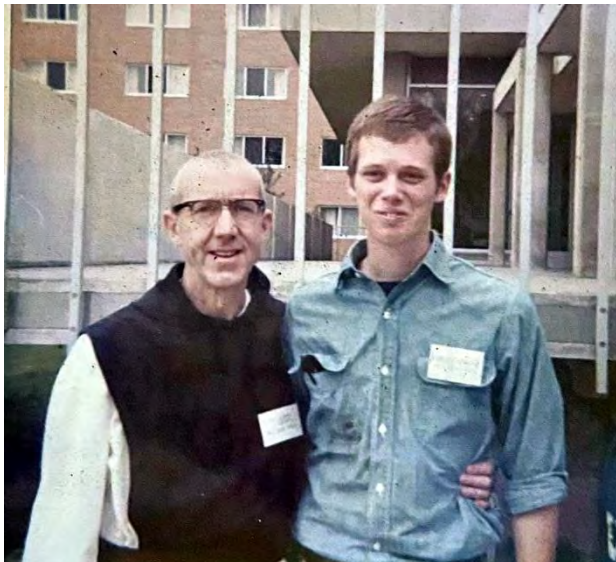


My Unificationist Memoirs - Chapter 2

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Much of Christian history has been a course of spiritual, intellectual, and bodily suffering. As people of faith followed Jesus and his early disciples, they had to address the darkness of doubt, and question the meaning of their personal sacrifice, under circumstances of deadly persecution and unrelenting spiritual opposition. The life course of any person of faith will never be free of this suffering. However, I have been profoundly blessed to have experienced the grace of understanding denied my spiritual forebears because of the time in which I have lived and the steadily increasing merit of this providential age. "And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-

40).

I began to make fresh sense of my life course and personal struggles after meeting the Unification Church, as I reflected on my experience through the lens of a new understanding. Upon attending a Divine Principle workshop and hearing Michael Beard's lecture on the "Last Days," my darkness gave way to light and my heart was alive with joy. I was ready to follow the way of God's will unconditionally. Although my understanding was still quite undeveloped, I knew I was called. Moreover, I had experienced so many tests, and so much demonic spiritual opposition to my being where I was, I knew God's will was unfolding in my life.



The first test occurred after the monastery and before I left the Casa Maria, the Catholic Worker House in Milwaukee. While serving there, I encountered a young man who was struggling with a heroin addiction. He exhibited erratic behavior but I, being young, inexperienced, and incautious, felt I could help him. One evening, in the kitchen of the Catholic Worker, he pulled a revolver on me to rob me. I felt completely calm and uncharacteristically confident. The moment was truly spiritual. I stared him down. He eventually backed off and gave me his weapon. It was unloaded. At the Catholic Worker, we never called the police on our clients unless there was an extreme situation, (as if this wasn't!). I just let it go. One evening, shortly after, he came to me

confessing his addiction as well as his entanglement with the occult, and asking for my help. I went over to his flat, not far from the Casa Maria and began to talk with him. Suddenly, his face changed, his features distorted, he became possessed and a fallen angel began to speak through him. I commanded the angel to leave "in the Name of Jesus!" and the spirit departed but immediately another took his place. Another angel claiming to be even more significant, more powerful than the first began to taunt me and tell me about their absolute dominion over the poor soul they were possessing.

Again, I commanded the spirit to leave. This happened seven times, each time I commanded "in the Name of Jesus!" the spirit departed. Finally, I exerted all of my spiritual power and intensity in prayer and the young man returned to himself. I asked him, where were you in the midst of this? He responded that he left his body and observed from a peaceful vantage all that occurred, but he had no control over what was happening. It was just about midnight. He asked me to stay, saying he was afraid. I assented and went to the next room to lie down. Immediately, an evil spirit descended upon me and I began a night of spiritual warfare. I had trained myself in the "Jesus Prayer" while in the monastery, and it was always alive within me. As the spirit bore down on me, I could feel the Name of Jesus repelling it. I was in a state somewhere between wakefulness and sleep; my limbs couldn't move; I couldn't break off; I was locked in battle. Suddenly, at 6:00 in the morning, I could feel God leave me. The spirit entered. It smelled like raw sewage, dank and dark and oppressive. I woke up and shouted out the "Our Father," commanding the spirit to leave. It did. I walked into the next room and the young man had been up all night performing

some kind of Satanic ritual. There was a pentagram drawn on the floor. A powerful voice came into my head, "Shake the dust off your feet and leave!" I did.

I had been physically sick, when a spiritual healer came to the Casa Maria within a few days of my experience with the possessed heroin addict. She prayed over me and I felt a tremendous surge of God's love and energy flowing like fire through my body. I was healed. God now needed to break me away from the Catholic Worker. This happened over my difference with liberation theology. Although I had opposed the war, I was instinctively and deeply anticommunist. Originally, Dorothy Day had founded the Catholic Worker movement as an antidote to the Communist Party's organizing the working class. However, the movement had drifted further and further away from her original inspiration during the Vietnam War. Nixon was detested and a petition circulated for his impeachment. The "Forgive, Love, and Unite Movement" had not yet been initiated but God inspired me to question why we, as Christians, shouldn't forgive and love Nixon. I refused to sign the petition, angering my fellow Catholic Workers. Moreover, even beyond hating Nixon, there were activists who supported a victory of the communist North in the war. One of these, Michael Cullen, was a renegade Irish seminarian organizing migrant workers in Milwaukee. He was giving a presentation on liberation theology at Marquette University and I was in attendance. During the Q and A period, I challenged his theological analysis and asked why Catholicism needed an atheistic ideology to enlighten its biblical exegesis. I argued that Marxism practiced the politics of resentment while Christianity embodied the message of love and forgiveness. They were diametrically opposed. That was the last straw. I was out of the Catholic Worker community and on my way to Washington, D.C.



When I arrived at my family's home in Annandale, I began to settle into a spiritual routine of prayer and meditation, pursuing a discernment process to determine if I should enter the monastery's novitiate to become a Cistercian Trappist monk. Each morning and afternoon I would intensively study and pray. In the evenings, I would spend time with my parents and younger siblings.

One day in early November, in the course of my afternoon prayer, I felt propelled to exit my home, as though I were Abraham called to leave his father's house in Ur. The experience came with a sense of finality, of ultimacy, such that I felt I might need to keep walking and never return. Once

outside, the feeling dissipated. I returned to my room and parsed the experience. This occurred two days running. On the third day, I emerged from my home and looked down the street to see a woman carrying a bucket of flowers. My days of prayer came to a point: I had to speak to her about Jesus. A spiritual momentum pushed me forward to overcome my hesitancy and natural shyness. I approached her, asking, "Have you been thinking about Jesus today?" Felice Walton Hart didn't miss a beat and answered, "Praise the Lord! All day long!" She then proceeded to invite me to a weekend workshop. Little did I know, my years of longing and prayer had been answered.

The evening of November 9, before I went to the workshop, I was at home and went to bed after my usual prayer and meditation. I felt tremendous spiritual excitement about the next day. The spirit world was energized and active. But Satan wasn't finished with me. Sometime in the night, I was attacked by the same spirit that assaulted me in Milwaukee. My body was literally and violently shaken as the spirit took hold of me yelling "NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!" I again battled it in prayer, drove it off, and determined I absolutely would attend the workshop. The next morning, my parents were having breakfast downstairs. They were going to the Marine Corps Birthday Ball in Washington D.C. that evening, and I remember saying I would be away at this workshop and not to worry. They had no idea about my intense spiritual battle. The surreal disconnect between my night spent wrestling with a spirit and the tranquil domestic scene amused me! When Felice came with the van and a driver to pick me up, I told her of my experience. She was completely unsurprised. And as I look back, I understand why.

From the moment I entered the Center on Military Road, I felt a union of heart with Jesus - but this feeling came with a new sensation: it had a decidedly Asian "flavor." The intensity of the spiritual experience began to build as I sat and listened to the lectures that Saturday morning. Chapter I opened my heart to the creation and shifted my perspective on the nature of our lives and our relationship to the physical and spiritual worlds. When I heard Chapter II, I felt deeply convicted and repented for my many failings related to the sexual nature of the Fall of Man. However, the Mission of Jesus touched me most powerfully. It hit me as though Jesus himself delivered it. I finally understood the spiritual experience I had in the monastery and the deep pain and sorrow Jesus still carried from his course of rejection and suffering. I could feel his longing for completion. The Christology and Resurrection lectures shook the foundations of my Catholic faith. Though their logic proved unassailable, my spiritual conviction arose from the mystical experiences that accompanied each lecture's words.

I hardly rested Saturday night as I existed in a state between sleep and mystical awareness. My heart was caught up in union with Jesus. Centuries of Catholic longing were being realized in me, and my physical being could scarcely contain the emotions. Before 5:00 a.m. Sunday morning, I heard everyone gathering downstairs for Pledge Service. I rose to join them but was met on the stairs by a brother who told me to get more sleep, so I would be alert for the day's lectures. Reluctantly, I retreated to my room.



The History of Restoration lectures continued to enlighten my understanding. I had immersed myself in Catholic scriptural analysis in which the course of Israel, its kings, prophets, and people, were seen as the typological prefigurements of Christ and prophetic preparation for the New Testament. Thus, I savored the explanations for the Foundations of Faith and Substance, the Providential Time Periods, and the Parallels of History. Truly, like Saul of Tarsus, scales fell from my eyes. Reborn, I became Paul.

Back to where I began. After I heard "Conclusion" and I was praying in Michael Beard's room, I looked up to see a strategically placed black and white photo of a young Sun Myung Moon, framed by the quote from Isaiah, "Wonder Counselor, Prince of Peace." Two voices entered my head: "He's the Antichrist!!! Leave immediately!!!" and "He's the Lord, the Messiah! You have been called! Leave everything and follow him!" After three days of mystical experiences and revelatory

teaching, I knew Sun Myung Moon was the Messiah. I left everything to follow him.