

Pledge 6

Spreading God's Blessing

천일국 주인 우리 가정은 참사랑을 중심하고 하나님과 참부모님의 대신가정으로서 천운을 움직이는 가정이 되어 하늘의 축복을 주변에 연결시키는 가정을 완성할 것을 맹세하나이다

Our family, the owner of Cheon Il Guk, pledges to become a family that moves heavenly fortune by embodying God and True Parents, and to perfect a family that conveys Heaven's blessing to our community, by centering on true love.

AFTER DISCUSSING earthly society in the fourth pledge and the spirit world in the fifth pledge, the focus in the sixth pledge reaches the highest point of all, the work of God. This pledge calls us to embody God's nature, inherit God's power, and do God's work. Specifically, we participate in the work of God when we spread God's blessings, sharing them with the people in our communities, until the entire earth is covered with blessings.

Of all the blessings we can share, the most precious is that which can restore and give new life to the family. Unique among these is the Holy Blessing officiated by the True Parents. Bestowing God's grace upon the family, the Blessing opens the door to perfecting its love. True love in the family is the starting-point for every sort of blessing on earth and in heaven. Through its expansion worldwide to millions of families, the Kingdom of God will finally be established on the earth.

In brief, the sixth pledge defines our family's role in spreading God's Blessing. God is the font of all blessings. The goal of God's work, the Divine Principle teaches, is to establish His Three Great Blessings on the earth: blessings of individual integrity and maturity, blessings of love and family, and blessings of wealth and abundance. As families who have been reborn in Christ, the True Parent, we will embody Christ's nature, and hence God's nature. We become members of Christ's body. (1 Cor. 12:27) Therefore, our desire is to act with Christ, mobilizing the power of God as he does, to convey God's blessings to others, even as they were conveyed to us.

To Embody God and True Parents

In order to spread God's Blessing to others, our family should *embody God and True Parents*. Some have translated this as "represent God and True Parents." However, the word *embody* (대신, *taeshin*) has a significantly different meaning from the term *represent* (대표직, *taep'yō-jeok*) in the second pledge. (Figure 10)

In the second pledge, the word "represent" (*taep'yō-jeok*) describes a family's position before God. The family takes responsibility to stand before God as a true object partner, representing other families who are unaware or unwilling to stand in their proper positions. In the Bible, when all of Israel dwelt in darkness and God looked for someone who would carry His message, Isaiah said, "Here I am! Send me." (Isa. 6:8) It is just so with a family that represents heaven and earth. It proudly stands in the forefront of responsibility regardless of the circumstances and regardless of what other people do. This family also takes responsibility for the debts of history. Like Moses who fasted a second 40 days to intercede for the people's sin of the golden calf (Deut. 9:18-26), and like the suffering servant who took on the sins of his people (Isa. 53:4-6), a family that represents the cosmos makes every effort to settle the unpaid debts that stand in the way of a prosperous future.

FIGURE 10: FIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TRUE FAMILY

	Position	Function	Perspective	Characteristics
Pledge 2	A family representing <i>(taep'yō-jeok)</i> heaven and earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resembles True Parents' family ▪ Represents a tribe before God ▪ Represents a history Isa. 53:4-6 	Vertical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsible ▪ Historical ▪ Representative Matt. 10:40
Pledge 2	A family central <i>(jūngshim-jeok)</i> to heaven and earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resembles True Parents' family ▪ Responsible for the people's welfare ▪ Supports and protects the people 	Horizontal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central ▪ Compassionate ▪ Lives for others 1 Jn. 4:21
Pledge 6	The family that embodies <i>(taeshin)</i> God and True Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member of the body of Christ ▪ Acts on behalf of God and True Parents ▪ Extends True Parents' reach ▪ True parent, true teacher, true owner 1 Cor. 12:27 	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Born again ▪ Oneness with God & True Parents ▪ Temple of God John 14:20
Pledge 6	The family that moves heavenly fortune	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-creator ▪ Owner of God's Providence Matt. 16:18-19 Mark 11:23 	Ideal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living by faith ▪ Sever ties to Satan ▪ Overcome persecution ▪ Unity with True Parents ▪ Family Unity
Pledge 6	The family that conveys Heaven's blessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administers the Blessing ▪ Expands the Blessing to the community, nation, world and cosmos Matt. 28:18-20 	Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caring for others ▪ Of God's lineage ▪ Evangelical

The accompanying phrase, “central (중심적, *jūngshim-jeok*) family of heaven and earth,” refers to a family’s responsibility to care for others in its domain. “He who loves God should love his brother also.” (1 Jn. 4:21) A central family lives for the sake of others, protects them, helps them, and raises them up.

Moreover, a central family lives as though the fate of society depended on it. Its zeal to save the people arises out of God’s heart, which agonizes over the thousands of lost souls who each day take the journey to the other side and find themselves in hell. Who can put a stop to this train of death? Like Abraham, Moses and other central figures in the Bible, a central family carries the weight of providence on its shoulders. Father Moon takes his central responsibility that seriously. In speaking of his mission to America, he said,

This universal principle must be taught to American youth who are in darkness and confusion today... If I don’t fulfill this duty, then God must find someone else who will. This is the only course left to America and someone must do it.¹

However, Father Moon’s position is unique: his family is *the* representative family for all humankind in this age and *the* central family that carries the entire providence of God on its shoulders. Our family’s role is analogous but within a limited sphere, as indicated by the particle -적 (*jeok*). Our family can be the representative family of our clan and our town, carrying the cross of its history. Our family can be the central family in our community, taking responsibility to bring it salvation and hope: this is the meaning of the designation “tribal messiah.”

Still, our position as a representative and central family is only a likeness of the true representative and central family of the True Parents. Therefore we are like the disciples whom Jesus sent out and said, “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me.” (Matt. 10:40) We are like small true parents. When the people receive us and hear our message, they are also receiving True Parents and their words. Conversely, many times when we fall short of fulfilling our mission, Father Moon and the True Family carry us. As *the* representative family and *the* central family, they cannot allow themselves to fail.

The meaning of the phrase, “the family which embodies (*taeshin*) God and True Parents,” in the sixth pledge includes the sense both of embodying God and True Parents and of being a member of the body of God and True Parents. It goes without saying that the True Parents regard themselves as both a representative (*taep 'yo*) family and a central (*jūngshim*) family, uniquely responsible to represent humankind before God and to bring salvation to the world. Hence, any family that aspires to embody the True Parents will also regard itself as such. Nevertheless, *taeshin* has another more internal meaning: a connection grounded in a unity of heart and will. The meaning of a *taeshin* family has four aspects.

You Must Be Born Again

First, a *taeshin* family embodies the qualities of True Parents' family. It shares their family's heart and zeal to do God's will. It practices their tradition. A *taeshin* family studies True Parents' way of life and makes it their own: their daily schedule, their life of prayer, their sacrificial spirit and absolute determination.

We should learn their methods of preaching and teaching. We should emulate their attitude of patient forbearance toward those who betray them. We should even learn the True Parents' language. To inherit True Parents' tradition we have to put aside our former ways and habits, including the traditions of our own culture wherever they fall short. Their ways of self-denial and self-sacrifice certainly challenge the self-centered and indulgent individualism that characterizes the lifestyle of most Americans.

A *taeshin* family is a true family. True love shines through and through, as this family achieves unity in every way: mind and body, husband and wife, parents and children. It should show forth the godliness which is the original nature of every family. Jesus spoke of his own divinity as potentially present in each one of us: “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” (John 14:20) We should embody the divinity of God within us, manifest the love of God among us, and shine forth the light of God to everyone around us.

How can we become Christ-like? Father Moon envisions a world where:

Many children like Jesus should be born, and many brides and grooms who are like Jesus should arise. Many families must emerge with ideal spouses—as Jesus’ [bride] would have been—who can raise perfect children. God’s ideal world begins here.²

We may have already been consecrated as God’s children through the Blessing, yet, the Blessing is no panacea. We still wrestle with fallen nature, fight with our spouse, and struggle to unite with God’s will and the call of conscience. When we received the Blessing we were still spiritually immature—at best our spiritual level was only at the top of the growth stage. God did not yet dwell powerfully in us. After the Blessing we must still grow to full maturity before we can become the wholesome vessels able to embody the substance of God’s love. How do we attain such a state of oneness that God’s love pulsates in each of the billions of cells in our body?

Jesus gives the answer; he said we must be born again: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) Though Jesus’ disciples wondered at this, later, on the day of Pentecost, they received the Holy Spirit: “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:3-4) From that moment these disciples, beginning with Peter, who had formerly been timid and at a loss for words, were filled with the power to speak persuasively and proclaim the Gospel. (Acts 2:14-36) These disciples, who had fled the scene when Jesus was arrested and cowered in fear of the authorities, now spoke boldly to the authorities and preached Christ at the risk of their lives. (Acts 4:8-13) Paul describes how the Spirit working within transforms us into children of God, embodying God and Christ:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God...
When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
—*Rom. 8:14-17*

Unfortunately, the last line, “provided we suffer with him,” is too often overlooked. The grace of the Spirit is alive only in the person who, like those first Christians, takes up his cross.

The forces of darkness that beset the modern world—racism, war, exploitation, corruption and moral decay—are pressing hard upon the churches. People cry out for God to act once again, to definitively end the reign of evil and loosen its hold on our hearts. The True Parents have come in the power of God to give God the victory and the glory on earth for all time. They bring a new infusion of the Spirit to revive crippled Christianity. The issue for us is how we can be transformed from the confused and cowering disciples at the foot of the cross to the bold and dynamic apostles filled with the Holy Spirit.

There is only one way, and Jesus taught it: the way of sacrifice. “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24) When we sacrifice ourselves for others with a devoted heart, going beyond limit of our strength and feeling that we are about to perish, God meets us and embraces us. Father Moon says,

If you are anxious to see God or to see True Parents in a dream, the only way is to work for God with your whole heart. You must have the type of God-like heart that is willing to shed blood for the sake of all people. You must have such a heart that you would even forget sleeping, and cry with me. That is the closest path to reach God.³

God draws close to those who willingly go down to embrace people in the midst of their pain and suffer together with them. To that end, God first raises us in the truth and wraps us in His love. Then God sends us out to the world with some trepidation: will we remain faithful, or will we turn back rather than face the pain? God is delighted when we willingly bear the cross and demonstrate our loyalty to His cause. We become God's friends and companions, sharing the same heart.

The outpouring of Pentecostal spirit founded on Jesus' cross finds its completion in our cross. According to the Divine Principle,

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross became the basis for God's exercise of power from heaven:

By delivering Jesus to Satan, God set up as compensation the condition to save sinful humanity... How did God achieve this? Because Satan had already exercised his maximum power in killing Jesus, according to the principle of restoration through indemnity, God was entitled to exercise His maximum power. While Satan uses his power to kill, God uses His power to bring the dead to life... God thus opened the way for all humanity to be engrafted with the resurrected Jesus and thereby receive salvation and rebirth.⁴

Jesus laid the foundation for spiritual rebirth at Pentecost by the cross. The classical sign that a person has connected with Jesus and received rebirth occurs when he puts aside his old manner of life and takes up his cross, following in Jesus' footsteps.

Pentecostal experiences are not ends in themselves, but rather the means to empower us that we might better fulfill our walk of faith. The Spirit helps us in our weakness, so that we can be strong enough to bear God's burdens and fight in His struggle to renew the sinful world. Today, when God is bringing providential history to its consummation, new Pentecostal phenomena abound. For example, at the Cheongpyeong Training Center in Korea, evil spirits are cast out, illnesses healed, and forgiveness abundantly given. These spiritual works are clearing away the obstacles that have blocked God's love and power from flowing abundantly into people's souls.

Nevertheless, the final responsibility to defeat Satan lies neither with the Messiah nor with the Holy Spirit, but with myself:

After the Second Coming of Christ, the people of faith are to bear the third responsibility to defeat Satan, the fallen archangel, and complete the providence of restoration. They are to achieve this in accordance with the Principle of Creation, which lays out the way for human beings to gain the qualification to rule the angels.⁵

God gives us grace to empower us, that we might subjugate the principalities and powers of evil. God intends that we become lords

of both the spirit world and the physical world and to link them through our minds and bodies. Whatever power the spirit world possesses should become our strength in the battle for goodness. Then we ourselves will defeat Satan and gain a victor's crown. In this way, we attain a living oneness of heart and spirit with the True Parents and with God.

Member of the Body of God and True Parents

Second, a *taeshin* family is a member of the body of God and True Parents. Paul wrote of the church as the body of Christ, saying, "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Cor. 12:27) As members of Christ's body, we should share one mind and one spirit, which is to do the will of Christ in the world.

Members of the body of Christ have diverse talents and vocations. Some have exceptional faith, others are gifted preachers, some are healers, some speak in tongues, others have the gift of prophecy. Paul cautioned his readers not to compare their gifts or status in the church with others, for in the body every member, from the least to the greatest, is equally important. Rather, everyone should devote himself to the advancement of the whole, while caring for each other. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." (1 Cor. 12:26)

Accordingly, regardless of our mission or level of ability, as members of the body of God and True Parents we should all move to one purpose: the fulfillment of God's providence. We should pool our talents and support each other in our missions. When parents go out on a mobilization for a providential campaign, neighboring families should willingly open their homes to care for the children. If a child of a poor family becomes sick and requires expensive medical treatment, neighboring families should willingly help with the medical bills. In this regard, the Unification Church has a wonderful tradition of adoption to give childless families the opportunity to complete the Four Great Realms of Heart.

Most importantly, all the members of the body of God and True Parents move together in a wonderfully coordinated way to fulfill God's will. Willingness to cooperate and sacrifice is the key to the church's organizational prowess. At the various festivals and confer-

ences around the world, representatives from the many different organizations established by Father Moon team up with local members to make the meetings a success. This marvelous body reaches into every field of activity—religion, politics, sports, science, business, media and the arts.

As members of one body, no one should be puffed up by self-conceit or by reason of exceptional revelations. As Paul said, we should “hold fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.” (Col. 2:19) We share concern above all for the welfare and success of the True Parents and the True Family, since they are the head that gives every blessing to the body. No individual or organization should ever regard itself as independent from the True Parents and the central providence.

Occasionally a person responsible for some small domain will make the mistake of trying to preserve his turf and his manpower by finding ways to insulate his domain from the center. This type of thinking is against nature. If the body falls to the ground after slipping on ice, does the hand think, “I should protect myself at all costs and not risk injuring myself by breaking the body’s fall”? No, it willingly puts itself in harm’s way to protect the head and back and soft organs. By this principle, when we sacrifice our smaller purpose for the sake of the greater providential purpose, we will prosper all the more.

Children sometimes grow impatient with parents who seem not to care or understand their point of view. Yet running away is no solution; the child only cuts him or herself off from the family that gives it life and nurture. The same is true for a church member who confronts a seemingly obtuse leader who does not listen to his “good advice.” Instead of escaping from the mission, a successful church member will humbly and patiently serve with the aim of eventually winning his leader’s trust. Even though he may possess superior insights and abilities, he does not insist on his own way. He wisely chooses patience, until the time comes when his superior is open to listen. In that moment his superior may accept his ideas; on the other hand, the member may recognize that his proposal was flawed when seen from his superior’s wider perspective.

Being a member of the body of God and True Parents uplifts us. United with them, our faith and character become mature, as we “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” (Eph. 4:15) Joined with them, we grow with them to embrace higher and higher levels. Participating in their glorious work, we share their value and their glory. We are their hope, as they are ours.

Acting Together with God and True Parents

Third, a *taeshin* family acts on behalf of God and True Parents. Embodying True Parents' love and heart, it is reckoned as qualified to do what they do. As members of the True Parents' body, *taeshin* families are their hands and feet, mouth and ears, extending all over the globe. Moving as one, the True Parents through the agency of this body can right this world turned upside down. We give them the needed reach fulfill their great responsibility.

Of all the things the True Parents do, the most important is to administer the rite of the Blessing. In recent years, Blessed families have officiated at Blessings all over the world, representing the True Parents and ordained with their priestly authority. In recognition of our families' authority to administer the Blessing, we are called “Blessed Central Families.”

Embodying God and True Parents in this way also has a painful side. For on sober reflection, we are utterly unworthy to stand in their shoes. We often deviate from their directions and fall far short of their standard of attendance to God. We do not share their seriousness or determination. We do not feel the depth of God's sorrowful heart that propels them to the absolute degree of sacrifice and devotion. They think of nothing else but how to advance God's providence, while we, caught up with personal affairs, can devote only sporadic efforts. This weak faith in fact cripples the body of God and True Parents. Instead of acting together with them, we become their burden. Instead of extending their reach, they drag us forward by dint of their sheer will even as we criticize and complain. The True Parents can act only on the foundation that we provide them. By our faithlessness we undermine their foundation, leaving them to pay additional indemnity in places like Danbury prison.

Nevertheless, the True Parents hold us no rancor, but continue to build us up until we are able finally to stand as mature fruits acceptable to God. They have healed our infirmities and helped us to overcome our shortcomings until we can finally become victorious with them. We need only prevail in the small arena of our clan and community as tribal messiahs. Then we can stand alongside them as God's representatives dispensing blessings to the world.

Embodying True Parents' Kingship as a Royal Family

Fourth, a family that embodies God and True Parents is a royal family. This concept was already explained in the discussion of the third pledge. We have the pride and dignity of belonging to the royal family of God and Jesus Christ.

We have been appointed tribal messiahs, charged with bringing all the people in our clan and in our community to God. Just as the True Parents' family is a royal family to the cosmos, every true family should become a royal family to the members of its clan and the people in its community. By our example and by our sacrifice, we should win the people's hearts and thus earn their respect and gratitude. We should become like parents to many thousands of people, who look to us for leadership, guidance and example. They will then naturally lift us up as kings and queens. Don't we respect and honor the True Parents for the same reason?

The Divine Principle describes the mission of the Messiah by the symbol of Moses' staff: "A staff provides protection and support for people to lean on; it smites injustice and leads people on the right path. Symbolizing Jesus, Moses' staff disclosed the missions which Jesus was to accomplish at his coming."⁶ These are likewise the missions of every tribal messiah. Father Moon has explained these missions by the concept of the Three Subjects Thought as the responsibilities of "true parent, true teacher and true owner"; these were discussed in elucidating the fourth pledge. A true parent provides protection and support to her children; a true teacher leads people on the path of truth; and a true owner smites injustice and establishes the rule of righteousness. As tribal messiahs in our communities we are to play all three roles: provide support to the needy, teach the truth, and defeat the powers of evil.

Already, many families are achieving success as tribal messiahs. They are well respected in their hometowns. Some have attained public office. Others are teachers, social workers, or ministering to the poor and downtrodden. They are giving spiritual guidance and leadership to hundreds of people in their communities.

For example, one brother in Brazil has a successful radio ministry that reaches over ten thousand people. His home is a central meeting place where people come for help and advice. He has brought hundreds of people to the Blessing. For years this older man had been a dedicated church member, when one day at a meeting the church director asked, "Who has a foundation he can offer to True Parents?" Looking around the table, he saw that there was no one. From that day, he determined to create such a foundation by himself. He went to his hometown, leaving his church mission amidst some criticism. He took up his former teaching position at a local college and began a modest radio program. It started as an ordinary talk show with interviews of sundry guests, but over the years he developed it into a vehicle for teaching spiritual truth. Now the people in his district see him as embodying the heart of Christ and divine wisdom. Though without political power, he has become their spiritual king. When people inquire deeper into the source of his spiritual wisdom, he points them to his Teacher.

Mobilizing the Power of God

To spread God's Blessing to others, we should also become *a family that moves heavenly fortune*. We should establish such conditions in our family life that the power of God and the angels will support us as we undertake to fulfill God's will. Then we can be co-creators with God and accomplish great things.

Although the official English translation of the Family Pledge translates 천운 (天運, *cheon ūn*) as "heavenly fortune," we should be careful not to misunderstand this term. Father Moon's concept of *cheon ūn* has nothing to do with luck or personal destiny. Literally the creating and supporting power (運, *ūn*) of heaven (天, *cheon*), it is energy whose purpose is entirely public. *Cheon ūn* is defined as the power of God which acts throughout the cosmos to fulfill God's

ideal of creation. Thus, we can understand *heavenly fortune* to mean God's power of creation.

For more insight into the nature of God's creative power, we turn to a Korean aphorism recorded by the 19th century Confucian scholar Choi Han-Gi:⁷

天心之活動運化	God's heart acts to design and create;
天理之活動運化	God's principle acts to design and create;
天氣之活動運化	God's energy acts to design and create.

In repeating the characters 天 (천) and 運 (운) three times, this aphorism specifies the operation of God's power of creation as God acting (活動, 활동) to design and lay the groundwork (運, 운) and then bring into existence (化, 화). 運化 (운화) together denotes creation, and it is plausible to regard the character 運 (운) of 天運 (천운) as encompassing the full meaning of this phrase. Furthermore, this creative power emerges from God or Heaven's heart (天心, 천심), which supplies the motive and purpose for God's activity. It follows Heaven's principle and ideal (天理, 천리), which specifies the laws of creation. Moreover, it operates with Heaven's energy (天氣, 천기), the force or "Qi" that lies behind all matter and energy in the created universe—what the Divine Principle calls Universal Prime Energy (萬有原力, 만유원력). The concept of heavenly fortune includes all this content.

Heavenly fortune is imbued with purpose and law. Hence it upholds those who move in accordance with universal law and forsakes those who violate universal law. For example, the human body, with its bones, muscles and ligaments, is designed to utilize the laws of physics to enable an athlete to run, jump, turn and throw a ball with pinpoint accuracy. By those same laws, if that body steps off a cliff, it will fall. Likewise, God designed the spirit to grow to maturity through observing spiritual laws. It will grow when there is good interaction between life elements, vitality elements and spirit elements. It will shrivel if the flow of these elements is blocked.

In the Divine Principle, heavenly fortune goes by the term, "power of the Principle."⁸ This is the power that operates to maintain all existence within the realm of lawful action, strengthening those

actions that are in accord with the Principle and discouraging those actions that violate the Principle. It provides the energy to maintain such lawful processes as: harmony of the dual characteristics, giving and receiving action, and living for the sake of the larger whole.

How can our families *move heavenly fortune*? There are several conditions we should meet. First, we should live by faith, for with faith nothing is impossible. Second, we should sever all ties to Satan through the discipline of self-denial. Third, whatever persecution we may face, we should endure and overcome it with gratitude, patience and forgiveness. Fourth, we should be united with the True Parents and support the direction of the providence that they are conducting. In that way we can be confident that the direction of our efforts conforms to God's purpose. Fifth, we should be unified as families, conforming our lives to God's heart, God's principle and God's will.

Faith that Moves Mountains

Every religion teaches that God protects those who are faithful and live according to the Way. King David had such faith:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for thou art with me. —*Ps. 23:4*

The Qur'an exhorts,

O you who believe! If you help God's cause, He will help you and make your foothold firm. —*Qur'an 47.7⁹*

Our family can *move heavenly fortune* when we live by faith and live with God. God wants to unleash His power through us to transform heaven and earth. Whatever the situation, the living God will tell us what to say and show us what do. If we respond as God's object partners, we become the mediators and focal points for God's power and grace. Our faith can move mountains. (Mark 11:23)

On the other hand, God may be full of desire to unleash His power on the earth, but unless we become God's acceptable object partners, His power must remain with Him. And for our part, what can we hope to accomplish without God's power and support? "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." (Ps 127:1)

Moses moved heavenly fortune. God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, saying, “I will be with you.” (Exod. 3:12) Armed with that experience at the burning bush, Moses served God with absolute faith, and he became the focal point for God’s power to act on the earth. When the Israelites were encamped at the shore of the Red Sea and an Egyptian army was fast approaching, they cowered in fear. Yet Moses stood firm and said, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today... The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still.” (Exod. 14:13-14) He stretched out his rod over the sea, opening a way for the Israelites to cross on dry ground. In Moses, the Israelites saw the power of God. But it was Moses’ indomitable faith that allowed God to work powerfully through him. Later at Kadesh-Barnea, when he struck the rock twice, Moses deviated from the direction of heavenly fortune. It left him, and he was fated to die in the wilderness. (Num. 20:7-12)

Joshua and Caleb also moved heavenly fortune. When they brought back faithful reports after spying out the land, God blessed them on this condition of faithfulness. (Num. 14:30) God appointed Joshua to succeed Moses, declaring that he will have victory everywhere he goes (Josh. 1:3); he only must “be strong and of good courage” (Josh. 1:9) and follow all the laws of Moses. In other words, Joshua inherited heavenly fortune. He defeated thirty-one kings and conquered much of the land of Canaan for Israel. (Josh. 12:24) Caleb likewise would lead the tribe of Judah into Canaan. (Josh. 14:6-14)

Severing Ties to Satan

People living in accordance with God’s design are meant to be the center of God’s creation. Therefore, they would possess heavenly fortune in abundance. The Fall, however, threw God’s entire design out of balance. As the Divine Principle puts it, “Tragically, the universe lost its center when human beings fell.”¹⁰ Consequently, the fallen world is out of sync with heavenly fortune. Realigning ourselves with God’s creative power requires that we first overcome the effects of the Fall.

Therefore, another necessary condition for moving heavenly fortune is to sever ties with Satan. Satan's control over humankind is so deeply entrenched that, still today, cutting our ties to him remains quite difficult. The Bible condemns idolatry because idols represent the false god Satan. Yet Satan's hold is actually far more subtle, penetrating the depths of the human heart. After all, Satan planted his first hooks into Adam and Eve through the power of love. He used the power of unprincipled love to overcome the power of God's Principle that was guiding them on their proper course. Ever since, our entanglements with Satan have remained the chief obstacle to receiving God's help and grace.

To separate Satan from ourselves, and thereby realign ourselves with heavenly fortune, we must demonstrate love for God that surpasses all the attractive loves of this world. Father Moon says,

For God to make a new start, He must clean up everything. There must be no other subject being, no Satan. God must be the absolute and only subject. God cannot set His new starting point unless Satan's position is completely removed. For man to deny himself is not that much of a problem. The problem is to deny Satan who controls man.... If an alien subject, who is centered upon false love, remains in the presence of God and the universe, there are two standards, and the starting step for perfection cannot be made.¹¹

To establish absolute love for God and wholly deny Satan's love, we should demonstrate absolute faith in God, like the faith of Abraham and Isaac. Similarly, we should demonstrate absolute obedience by being completely obedient to our pastor as God's representative. Living by absolute faith and obedience pushes us down to the "zero point," where there is no egoistic self. At that point Satan is cut off, and we can be lifted up to relate only with God.

God set up the discipline of religion for the purpose of helping human beings to sever their ties to Satan. Today many people prefer an individualistic spirituality, but such is a weak form of faith. Separating from Satan requires that we divide ourselves inwardly, cutting off our fallen nature, as Abraham divided his offering. (Gen. 15:10) But without belonging to an organized church, where there is

no one to obey but one's own self, how can the self divide the self? Father Moon put it bluntly, "If you insist on your own thinking as your foundation, it sets the condition for Satan to dominate you."

Overcoming Persecution

A royal road to severing Satan's ties and thus opening the door to tap into God's power is overcoming persecution. Persecution helps people deny themselves and deny all worldly loves. By overcoming, the faithful affirm that they belong to God alone. According to Father Moon:

The standard of self-denial must be created within reciprocal relationships. If you are pushed into the position of being denied by somebody else, it is the same as self-denial. Since we cannot create the sphere of denial by ourselves, God Himself creates it. Therefore, a religious person will be opposed by everybody. This is the deeper meaning of persecution. When one believes in God and in religion, often those who are closest to him, such as his parents and loved ones, will oppose him. In such a case, Satan, as the second subject, is attacking the first subject, God... As a result of persecution, or absolute denial in front of God, man can enter the sphere of reciprocal relationship with God. Thus God can intervene for him. This is why religion has developed the most through persecution.¹²

Going over persecution surpasses even years of meditation in the mountains as the fastest way to cut Satan's chains and reach the "zero point" of total self-denial. Those who demonstrate victorious faith in the face of bitter persecution discover that God's power is protecting them and prospering their way.

Suffering is of little benefit unless we digest it with patience and love. If it crushes us, it loses its value. Some people glory in their suffering and take self-righteous pleasure in the role of a victim. Yet with minds bent on vengeance, they are caught in a satanic web of accusation. Thus, the suffering of the righteous and the suffering of self-centered people have completely different significance. Those who endure suffering and even death while pursuing goodness and

living in the service of others, like Rev. Martin Luther King, we regard as saints. Conversely, when suffering is not accompanied by repentance or striving for goodness, it only becomes an occasion for more sin. The riots in Los Angeles that followed the beating of Rodney King might be cited as an example of the latter.

Spiritualists report that hell is populated by the victims as well as the perpetrators of crimes. The victim is chained to his murderer by bonds of hatred that are as palpable as bonds of love.

Here is one such account of two inmates of hell who lived on earth in the days of the Spanish Inquisition: one a cruel judge and the other a merchant whom he had wronged. The judge coveted the merchant's beautiful wife. He imprisoned him on trumped-up charges, took his wife, and killed her when she resisted his advances. The merchant died in the judge's dungeon:

And so this poor man had died, but he did not join his wife who, poor injured soul, had passed at once with her little innocent child into the higher spheres. She was so good and pure and gentle that she had forgiven even her murderer... and between her and the husband she so dearly loved there was a wall created by his bitter revengeful feelings against the man who had destroyed them both.

When this poor wronged husband died, his soul could not leave the earth. It was tied there by his hatred of his enemy and his thirst for revenge.... Devils from hell clustered around the wronged spirit and taught it how through the hand of a mortal it could strike the assassin's dagger to the judge's heart, and then when death severed the body and the spirit he could drag that down with him to hell... He inspired a man on earth to kill the judge; his hand guided the mortal's with so unerring an aim that the judge fell pierced to his false, cruel heart. The earthly body died but the immortal soul lived and awakened to find itself in hell, chained to a dungeon wall as he had chained his victim, and face to face with him...

All through the years these deadly enemies faced each other, pouring out their hatred and defiance... And away in the bright sphere mourned the poor wife, striving and hoping till

the time should come when her influence would be felt even in this awful place, when her love and her unceasing prayers should reach the soul of her husband and soften it.¹³

Should a person be crushed by his trials, no one can help him. Even if he had been of good character, he is liable, like the poor merchant, to multiply evil by seeking vengeance, either on earth or from the spirit world. The only way he can break his chains is to forgive his enemy and turn his heart away from the mean business of vengeance to the all-embracing love coming from above.

Enduring suffering and persecution with patience and love is a strategy that utilizes heavenly law to mobilize God's power. When a righteous person is struck unjustly, it creates a debt. It puts blessings in a heavenly bank account, reckoned for a future withdrawal. Should he die without reaping his reward, his children will inherit his merit.

This principle also works on the level of society: the merit of the early Christian martyrs ultimately brought Christianity to dominion over the mighty Roman Empire. The blood spilled by the slave-owner's lash ultimately brought liberation to the black slaves in the United States. The martyrdom of millions of faithful Russian Christians in the Soviet Union stored up merit which finally caused that godless tyranny to collapse. These phenomena, which have occurred over and over again in the course of history, demonstrate the workings of heavenly fortune.

The Center of Heavenly Fortune

A fourth condition to move heavenly fortune is to be united with Christ, the True Parent. St. Paul, who understood this principle, regarded Jesus Christ as the only source of value: "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ." (Phil 3:7-8) Today, True Parents stand united with Jesus Christ as they fulfill the mission of the Second Coming. Truly, they possess the keys to heavenly fortune. (Rev. 5:2-5)

Many people have fervent faith, but only the True Parents and those close to them are intimate with God's heart. True Parents stand at the center of God's providence. They have the same mind as God, knowing God's mind, God's situation, God's purpose and God's hope. They have endured suffering with grace and perseverance, and God has protected them through every adversity: imprisonment, torture, government inquisition, and numerous assassination plots. True Parents are God's delight. He therefore gives them unparalleled protection and power to fulfill the providence.

Today True Parents stand at the hub of the wheel of the divine providence, while the entire cosmos revolves at its rim. Both the spirit world and the earthly world heave in the throes of a great transformation, driven by a power far greater than the ordinary forces that move the lives of individuals and even the courses of nations. When we unite with True Parents, we affix ourselves to the hub of the providence, turning with it. We can ride with the providence and keep abreast of its changes. Therefore, we cannot go wrong. Catching the wave of God's providence, to use another metaphor, can be a thrilling experience. Those who catch the wave will be sitting on the top of the world.

True Parents are the rock upon which we can stand with power. They possess the keys to the Kingdom of heaven, and they give them to us that we may use them to unlock the doors for millions of people. As Jesus gave the keys to Peter, True Parents give us the keys and the promise that through God's mighty power we will prevail: "On this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 19:18-19)

In the history of the Unification Church, there have been many capable people who joined for a time and then fell away. These were often the most intelligent and capable members, who quickly found themselves elevated to positions of responsibility. Nevertheless, some grew impatient, believing that they were smarter and more qualified than their leaders. Faced with unrelenting persecution, they lost hope that anything would come of Father Moon's ministry and figured that they could reach a higher status in society if they disassociated from him. Meanwhile, members of modest ability remained and labored on for the providence. Eventually, some of

them grew to occupy high positions. Now, thirty years later, some of those lapsed members have returned to the church. Ashamed of their past, they have taken up lowly positions while their former comrades of humble native ability stand high above them. The latter achieved a greater destiny because they valued True Parents and God's providence above their personal destiny.

Family Unity

A fifth condition for moving heavenly fortune is unity: unity with God's heart, God's principles, and God's will. How much do our lives conform to the way of Heaven? Heavenly fortune only operates for those who live in accordance with creation's laws.

Oriental religions describe the fortune that comes to those who conform their lives to the Tao of heaven:

To he who conforms to the Way, the Way readily lends its power. To he who conforms to virtue, virtue readily lends its power.
—*Tao Te Ching* 23

Heaven helps the man who is devoted; men help the man who is true. He who walks in truth and is devoted in his thinking, and furthermore reveres the worthy, is blessed by Heaven. "He has good fortune, and there is nothing that does not further."
—*I Ching*¹⁴

Similarly, Saint Paul urges us to "put on the whole armor of God." He teaches that in order to mobilize the power of God in the fight against evil, we must completely equip ourselves in every way, including "truth... the breastplate of righteousness... the shield of faith... the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:11-17) Paul endured imprisonments, beatings, shipwrecks, and days and nights without food or shelter. (2 Cor. 11:23-28) Yet not only did heavenly fortune work powerfully to protect him and prosper his work, but Paul by his dedication and personal sacrifice moved Heaven's work forward.

All the individuals and systems in the universe interconnect, powered and directed by God's creative energy. This energy is multiplied by countless interactions between subject partners and

object partners. At every level they are making oneness. Likewise, we should examine whether the subject and object partners which constitute ourselves and our families are interacting in healthy oneness. Is there unity between my mind and body? Between husband and wife? Between parents and children? Am I in unity with my church leader, who conveys God's will for my area of responsibility? As long as an individual is united with God's principles, and thus exists in harmony with the universal ecology of life, he or she is in a position to receive God's protection and to advance God's work by moving heavenly fortune.

The full measure of this unity is achieved in the family, which is a microcosm of the countless yang-yin relationships in the cosmos. A God-centered family is far more effective in moving heavenly fortune than is any individual. This is why the Divine Principle calls the Four-Position Foundation "the fundamental foundation for the life of all beings, providing all the forces necessary for their existence and enabling God to abide in them."¹⁵

Therefore, we should redouble our efforts to resolve the disunity in our life, especially in our families. Difficulties between husband and wife can negatively impact our family's effectiveness in doing God's work. Any unprincipled situation in our family can block us from moving heavenly fortune. Even with a harmonious marriage, if the family pulls back from public activities, thereby disuniting with the principle of serving the whole, God's power and protection for that family will inevitably diminish. Uniting in every direction and living in accord with the Principle: this is a key condition for increasing God's power in our life.

Conveying Heaven's Blessing to Our Community

The reason for moving heavenly fortune is not for our own sake; it is to *convey Heaven's blessings to our community*. This was the tradition of Abraham, Moses, the prophets, Saint Paul, the Buddha, and all those whose mountaintop experience of faith led them to embark on a life of service to their people.

Abraham put his life in God's hands, leaving home and family to journey to a new land. As a consequence, God blessed him with a

tremendous destiny, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great...” Yet Abraham’s blessing was not only for himself: “By you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3) He intervened on behalf of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He extended hospitality to strangers, feeding three angelic visitors with his best food. Abraham’s tradition of conveying God’s blessing to others would ultimately make him the source of blessing for millions of people through the three great religions which stemmed from him.

Jacob so prized God’s blessing that he fought to receive it from his father, even at the cost of alienating his brother Esau. He found prosperity in Haran, working for his uncle Laban and gaining wives, children and flocks. But Jacob was not content to keep his blessing to himself. He determined to share it with his brother Esau despite all the enmity between them. Returning home to face his brother, Jacob melted his hatred by giving him a substantial gift: “two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred eyes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses.” (Gen. 32:13-16) Jacob serves as a good model of a person who conveyed God’s blessing to others, even to a man who had been his enemy.

Joseph followed this same tradition. After being sold into slavery by his brothers, he overcame the temptation of Potiphar’s wife and so became qualified to receive the grace of heaven. In prison, the Lord was with him, and he became the warden’s trusted assistant. Gifted with the power to interpret dreams, Joseph rose to a high position in the Egyptian court. Yet he did not have a mind to enjoy his good fortune by himself, but shared it with his family, including even the brothers who had sold him into slavery.

Moses, too, lived to convey God’s blessing to others. The entire focus of his concern was for his brethren, the Israelites. Despite his continual efforts on their behalf, they were not grateful, but murmured and complained constantly. While he was fasting for forty days on Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, they fashioned a golden calf. Yet Moses’ love for his people never wavered. In the aftermath of that incident, God offered to raise up a new Israel from Moses’ own family, but Moses would have none of it. Interceding

for his people, he fasted for another forty days to prepare another set of tablets. Through Moses' desperate intercession, God gave the Israelites a second chance. (Deut. 9:9-19)

St. Paul devoted his entire ministry to spreading God's blessing, braving many perils during his continual efforts to spread the Gospel. His final mission before his arrest was to gather a collection from all the churches in his mission field to help the poor Christian community in Jerusalem.

Father Moon has followed this pattern. His way is never to keep anything for himself. Before they even arrive, whatever funds he receives in donations and earnings he earmarks for spending, to further his movement's many activities around the world. He teaches the members of his church to do likewise: to place their tithes at the service of the worldwide mission before spending the money to erect splendid buildings.

Whatever wealth we possess first belongs to God before it becomes our own. God gives us wealth for the sake of all His children in need. Paul pointed out, "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." (2 Cor. 9:8) As long as we help others, we will always have enough for ourselves.

Beware of hoarding your blessings! The family that hoards its blessings to itself, that dotes on its children while avoiding public responsibilities, is guilty of selfishness on the family level that runs counter to the universal law of nature. It may not be many years before it becomes poor, reaping the fruit of its deeds.

God loves not the proud and boastful such as are niggardly...
and themselves conceal the bounty that God has given them.

—*Qur'an 4:37*

Let the rich man satisfy one who seeks help;
and let him look upon the long view:
For wealth revolves like the wheels of a chariot,
coming now to one, now to another. —*Rig Veda 10.117.5*¹⁶

It is God's nature to give of Himself to all His creatures, both evil and good, as it is said, "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good" (Matt. 5:45) and "If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. 1:13) As Jesus taught by the Parable of the Prodigal Son, heavenly Father welcomes even the worst criminal when he repents and returns home.

At the same time, while God is ever willing to convey blessings, He always respects human freedom. God never violates our dignity as sovereign beings. Hence, we can only be facilitators in conveying God's blessings and can never determine another's free choice. Should we try with every ounce of strength to turn someone around, and still he remains stubbornly fixed in his ways, we should not feel as though we failed. To respond or not is ultimately his portion of responsibility. Our responsibility is only to be clear, centered and united that God may work His will through us.

When we spread God's blessings to others, we manifest the nature of God. As families which embody God and True Parents, this conforms to our own natures. The more we strive to spread God's blessings, the more we become God-like, and the more we resemble True Parents. This is, in fact, the royal way to embody God and True Parents: witness to the Truth and spread the salvation that they are laboring to bring into the world.

Ten Benefits of the Blessing

Of all the blessings we can share with others, the most precious by far is the holy marriage Blessing, by which God comes to dwell in the union of husband and wife. The Blessing can liberate us from the fetters that prevent the expression of true love. It can free us from the baneful spiritual influences that plague the intimate sphere of family life and turn it into a battleground. It can empower us to build lasting and prosperous marriages, and produce pure-hearted and righteous children. When society is then filled with loving and faithful Blessed families, it will prosper as never before.

The Blessing provides the best path to solve the problems of family breakdown and social decay because it addresses their root cause. Let us examine the meaning of the Blessing in more depth. We can enumerate ten spiritual benefits.

First, the grace of the Blessing attacks the root problem of love which originated at the Human Fall. The Fall can be likened to a spiritual disease that tainted love, caused continual conflict between flesh and spirit, and made the family dysfunctional. Father Moon says,

As the descendants of Adam and Eve, all human beings are born with original sin. The Fall gave rise to conflict of mind and body within every person and caused our societies to be filled with tainted love, and people do things that contradict the desire of their original minds.¹⁷

God is love. When creating human beings out of His pure love, God never intended that their love become corrupt. Nevertheless, an illicit relationship between Adam, Eve and Lucifer defiled the love of Adam and Eve and wrecked their family life. The Fall laid a curse upon conjugal love, as described in Genesis. The verse, "I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her seed" (Gen. 3:15), means that men acting the part of Lucifer continually abuse and violate women. The verse, "In pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16), describes the unresolved mixture of pain and desire, love and domination, that characterizes love in many marriages.

By afflicting the intimate human relationships within the family, the Fall spawned the state of inner contradiction between our original mind and our evil mind which Paul so eloquently described:

I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.... For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin." —*Rom. 7:15, 22-23*

This problem afflicts family life particularly hard. While spiritually advanced people may develop a saintly character and a compassionate heart of for all creatures, life's ordinary weaknesses arise the moment they step into their family circle. Outstanding rulers, courageous patriots and brilliant scientists often keep mistresses, are unfaithful to their wives, or lack feeling for their children. Monks

and nuns, yogis and shamans traditionally avoided this problem by remaining celibate.

Until now, all human families have been afflicted by the original sin, and their intimate relationships could not fully manifest true love. Then, in 1960, Father and Mother Moon inaugurated the Blessing, establishing the first marriage completely free from the original sin. Overcoming all satanic influence and accusation, they perfected the true family for the first time in human history. From this starting point, they have been offering the Blessing to all the families of the world. The Blessing affords every family the opportunity to enter this previously unattainable realm of grace.

Second, the Blessing is a gate, not a cure-all. Blessed couples do not automatically become true families without some condition on their part. The full promise of the Blessing can only be realized when we practice a life of responsibility. Therefore, at the Blessing ceremony, the participants vow to renounce forever the corruption of love. They pledge before God to be faithful to their spouse forever and never violate their marriage bond with illicit love. They pledge never to divorce, but to work out every difficulty in God's grace. They pledge to educate their children to this standard of true love. And they pledge to dedicate their families to the peace and welfare of the larger community, nation and world. Those couples who do not make sufficient effort to live up to their vows, who then lapse into a selfish life and accumulate sins, are liable to lose the Blessing.

Third, the Blessing is for everyone. People of every religion and creed, including those with no formal religious faith, can enhance their family life immeasurably through the Blessing. Whatever faith they practice, especially if it includes a large measure of discipline in mind over body, can be a good foundation upon which to build life as a Blessed family.

Thus, for families that have already found fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, the Blessing opens the door to an even deeper fellowship. Jesus ordained Father Moon to advance his work; hence he is completely supportive of the Blessing. Likewise, the Blessing offers added benefits to people of every religion. Building upon their existing foundation of faith and love, the Blessing makes for a better Christian family, a more devoted Buddhist family, a more faithful

Muslim family, and a more loving humanist family. As a universal rite, the Blessing is particularly suited to families of mixed religious faith.

The values of the Blessing are universal. They are consistent with the ethical teachings about family, charity and community service found in all religions. All religions teach that children should honor their parents and husbands should be faithful to their wives. Their teachings serve as reliable guides to Blessed couples as they strive for the full realization of their divine potential. They are in accord with the principles of the Family Pledge as discussed in this book. Therefore, there is no requirement to believe in a particular doctrine or theology. Couples of every religious tradition can attain the highest ideal according to their integrity, effort and devotion.

Even where there are apparent contradictions between the Blessing and the ways of other faiths, further examination reveals a deeper convergence. For example, the Blessing does not allow divorce or polygamy, though certain religions permit it. Yet the scriptures of those religions explain that they were granted as concessions to human weakness and not as guidance for those striving for the highest good. While Muslim men may marry up to four wives, this was given expressly as a concession in times of war to provide support for widows and orphans.¹⁸ The Qur'an makes clear that it falls short of the ideal arrangement: "You will not be able to deal equally with your wives, however much you wish to do so." (Qur'an 4.129) The Mosaic Law allows divorce, yet God spoke through the prophet Malachi, "I hate divorce" (Mal. 2:16). Jesus clearly stated, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." (Matt. 19:8) Hence, Muslim, Jewish and Christian couples who strive to become ideal families through the Blessing live in accordance with the highest teachings of their respective faiths.

What of Jesus and Paul's advocacy of celibacy as a path superior to marriage? (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:32-35) They rightly understood that there existed a spiritual barrier blocking our way to perfect conjugal love. Jesus never married and could not reveal the path to forming a true family; how could any of his followers surpass him? As the church exalted monasticism as the way to imitate Christ, it

came to regard sexuality as something shameful or forbidden, even a temptation from the Devil. To this day, many Christians have a certain ambivalence regarding sexual pleasure. Neither Luther nor Calvin regarded marriage as a sacrament; they viewed it rather as an expedient institution to prevent the temptation of licentiousness. The Roman Catholic Church did not institute the sacrament of marriage until the tenth century, and regards it only as a temporary grace to be dissolved at death—this even though we observe that true love grows ever deeper in old age. Is there not a contradiction between these traditional attitudes towards conjugal love and the divine institution of marriage at the creation? (Gen. 1:28; 2:24)

Celibacy was justified as long as the spiritual barrier preventing perfect conjugal love—the curse of Adam and Eve’s fall—had not been taken away. However, with the advent of the Blessing, this ancient barrier is finally transcended. Now God can be deeply present in human conjugal love based upon His Blessing of our marriage. The Blessing is unexpected and mysterious. It is a new gift of God, not based upon human works. Today zeal for the celibate life is flagging, another sign that the world has moved into a new dispensation.

Fourth, the Blessing enables us to grow into greater spiritual and emotional oneness with God. Our souls are knitted to God, as we become His true children. For the true child of God, God is not distant. A child of God truly experiences that his heavenly Father is as close as his own physical father; thus Paul and Jesus addressed God with the familiar term “Abba,” “Daddy.” (Luke 11:2, Gal. 4:6)

Fifth, the Blessing transforms our lineage. Its benefits, therefore, are received by the family as a whole and are heritable to subsequent generations. Individual salvation through the cross of Christ is not similarly passed on. Every generation of Christian children needs baptism; every new generation needs to find Jesus as their personal savior. There are Christian couples who are happy into their old age, loving each other with a love that is beautiful to behold, yet whose children wander far astray. This is because without the Blessing, the root of lineage remains in Satan’s possession. Salvation of the individual cannot cope with this problem; only salvation that encompasses the entire family and its lineage can resolve it completely.

Central to the Blessing is partaking of the holy wine: one cup shared by the bride and groom. As the Eucharistic wine represents Jesus' blood, the holy wine represents the blood lineage of the True Family. Just as in the partaking of the Eucharist, we (symbolically) receive Jesus' flesh and blood to be reborn individually as God's children, so the holy wine connects us family by family to become part of God's family:

The holy wine... is the wine of love, the wine of the husband, and the milk of the mother. It represents the water of life, the blood of the parents, the manifestation of all glory, and the love of bridegroom and bride. It contains in it the life force of God the Father. With the holy wine I am giving out the substance of the Father's heart and blood lineage. Through it I am giving out God's life force and forming a connection of lineage.¹⁹

Receiving the holy wine breaks the chain of false love, forged link by link from parents and children in every generation that bound us to the root of sin in the Garden of Eden. It links us with God's lineage, forged through the central history of Israel, Jesus Christ and the True Parents.²⁰ This connection of heart and lineage is, of course, conditional on how we live our lives thereafter. By offering God devoted service, we make that bond substantial, as Paul said:

We are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

—*Rom. 8:17*

The Blessing changes a family's lineage once and for all. The change of lineage never needs to be repeated, provided one keeps the Blessing unstained. Its benefits continue and accumulate in the lives of the children and grandchildren. This means that the children and grandchildren of blessed couples are in an entirely different position than their parents. From birth they already belong to God's lineage, unstained by the original sin. While they cannot avoid their own portion of responsibility—just as Adam and Eve, born without sin, were responsible to obey the commandment in their generation—as

long as they maintain their purity they will benefit from the Blessing's cumulative grace.

Sixth, blessed families are eternal. The eternal God created humankind as His eternal partners. Therefore, when God dwells in the conjugal love of a true family, that marriage will become God's eternal counterpart. The conjugal love between husband and wife will resonate with the eternal unity between God's dual characteristics and participate in God's eternity. This is the eternal Four-Position Foundation, in which God participates as a member of the family. God did not intend marriage to be "till death do us part." As discussed previously, by virtue of the Blessing, marriages made on earth continue forever in the spirit world.

Seventh, let us consider the impact of the Blessing on society as a whole. Families formed through the Blessing shine forth as beacons of God's love to the other families in their communities. Because they have a firm moral compass, clearly understanding the family ideal and what is required to achieve it, they can show the way to other families who grope in the darkness and confusion of this present age. In a world where media images portray the average high-school girl as having sexual affairs with three or four boyfriends and where divorce is even expected, society needs families that stand up for the eternal values of virginity before marriage and absolute fidelity in marriage. Many young people are confused about family values, yet desire from the bottom of their hearts to find true love with one partner that will last for eternity. Unless they find people among their peers who are righteous about these matters, whose example they can follow, they will be sucked down into the maelstrom of immorality and left with only shattered dreams.

When a person's love is broken or corrupted, it coarsens his behavior in all areas of social life. All manner of greed, violence, betrayal, exploitation, alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental illness ensue when people lack true love. Blessed families who are confident and generous in loving others will renovate our decadent social climate. As upstanding citizens, by their example and service they will bring out the goodness in people and encourage their public spirit.

Eighth, as was discussed in connection with the fourth pledge, the Blessing advances the ideal of a global family. Thus, Father and Mother Moon perform the Blessing in large ceremonies that include thousands of couples from every nation, race and religion. Through satellite hookups, participants in every part of the world receive the Blessing at the same time. The ceremony itself, as a huge public demonstration, signals the promise of world peace based on ideal families.

Furthermore, many blessed families are themselves international and interracial. Young people who take a spouse of a different race or culture offer their marriages as crucibles for dissolving the ancient prejudices of racism and nationalism in the fire of true love. The children of these marriages will have the blood of two races flowing through their veins. In loving them and loving each other, the couples will achieve interracial harmony and show the way for others to do likewise. As blessed families link the world together with bonds of heart, the barriers of color, language and national pride will fall away. Here is the starting point for a global transformation and the dawn of world peace founded on true love.

Ninth, the Blessing opens the way to build the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the desire of the ages sought for by visionaries, prophets and philosophers since ancient times. Yet, attempts to build ideal societies through ideological and political policies have failed miserably. Changing the "system" does not touch the core issue for human fulfillment, which is love. It does not remove the root cause of alienation, the corrupt state of the human heart. Socialist experiments like the kibbutz movement in Israel floundered as the second generation left for the allure of city life. Somehow the idealism of their parents did not attract them, for it did not touch the heart of their longing. Communist nations tried to end the alienation of man from his labor, but when the "liberated" members of the Soviet proletariat returned home each evening from the factory or collective they faced the same grayness, taking recourse in a bottle of vodka.

An ideal world becomes possible only after resolving the core problem of human life: the problem of love. By transforming the conjugal relationship between husband and wife, family life can

fulfill its potential as the loving environment for training citizens of peace. In this way, the Blessing provides the key to building a genuinely utopian culture where all the cherished hopes of humankind can be realized.

Tenth and finally, let us consider the value of the Blessing from God's point of view. In the beginning, the Blessing of Adam and Eve was to be the moment of fulfillment for God's purpose of creation. God intended that human beings, as the crown of creation, be the hub around which the entire universe would turn and realize its fulfillment. God created Adam as the microcosm and encapsulation of all the masculine qualities in the cosmos, and Eve as the microcosm and encapsulation of all the feminine qualities in the cosmos. Had Adam and Eve married under God's Blessing, the entire cosmos would have danced in harmony and become whole, revolving about Adam and Eve as its center.²¹ Instead, when Adam and Eve fell, the creation lost its center. Ever since, as Paul stated, "the whole creation has been groaning in travail" while it "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:22, 19)

Ever since the tragic day when humanity squandered the promise of Eden to live in pain and toil, God's ultimate goal has been to bestow the Blessing. He has been working throughout human history for that one purpose. In this light, we can truly understand that it was for sake of the Blessing that Jesus went to the cross. He gave up his body so that one day he could return and complete the unfinished work of salvation by instituting the Blessing. Likewise, the Israelites suffered slavery in Egypt, and later exile in Babylon, only so that one day their descendants could welcome the Messiah and receive the Blessing. Countless Christian believers were martyred in Rome's coliseums for the hope of the future resurrection that comes with the Blessing. Father Moon, too, suffered imprisonment and torture so that one day he could bring the Blessing to humanity. In this sense, the Blessing is more valuable than life itself. It is more valuable than any religion or philosophy. Its value exceeds that of the United States of America with all its vaunted freedoms. Indeed, its value surpasses the entire universe!

Received through Faith

In the early days of the Unification Church, its members could receive the Blessing only after years of sacrifice. The Blessing was thought of as a reward for years of effort. Heavy qualifications included a seven-day fast and witnessing to three spiritual children, all the while maintaining celibacy over many years.

However, since 1992 the Blessing has been dispensed to all people as a free gift. The former onerous conditions no longer apply: no years of celibacy as preparation, no fasting, no fundraising and no witnessing. Certainly, it is still worth taking time to prepare oneself to receive the Blessing by cultivating the inner qualities of faith and love and by strengthening the power of the conscience over the desires of the flesh. Fasting, celibacy, prayer, evangelism and tithing are recognized as good training for family life in all religious traditions. Nevertheless, today such training is no longer a formal prerequisite for the Blessing, which is offered to all as a free gift, to be received by faith.

The older members who were surprised by this new dispensation came to understand that their Blessing was not earned. None of their efforts to prepare for it could remotely compare with the Blessing's value. In fact, everyone's Blessing is of equal worth. Taking a lesson from the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, they recognized that they were like the workers hired in the morning for one denarius, who grumbled that the newcomers hired late in the day received the same wage. (Matt. 20:11-16) In fact, the gift of the Blessing is entirely of God's generosity.

A similar situation arose in the early Christian church when Gentiles began to join in great numbers. The first Christians were Jews who had kept the burden of the Mosaic Law for years in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. Some of them complained in their hearts as they saw the Gentiles who had not kept the Law receiving the same salvation without having to adopt the yoke of the Law. Nevertheless, as Jesus taught in the parable, they were not to question the wisdom of God. In fact, it was the Gentiles, the late-comers, who built up the church while the Jewish Christians faded into obscurity. Who knows what great works God intends to

accomplish through couples who received the Blessing lately through the benefit of Heaven's newfound generosity?

Let us examine from the viewpoint of the Divine Principle why today the Blessing can be offered freely as a gift to all the people of the world. According to the Divine Principle, one can receive the Blessing only on the foundation of making conditions to indemnify the Human Fall, which occurred at the top of the growth stage.²² The old requirements for the Blessing, including the seven-day fast, three spiritual children and seven-year "formula course," were for making these conditions.

For the Blessing to be offered as a free gift, recipients must already be at the top of the growth stage. How is this possible for people who have not made the special conditions of Unification Church life? By 1992, True Parents' worldwide victory had lifted up the entire world to stand at the top of the growth stage.

Father Moon had restored the situation when he began his ministry in 1945 and was looking to be received by worldwide Christianity. At that time, world Christianity stood at the top of the growth stage, based on merit of the blood of Jesus, the saints and martyrs. Its foundation is Jesus Christ, who, according to the Divine Principle, offers resurrection to the growth stage.²³ Furthermore, the democratic world had just achieved victory in the Second World War, which "fulfilled the growth-stage indemnity condition to restore God's three great blessings worldwide" and "the growth-stage foundation to restore God's sovereignty."²⁴ Therefore, in 1945 the Christian world stood at the top of the growth stage and was ready to receive the Blessing. Had the Korean Christian churches received Father Moon at that time, he would shortly have begun performing worldwide Blessing ceremonies similar to those of today.

Instead, when the establish churches rejected Father Moon, the world lost its foundation to receive the grace of the Blessing. Father Moon then took responsibility to build it again, going through a difficult "wilderness course" from 1945 to 1985. Step by step he made the sacrificial conditions to restore the entire course of providential history. As Father Moon suffered imprisonment, persecution and tribulation, all Unification Church members, as True

Parents' body, walked that course with him. They had to restore the lost foundations on the levels of family, tribe, nation, and world. Blessings were held at periodic intervals as one or another of these foundations was achieved. During that period, therefore, providential necessity required the imposition of severe qualifications to receive the Blessing. These difficult conditions reflected not only a member's individual course, but also his or her participation in the True Parents' thorny wilderness course.

By 1992, everything that had been lost in 1945 had been restored. Activities surrounding the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the fall of Soviet communism, and Father Moon's meeting with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung were among the conditions that set the stage. On August 24, 1992, Father Moon proclaimed the advent of the True Parents of humankind to a world which once again stood conditionally at the top of the growth stage.

The Blessing of 30,000 couples occurred the next day. Among the participants were elderly grandparents invited by their grandchildren and young people who had only heard a few lectures of the Divine Principle. They came through the prompting of the Spirit or their regard for the Unificationist who invited them. Yet by attending the ceremony and participating in the associated rituals, they could receive the Blessing, be cleansed of original sin, and begin to grow towards the ideal of the true family—all as a free gift.

Preparing for the Blessing

Everyone receives the same Blessing—whether the partners are dedicated Unificationists, faithful Christians, or couples of no particular religious conviction that come to the ceremony at the invitation of a friend. While there are no specific prerequisites, participants should take the Blessing seriously and prepare for it. Many of American Unificationists who went through the older “formula course” training had been among the hippies and drug-users of the '60s, and they sorely needed it. Yet other churches also train their young people in the moral prerequisites for marriage. A well disciplined Christian or Muslim may be ready to receive the Blessing straight away.

Thus, for Father Moon, the chief purpose of religion is to provide a course of discipline to prepare individuals for success in a Blessed marriage, by which they can form a true family that can receive God's complete original love:

What does God intend to do through religion? He intends to discipline the body. You probably think that by believing in religion you will be saved, that by believing in Christianity you will go to heaven, or that by believing in Buddhism you will go to paradise. But it is those who are united with God's love who will enter heaven. To enter heaven, Adam's family should have been a family whose center was the love of God, a family which had a blood relationship with God ...

If we ask what religion should do, the answer is that it should motivate our body to do everything it hates to do. What does the body hate most? To fast! To serve! To sacrifice!²⁵

This speech was given in 1995, one year after Father Moon disbanded the Unification Church as a religion of individual salvation and established of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification as the organization for blessed families. What is not often noted is that this teaching, taken together with the end of the Unification Church as a "religion," means that all religions are equal as regards preparation for the Blessing. The formula course of Unificationists no longer has any special significance; a person could just as well receive the needed training as a Buddhist monk or in a Christian youth group. Father Moon is emphatic that religion is still necessary on the path to forming a true family. But now, as God's grace flows ever more abundantly to all His children, any religion with a strong moral teaching can supply the needed preparation.

We have stated all who receive the Blessing, regardless of their preparation or lack of it, are regarded as standing at the top of the growth stage. Yet the top of the growth stage is still a long way from perfection. After the Blessing, the couples need a course of spiritual discipline to grow through the completion stage and perfect their families as true families. This takes at least seven years. The Family Pledge is the road map for blessed couples to attain the full promise of the Blessing. The efforts we make in growing to perfection are

investments in our own future. The spiritual growth is real and palpable. Bit by bit we are transformed into the divine image. Family members living in the realm of God's Blessing are realizing their inborn potential to become God's true sons and daughters.

Once we understand that the Blessing is a free gift, should we not invite our relatives and friends to participate with a joyful heart? Older members need to put aside memories of their thorny path and connect with the joy that comes with the Blessing. On meeting a young, excited blessed member, we should listen to his testimony and connect with his spirit. Everyone should be overjoyed to share this wonderful gift.

As we share the Blessing to the people of our communities, we shall defeat Satan's stratagems of materialism, self-indulgence and decadence by which he is trying to destroy us. The Blessing liberates us from Satan's chains, which have been frustrating all the efforts of our original mind to achieve goodness. Upon receiving the Blessing, God empowers us to become His true children and realize every happiness: an inner life of oneness with God, a loving family, and abundant prosperity.

Moreover, as the people of the world unite in true families, they also join to constitute the great universal family. This will be the dawn of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Kingdom of God will be an eternal, unified culture moving in oneness with God's heart. We call it the *culture of heart*. To this topic we now turn as we study the seventh pledge.

1 Sun Myung Moon, "Let Us Know Ourselves," *God's Will and the World* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1985), p. 504.

2 Sun Myung Moon, "The Standard-Bearer of Tradition," *God's Will and the World*, p. 234.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

4 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 279.

5 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 186.

- 6 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 238.
- 7 김용옥, “혜강 최한기와 유교”, (서울 : 통나무, 2004), p. 79-129
- 8 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 66.
- 9 Mohammad M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’ān*, quoted in *World Scripture*, p. 396.
- 10 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 30.
- 11 Sun Myung Moon, “Total Indemnity,” *God’s Will and the World*, pp. 591-92.
- 12 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 594-95.
- 13 Franchezzo, *A Wanderer in the Spirit Lands* (West Grove, PA: AIM Publishing Co., 1993), pp. 140-41.
- 14 Great Commentary 1.12.1. Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, trans. C.F. Baynes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
- 15 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 25.
- 16 Arthur J. Arberry, trans., *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955); Abinash Chandra Bose, ed., *Hymns from the Vedas* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966). Quoted in *World Scripture*, pp. 697-98.
- 17 Sun Myung Moon, “View of the Principle of the Providential History of Salvation,” *True Family and World Peace*, p. 49.
- 18 Qur’an 4.3
- 19 Sun Myung Moon, *Blessing and Ideal Family* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1993), p. 316.
- 20 On the formation of God’s lineage, see Sun Myung Moon, “View of the Principle of the Providential History of Salvation,” *True Family and World Peace*, pp. 50-56.
- 21 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 30.
- 22 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 175.
- 23 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 139-40.
- 24 *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 375.
- 25 Sun Myung Moon, “True Family and I,” *True Family and World Peace*, p. 78.