

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 15

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In the words of John Henry Newman, "Growth is the only evidence of life." Now joined in an eternal bond, Cindy and I set a spiritual course in our marriage with intentional effort. We continued our reading of CS Lewis, Thomas Merton, and other similar authors. We lived close to St. Anne's in the Sunset, so attended Mass there or, with Fr. Filice. We sometimes went to St. Ignatius at USF or to St. Brendan's, the church in which my parents had been married.

All the while, I continued my meditation and daily reading of Divine Principle or True Father's Words. The insights given to me by my daily practice informed Cindy's spiritual formation. When I came across a passage in Father's speeches which appeared to make my spiritual condition seem hopeless, I digested it through prayer, saying to God, no matter what, I will persevere and restore

our couple to You! The Bodhisattva Vow, to liberate all sentient beings, became very meaningful to me. As I meditated, I committed myself to labor for the entirety of restoration, since I myself would be one of the final souls restored. I feel this in the marrow of my bones. At this point of self-denial, I found the greatest hope. Even now, as I recall this, a surge of joy rushes from my heart, brightens my spirit, and moves me to tears.

Our first year of marriage was one of our most challenging. Cindy began her residency in Radiation Oncology by first working as an internal medicine intern at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco, in the middle of the HIV-AIDS crisis. Weekly, she would work at least one 36 hour shift. There were times that I could only see her by going to her "Call Room" at the hospital. I had entered my second year at UC Hastings Law and worked as an associate editor for the Hastings Constitutional Law Journal. We both led incredibly busy lives. Like MFT, when we look back to these times, we do so with great fondness.



Sage advice from spiritual teachers helped with these unfamiliar challenges. Early in our marriage, I brought Cindy out to Holy Cross Abbey in Virginia to meet with the Trappist monks, still my brothers. One of the elderly monks, the Abbey Prior, Fr. William had lived a semi-hermetic life for many years. As a young monk, I would hike to his hermitage, interrupt his solitude and serenity to work together in his vegetable garden, and pepper him with my questions. I would often join him as he celebrated Mass. One day, after communion, we sat together meditating in silence, when our hearts opened up and we had a shared mystical experience with Jesus. Needless to say, such a bond of heart is eternal. I had to introduce Fr. William to Cindy.

When we arrived at the monastery, I discovered that Fr. William had retired to the infirmary with Parkinson's Disease. I went back to his "cell" and knocked on the door. As speech was discouraged during the day, he knocked back, signaling me to enter. Though stooped from the disease, his face shone under close cropped white hair, drawing my gaze to his brilliant blue eyes. He didn't miss a beat, saying, "J.!" and embracing me. I explained

the purpose of my visit and brought him from the cloister to meet Cindy. After we had spoken for a while, Fr. William said he had advice for us, which I welcomed. He went on, "Cindy and J., two people living together are bound to have disagreements, even to quarrel. In those moments," as he spoke, he turned to look at my wife, "Cindy, remember, J. is your husband and he should have the last word!" Before I had the time to physically express the exuberant fist pumps in my mind, Fr. William turned to me and said,

"J., those last words should be 'Yes, Dear!'" I now pass along this advice to other couples. It has saved my marriage.

When Fr. William ascended, he visited me in my morning meditation. To this day, at this moment, we freely commune. Such is the world of God's Heart.



As a first year law student, I had written an article on the "Molko v. Holy Spirit Association" case which was then before the California Supreme Court, in which I argued for an interpretation of the First Amendment Religious Freedom clause to extend to the less than forthright witnessing activity of our members. The article was accepted for publication by the editorial board as I was a rising second year. I continued to write all summer and submitted it on time for the next quarterly publication. As the case would soon be decided, I wanted to get my arguments into print, hopefully to influence the case outcome. Over the summer, the editorial board had changed, bringing in a new third year contingent, utterly opposed to my "expansive" reading of the First Amendment. At the time, I did not know about the editorial shift in perspective. Neither were they forthcoming. Instead, they kept bouncing my article back to me for very minor edits, until the deadline had passed. By the end of 1988, the Court had decided the case against us and the article no longer was timely. Though angry, there was little I could do. I felt as though I was back at the Bladensburg Cross, getting spat on by a bigot in a pickup truck. I brought my experience to prayer, to deepen my understanding of True Father's heart, and the utter ignorance behind his rejection and persecution.

On my very first day as a law student at Hastings, I met another first year student, San Jin Nam, or as he preferred, "SJ." We became study partners, close friends, and navigated the tough years of law school together. Initially, I said nothing about my background but SJ was mystified by this German-Irish American who loved kimchi and understood something of "shimjung." As we got to know each other, we shared more of our spiritual lives and SJ easily accepted this "Zen Catholic Moonie." SJ's father had been a senior official in Syngman Rhee's government in South Korea. Several years after the fall of the Rhee government, SJ's father died from hereditary cancer and the mother emigrated to the United States with her three young children. His father's family, the Nams, had been courtiers of the Kings of Korea for nearly 1,000 years. They had intermarried with the royal family and their lineage was soaked in Confucian and Buddhist tradition. Thus, while an undergrad at UCLA, it came as a surprise to SJ when he began to have dreams of an ancestor, dressed in white, standing at the top of stairs looking down on him, telling SJ he had to change his heart and go to a Christian church. Too busy with school, he initially ignored them. Then, one night he dreamt he was drowning in a turbulent sea and he felt absolute despair. He looked across the water and Jesus was walking on the waves towards him, as he reached down, SJ reached up, and Jesus embraced him. After this dream, SJ began attending church.

Several years after law school, when SJ was practicing law in San Francisco and I had just moved to Santa Rosa, I wandered into a used book store in the town square of Sonoma, looking for nothing in particular. On a shelf, in the very back of the shop, a title jumped out at me, The Catholic Church in Korea. I opened the book and came across a passage about the early Korean martyrs, among them, one John Baptiste Nam. He had been a noble attending the King of Korea as a Chamberlain when he converted to Catholicism. Initially, Christianity had been well received in Korea but subsequent to the death of the king in 1864, enemies of the faith took power. After both international and palace intrigue, Chamberlain Nam was arrested, interrogated, tortured and condemned to death. He refused to renounce his faith. On March 8, 1866, along with others, he was beheaded on the banks of the Han River.

I immediately called SJ and said, "I think I know who your persistent ancestor is," and recounted how I had come across the book. SJ checked the scroll of his family lineage and discovered that a name had been scraped out from the family tree that matched the time period of John Baptiste Nam. Thus, the person about whom the family felt the deepest shame, was the very person most admired by Heaven.