

## My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 90

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### Chuseok

One can know the direction of God's Providence by viewing the intellectual and social fashions of the era, and going the opposite way. The most obvious example, one often noted in True Father's speeches, is "Free Sex." Thus, judging by the universal acclaim Free Sex receives and its noisily joyous celebration in all manner of media, we can readily assume that sexual purity is the practice of which Heaven approves. Of course, True Father's thunderous proclamations on "Absolute Sex" immediately move this principle from the status of "assumption" to universal law. Another example would be the ferocious embrace of the politics of resentment by the extremes of our political spectrum. Our modern day political operatives have mastered the use of fear and loathing to generate popular support and massive amounts of money. In the face of these roaring animosities, Heaven has proposed "Forgive, Love, and Unite." So much pleasure and profit can be derived from hatred, to propose that one forgive and love one's enemies requires self-denial on such a revolutionary scale that it amounts to a countercultural *cri de coeur*.



Yet, the current fashion I most love to flaunt is the proscription against "cultural appropriation." A legion

of woke scolds exists for the sole purpose of finger wagging condemnation of those of us who might dip into the cultural wealth of people other than our own to borrow practices that might enrich our lives and understanding. Books have been canceled, statues toppled, artists driven from galleries, musicians panned, and movies scorned for the violation of this politically correct tenet. From the emotional eruptions on Twitter, one would think that the production and celebration of culture is a zero sum game. Nothing could be further from the truth--and distant from the direction and purpose of Heaven in this age. The "cultural appropriation" emanation of postmodern orthodoxy is either rooted in a profound ignorance of history or worse, a willful misrepresentation of it.



Throughout human history, the path to peace and human prosperity has advanced through the sharing of culture. Along the great trade routes, the bartering of material goods led to the adoption of religious practices. For instance, Buddhism spread from India to China along the Silk Road; Christianity, an offshoot of Judaic monotheism, spread along the ancient roads and water routes encircling and crossing the Mediterranean Basin. Business relationships across cultures were secured through marriage--the subsequent children and grandchildren embodied an enriching mix of race, language, religion, and perspective. From the dawn of civilization, shared invention and technology elevated the living conditions of millions across geographic and racial boundaries. And although accompanied by great tragedy, conquered peoples submitted to the will of the victors, often, paradoxically, resulting in a profoundly transformative sharing of culture and religion in reverse--a most recent example of this can be seen in the ever growing influence of Zen Buddhism in Western religious practice, the fruit of European colonialism and American wars in Asia.

Of course, the entire Unification Movement is an audaciously massive exercise in cultural appropriation, one initiated by the Founders and zealously implemented by us, the followers. It's no wonder we encountered such opposition: we are shaking the foundations of the world. As all of these young Americans, Europeans, Middle Easterners, South Asians, Southeast Asians, and Africans--not to mention Japanese and Chinese--pledged loyalty to a Korean Messianic Couple, adopted elements of their Korean language and customs, gave up status and economic privilege, and even participated in international arranged marriages (and so much more!)--considering the cultural power and intellectual prominence of postmodern orthodoxies, by what paradigm could the secular world comprehend this phenomenon? Whose sacred ox didn't we gore? The world's thought-leaders could not help but resort to a violation of their very own ethics by leveling the racist trope of "brainwashing."

The truth of Unificationism evidences all of the ironies and complexities of human history. Here's one: Christianity's introduction to the Korean peninsula in the late 16th Century likely came through the invading armies of the Japanese Daimyo Hideyoshi Toyotomi. Three hundred years later, the Korean Christians would form the patriotic backbone of the opposition to the Japanese occupation of their country. While the Japanese would successfully eradicate the practice of Christianity from their country under the Tokugawa Shogunate, by fits and starts, Korea would become one of the most successfully evangelized nations in Asia.



That being said, Christianity faced a significant cultural challenge in its evangelization efforts because of its theological proscriptions against shamanism. Reverence for ancestors, expressed in ritual communion and family devotion, resides at the very heart of Korean culture and folk religion. Within the most ancient and enduring Korean traditions, the ancestors are respected and living participants. The periodic persecution of Korean Christians and foreign missionaries occurred in part because of this very real transgression of Korean sacred culture. A significant number of the Korean faithful suffered the fate of the earliest Christians, and found their necks on the chopping block. As my Irish nuns would say, "the flower of the Church was watered by the blood of its martyrs."

Which brings us round to another great irony: Within Unificationism, this Christianity reborn in the East, we revere and liberate our ancestors, elevating the practice of filial piety to the pinnacle of virtue--in the course of which we have intentionally absorbed the shamanistic principles of traditional Korea and spread them to the world. In so doing, we Unificationists have brought to light

the deeper meaning of "the great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) and the "communion of saints." And to make explicit the implicit paradox: many of those East Asian martyrs who populate the "great cloud of witnesses" we hope to resurrect and liberate, died in opposition to the shamanism we have come to embrace. Irony indeed.

So, as we celebrate Chuseok, the Autumn Harvest Festival in which our ancestors are remembered and revered, let's do so with gusto! We are shaking the foundations of Heaven and Earth. Remember on this day, how our True Parents, recalling their homeland with the most profound heart of love, would invite us to sing "Omay" together with them. What could be more beautiful?