to "enter into force sixty days thereafter," on April 11.

That day passed with little notice.

Might the CIG Constitution have an impact on our lives and the way the Unification family organizes itself in the immediate future? Looking further ahead, will it have an effect on the lives of our descendants or humankind as a whole?



Graham Simon

Let us assume that the Principle and True Parents' teachings become the fundamental bedrock of a future world order, that they resonate with humankind's inner nature to the extent that their universal acceptance is no longer a question of "if," but "when."

Given this assumption, the CIG Constitution would become an extremely important document. The question is whether it would be so in its current state or inevitably go through further incarnations.

Now, two months later, members in the West are beginning to subject it to sustained scrutiny (Editor's note: the presently available English translation is considered provisional, not final).

The CIG Symposium in London

The first serious effort came at "The Symposium on the Cheon Il Guk Constitution" held in London on March 22, 2014. The consensus of the eight panelists who gathered there was sobering: If the ideal world envisaged by True Father is to come to fruition, it certainly will not be helped on its way by this version of the CIG Constitution.

In fact, most of the panelists viewed it as entirely antithetical to the creation of a domain where a person would voluntarily choose to reside. The speakers highlighted a range of issues.

Dr. C. Turfus identified the Supreme Council, a body that would be seemingly unaccountable once True Mother ascends to the spirit world, as a very worrying development. He stated:

“[T]he main problem I see is with the Supreme Council. This appears to operate like a Communist-style Politburo with extensive powers to appoint and dismiss and to stack the institutions and even to have influence at the national church level through appointment and dismissal of advisers (national messiahs) and veto rights over the appointment and dismissal of national leaders. There is also the problem that most of the members of the Supreme Council are appointed by ‘True Parents,’ but, in their absence, by the Supreme Council itself, with no clarification of how this would work.”

Robert Haines saw a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the constitution. He asked, “Who owns Cheon Il Guk?” and answered:

“True Father and the Divine Principle had elevated humankind to be God’s partners and co-creators, endowed with our own consciences to guide us. This is reflected in the Family Pledge we read every morning in which we pledge ourselves to be Owners of Cheon Il Guk and to take responsibility for its creation — each of us and each of our Blessed Families. But according to this constitution undoubtedly the Supreme Council and its Chairman are the sole owners of Cheon Il Guk. This is therefore not a constitution based on the spirit of the Family Pledge. Its priorities lay elsewhere, namely the consolidation and preservation of religious authority and institutional power and control.

The constitution’s priority is to make clear that a select group of people monopolize the Will of God and the management of Cheon Il Guk. It is alarming that they will hold True Parents’ posthumous authority. This will lead us to repeat the tragic history of so many religions that have been corrupted by such power. They will control who receives the Blessing. They will hold the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. This will mean that we will have to swear allegiance and obedience to them above God and above our consciences. ...There will be no place for people to speak out against vested interests – no place for whistle-blowers or reformers. A ruler who claims a monopoly of the Will of God necessarily aspires to tyranny because, by definition, he is always right and those who oppose him are opposing God. This will leave no space for creativity and difference.”

Jesse Deocares from the Philippines, drawing upon the words of St. Paul, also saw the Constitution as being exclusive and deeply divisive – the very opposite to True Father’s vision. He told the audience:

“The imposition of the CIG Constitution, because it involves religious beliefs, can only be detrimental to the Church as a whole. I say this echoing St. Paul’s thought regarding the imposition of Jewish laws on the Gentiles. Such laws highlighted the Gentiles’ lack of conformity to Jewish customs (circumcision, for example) which would lead to the exclusion of many from Jesus’ circle of love. On the other hand, St. Paul saw that by practicing Jesus’ teaching of love, the Gentiles were able to receive forgiveness, regardless of their shortcomings. He said of the Jewish laws, in Rom. 4:15, ‘Where there is no law, there is no transgression.’ And where there is love, there is forgiveness. Laws are unforgiving, love forgiving.

In much the same way, the imposition of the CIG Constitution will collectively exclude major world religions and will inevitably squander the Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s teaching of unconditional love, which aims to embrace all peoples in all walks of life, theists, non-theists and atheists alike.”

Don Trubshaw (UTS Class of 1989) observed that the framers of the CIG Constitution had actually debased the ideal of Cheon Il Guk:

“Cheon Il Guk is, primarily, a world not really of this world. It is a spiritual ideal of Unificationists, many other religious people, and perhaps at the deepest level of all people. It exists in the realm of faith and hope, as a source of inspiration to strive for the realization of good character and a life lived by the highest values. The framers of the Constitution clearly overlooked this point. They have failed to distinguish between the ideal, the reality of an organization badly in need of a reform of its governance, and the social order created by autonomous human beings. In particular, they have sullied the ideal by reducing it to a hierarchy of power and a mechanism for control, and made absolute the constitutional arrangements for an organization by usurping the moral authority that rightly flows from a God-centered conscience and a God-centered love at the individual and family level.”

The primary concern I expressed at the symposium was the CIG Constitution is set to enshrine a new theological orthodoxy that is only partially in accord with the Divine Principle. This may sit fine with a small core of members in the West, but will alienate many others. I suggested that:

“Many first generation members in the West were attracted to the Unification Movement because the Divine Principle taught that Jesus was not God and that Christianity had failed by elevating him to a God-like position and worshipping him.

Over the past 20 years, following the failure of North and South Korea to unify in the wake of Father’s meeting with Kim Il Sung and the latter’s death in 1994, there has been a sea-change in our theology. The theory of Restoration by Returning Resurrection has been superseded by the Cheong Pyeong Providence. With the announcement that the True Parents are henceforth the visible face of God from now until eternity, they have been elevated to a God-like position. The CIG Constitution (Article 14) tellingly omits the Divine Principle as one of its Basic Scriptures.”

Ollie Davies, a post-graduate student who spoke at the symposium, humorously summed up his view of the real purpose of the CIG Constitution. He read to the audience an excerpt of the terms-of-use agreement for the World of Warcraft online game, then told us:

“We can conclude that it is not a constitution, as with a democracy. It is not a covenant, as with Canon Law. It is a terms-of-use agreement written to protect the Movement from its members. The defining factors of the document are the high levels of security, granting more power and protection the further up the chain you go, and, if that is not its original motive, it is the one it does very, very well.”

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The Purpose of the CIG Constitution

Given this response, it is helpful to place the CIG Constitution within a broader interpretive framework.

It is instructive to step back in time to the fourth century CE when Christianity was still in its formative stages. Around the Mediterranean there was a fundamental rift between the followers of Athanasius, who claimed that Jesus was God, and the followers of Arius, who maintained that Jesus was a created being, not God Himself.

In the end, the Roman emperor Constantine threw his weight behind Athanasius, because his views – today formalized in the Athanasian creed, read weekly by Christians worldwide – fostered the creation of a hierarchical power structure. With this, the growing religion, Christianity, could be safely incorporated into the apparatus of the state. From this emerged the Roman Catholic Church. If the Romans had allowed the Arian “heresy” to flourish, they feared it would have led to a democratization and empowerment of the people, especially women, which would have ended up destabilizing the state and its leaders’ ability to control the masses.

With the passing of True Father, the leaders of the Unification Movement now face a similar dilemma. They may feel the need to introduce a theological orthodoxy and hierarchical organizational structure to stem the tide of fragmentation.

But perhaps the initial CIG Constitution will not be the last word. Hopefully, its authors will take to heart the concerns being expressed by members around the world and consider it as a work in progress rather than the finished product. With a broader and more empowering constitution, the institutional concerns of fragmentation will fade and we can move a step closer to realizing the vision of Cheon Il Guk that we all hold so dear.

Graham Simon met the Unification Movement in California in 1981. He has lived in the UK, USA and Japan and worked extensively for international corporations, including IBM, Shell and Itochu Corporation. He holds an MA in Economics from New York University. He now lives in London and is a trustee of the FFWPU-UK charity.

THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE CHEON IL GUK CONSTITUTION

London 22, March, 2014

SUMMARY OF SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

(in the order in which they were presented)

Dr. C. Turfus

The document remains ambivalent throughout about what is meant by Cheon Il Guk. The language used suggests aspirations of nationhood contradicting its claim that CIG already exists. Insofar as it imposes a codified governance structure, term limits for office bearers and formal processes for impeachment in the Korea-based leadership hierarchy for the first time, this has to be hailed as progress. A number of serious questions however present themselves.

First, there is a question of how representative the proposed institutions can be when most of their members will be appointees, who can be dismissed at will by the Supreme Council (acting with True Parents' authority). There appears to be protection of appointees' positions insofar as they can be dismissed by those who appointed them but only as "prescribed by the law." But as there are currently no laws, and no prior tradition either of protection from arbitrary dismissal in the Unification movement, it remains to be seen whether any real protection will ensue.

The proposed judiciary is supposed to interpret the constitution and (unspecified) "laws." Nothing is said about how cases would be brought before the court or the procedures which would be followed. Also, although citizens are deemed to have rights there is no mention of the court being empowered to protect these rights (although it is stated that there will be means for those rights to be removed!).

But the main problem I see is with the Supreme Council. This appears to operate like a Communist-style Politburo with extensive powers to appoint and dismiss and to stack the institutions and even to maintain influence at the national church level with veto rights over the appointment and dismissal of national leaders. There is also the problem that most of the members of the Supreme Council are appointed by "True Parents," but in their absence by the Supreme Council itself, with no clarification of how this would work.

Jessie Deocares

Love vs. Law

The imposition of the CIG Constitution, because it involves religious beliefs, can only be detrimental to the Church as a whole. I say this echoing St. Paul's thought regarding the imposition of Jewish laws on the Gentiles. Such laws highlighted the Gentiles' lack of conformity to Jewish customs (circumcision, for example) and would lead to the exclusion of

many from Jesus' circle of love. On the other hand, St. Paul saw that by practicing Jesus' teaching of love, the Gentiles were able to receive forgiveness, regardless of their shortcomings. He said of the Jewish laws, in Rom. 4:15, "Where there is no law, there is no transgression." And where there is love, there is forgiveness. Laws are unforgiving, love forgiving.

In much the same way, the imposition of the CIG Constitution will collectively exclude major world religions and will inevitably squander the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's teaching of unconditional love, which aims to embrace all peoples in all walks of life, theists, non-theists and atheists alike.

Christianity did practice authority in her early stages, implementing the Bible as a law. But as a result, those who held heretical views experienced persecution and fear.

For these reasons, I say that the Constitution, bearing the Church's religious beliefs, will be detrimental to the Church as a whole, to the spiritual lives of Church members, and to their relationship with people outside. The Church must instead concentrate on enhancing the practice of unconditional love.

Graham Simon

A Theological Orthodoxy only partially grounded in the Divine Principle

Many first generation members in the West were attracted to the Unification Movement because the Divine Principle taught Jesus was not God and that Christianity had failed by elevating him to a God-like position and worshiping him.

Over the past 20 years, following the failure of North and South Korea to unify in the wake of Father's meeting with Kim Il Sung and the latter's death in 1994, there has been a sea-change in our theology. The theory of restoration by Returning Resurrection has been superseded by the Cheong Pyeong Providence. With the announcement that the TP are henceforth the visible face of God from now until eternity, they have been elevated to a God-like position. The CIG Constitution (Article 14) tellingly omits the Divine Principle as one of its basic Scriptures.

My fundamental concern is that the CIG Constitution is set to enshrine a Theological Orthodoxy which is only partially grounded in the Divine Principle. This may sit fine with a small core of members in the UK and other western countries, but will accelerate the alienation of most others.

The Korean leadership may believe that if they can build a strong movement in the East and gain traction in some Catholic countries, then stagnation of the West is a price worth paying. But they need to think again. Father came for the whole world. International marriage was central to his vision. If the West is lost, then the prospects for the survival of the movement elsewhere will diminish too.

Ollie Davies

The purpose of the CIG Constitution

When I first read the Cheon Il Guk constitution, I like many of you could see that there was something very wrong. But on the plus side, I now had documented proof that our strong suspicions that the church was being led by incompetency from a very high level were true.

Working on the faith that stupidity was not the only cause of such a flawed document, I went looking for its true purpose.

Although the constitution has some very pleasing democratic clauses, the fact is, the constitution doesn't serve to distribute power away from individuals or protect any existing laws or against corruption. The conclusion we can come to is that, the purpose of a democratic constitution and that of the CIG constitution differ.

The next comparison is with Canon Law. Although there are obvious similarities, many of the things contained in Canon Law, such as the nuances of pastoral care and education, are absent. All the clauses about acting power and excommunication are kept as the focus. The second conclusion we can come to is that the CIG constitution is a messy condensing of Canon Law with democratic articles thrown in to make it seem less intrusive.

The final comparison I make is between the CIG constitution and a standard "terms of service" agreement. Like the constitution, a terms of service is a consolidation of company rights to protect the company in an emergency from any challenge by a customer. Signers perform an act of faith that the company will not exercise the powers that the document gives.

As a result of these 3 observations, we can conclude that it is not a constitution, as with a democracy. It is not a covenant, as with Canon Law. It is a terms of use agreement written to protect the Movement from its members. The defining factor of the document are the high levels of security, granting more power and protection the further up the chain you go, and if that is not its original motive, it is the one it does very very well.

Robert Haines

Who owns Cheon Il Guk?

There is a big contradiction that lies right at the heart of the constitution. Who owns Cheon Il Guk? True Father and the Divine Principle have elevated humankind to be God's partners and co-creators, endowed with our own consciences to guide us. This is reflected in the Family Pledge we read every morning in which we pledge ourselves to be Owners of Cheon Il Guk and to take responsibility for its creation. Each of us and each of our Blessed Families. But according to this constitution undoubtedly the Supreme Council and its Chairman are the sole owners of Cheon Il Guk. This is therefore not a constitution based on the spirit of the Family Pledge. Its priorities lie elsewhere, namely the consolidation and preservation of religious authority and institutional power and control.

The constitution's priority is to make clear that a select group of people monopolise the Will of God and the management of Cheon Il Guk. It is alarming that they will hold True Parents' posthumous authority. This will lead us to repeat the tragic history of so many religions that have been corrupted by such power. They will control who receives the Blessing. They will hold the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. This will mean that we will have to swear allegiance and obedience to them above God and above our consciences. Indeed such things have already happened in our church. There will be no place for people to speak out against vested interests - no place for whistle-blowers or reformers. A ruler who claims a monopoly of the Will of God necessarily aspires to tyranny because, by definition, he is always right and those who oppose him are opposing God. This will leave no space for creativity and difference.

If we are truly to be Owners of Cheon Il Guk this must be represented in the constitution. Our inalienable rights to be free to build the Kingdom of God on Earth and in Heaven according to our conscience and in line with the Principle must be protected. "We the Owners of Cheon Il Guk", is how this constitution should begin.

Eddie Hartley

Practicality as a Governing Document

Concerning practicality of implementation as a governing document the current draft of the Constitution is extremely thin. It persistently refers to "prescribed by law" – what law where? We read in Article 13: "The Source of the Law is God's true love and True Parent's words." Which part of the 1,000+ volumes of Father's speeches will be converted into useful law? There would have to be a book of law in existence before the CIG constitution came into force. Where is it?

Some countries like the UK have a trustee body because this is demanded by the charity law of that nation. There is no mention of/provision for the role of the trustee body in the current CIG constitution. This is particularly, but not only, relevant to Article 64 – Financial Powers. Does "CIG management" include micro-management of a nation's financial affairs? Article 68 is a similar case. Article 82 is also very open to interpretation. Article 15 refers to "comply with the laws of the nation" but this is not enough.

There is Article 2 in the Addenda which could cause problems. There should be one representative in each major nation at least who is the immediate person to consult on all questions to do with the Constitution and also defends the special case of each nation as necessary.

There is a lack of definition of key terms such as "for the sake of the firm establishment and completion of CIG". There must be a description of what is really meant by this in simple English!

In short, this is a thoroughly inadequate document. Let the writers reach the standard of the USA or Germany constitution and then we can talk again!

Don Trubshaw

The Cheon Il Guk Constitution has committed a categorical mistake by failing to distinguish or respect the differences between three *intentional states*, or orientations towards the world, which for simplicity can be called the *religious*, the *moral* and the *social*. The religious is concerned with spirituality and our feeling for the ultimate (transcendence) and the sacred (immanence). The moral is our sense of right and wrong as established by rules and by institutional structure, position and authority, centrally that of the family. The social is the realm of personal relationships we develop through family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and acquaintances.

Cheon Il Guk has its theology, but it is, above all, the world of true love, and is described as such in the preamble to the Constitution. Cheon Il Guk is, primarily, a world not really of this world. It is a spiritual ideal of Unificationists, many other religious people, and perhaps at the deepest level of all people. It exists in the realm of faith and hope, as a source of inspiration to strive for the realisation of good character and a life lived by the highest values. The framers of the Constitution clearly overlooked this point. They have failed to distinguish between the ideal, the reality of an organisation badly in need of a reform of its governance, and the social order created by autonomous human beings. In particular, they have sullied the ideal by reducing it to a hierarchy of power and a mechanism for control, and made absolute the constitutional arrangements for an organisation by usurping the moral authority that rightly flows from a God-centred conscience and a God-centred love at the individual and family level.

Cheon Il Guk can also be thought of as the final form of restored humanity but its political and social form will evolve over time to reflect a world of peace and true love created by individuals and families. It cannot be created by fiat, only through the maturing of the principles of liberty and democratic citizenship. The focus of the Constitution, therefore, should be on the positive values, principles and beliefs of Unificationism that are likely to foster the emergence of such a world.

Robert Williamson

Given on the premise that we all believe that True Father is the Messiah and that the constitution is a first step towards building a world of "One Family under God", I would like to present a few thoughts.

True Father in his "We Will Stand Tour" 2001 National Tour gave the main theme, that we will "Rebuild the Family, Restore the Community, Renew the Nation and the World" The constitution then is the first step in laying down a structure that the world can follow, first in our own Church on the family level and then step by step on the National level as people of the world begin to follow our True Parents.

We are also in the position to learn from other nation's difficulties in forming a new constitution like that of Kenya, where after tribal fighting broke out again in 2012 a new constitution was finally put in place in 2013. One of the main challenges that Kenya faced was to educate the population on the new constitution and to bring about a participatory approach. This will also be a challenge for us to educate all the world wide branches of the

Church and to get everyone to participate. In other words it will not be easy to have a smooth transition period.

There also a number of questions that we need to address as quickly as possible, such as how do we create a vetting process for candidates to be elected to office and how do we organise elections. Also how do we organise a transition between our present Church structures towards the new constitution, and how do we educate the world and what is the qualification and disqualification of public officials?

In conclusion, many academics see our vision, but it is up to us to fulfil our portion of responsibility.

In the words of Professor Datin Dr. Rahmah Haji Bujang Head of the Academy of Malay Studies at the University of Malaya after attending the Summit of World Muslim Leaders held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in December 2001, who stated in "The Sole Purpose is Peace" that: *"Reverend Moon's work has stretched throughout the world. But if only more people would sit up, listen, and get involved in his many endeavours to promote world peace, then the nobility of his vision would become more evident and we could perhaps avoid the many man-made tragedies borne of ignorance of each other's value and needs. In my opinion, the greatest value of Reverend Moon's work is that it helps the people he has touched to fully understand the meaning of, and have the power to develop, a civic consciousness, the desire to get up and do their level best for the goodwill of man and the good of mankind."*