

## A Life of Hyojeong - An Interview of David Eaton

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### 1. Journey of Faith: What sparked your decision to join the church?

I grew up in a large Catholic family. I'm the oldest of 12 children and we attended Catholic elementary school. But by the time I was in high school, religion wasn't so important to me.

Music became my religion in a sense. I started music lessons when I was ten years old, and in high school I played in the school orchestra and band. I went to college, but I started working professionally in music during that time. In 1972 I got a phone call from a friend of mine. She had been studying Bible classes and she called me and said, "David, David, I have to tell you something. In our Bible class, we learned that the Second Coming will be coming in just a few years. You have to get ready." I replied, "Oh, that's interesting." I hadn't thought too much about religion through my high school years and into college, but all of a sudden this idea that if the Second Coming is happening, what does that mean for me? What does that mean for my family? What does that mean for music or for my career? So this thought remained in my mind rather consistently for several years.



Then in 1974, I was in Columbus, Ohio at the time, getting ready to start classes at Ohio State University, and I was approached by a German sister who was part of Reverend Sudo's IOWC team. She just walked up to me and said, "Do you believe in God?" I said, "Well, yeah." Then she invited me to a dinner and a lecture, which I went to and the first part of the introductory lecture was the Three Blessings and the Four Position Foundation --- in a sense, God's blueprint for how to build an ideal world. Then the next part of the lecture was the parallels of history; the last 4000 years from the time of Abraham to Jesus and then

Jesus to 1920. And when they got to the 1920 part, I reflected on what my friend said about the Second Coming being upon us, or in a few years. I thought, "Oh, is it 1920 and is the Messiah already here?" That was a shock for me at the time, but I felt, at the time, if this is true - and it was hard to deny the 4,000-year history parallels of history, it seemed so factual - that I thought I had to find out more. So this began my journey to discover more about the Divine Principle. I was majoring in music at the time. I just wanted to finish college, but I felt spiritually there were certain things that happened that were not coincidental, and this made me think that maybe God is trying to tell me something, namely, to explore more about just who Sun Myung Moon was. Who is this person? And True Parents? Who are they? I was quite shocked and moved to hear about all these things that had led to Reverend Moon and his mission. I felt that God was answering my prayers. God was guiding me in some way to find the truth, to see the truth, and to understand who the True Parents were. This was a significant part of my evolution into becoming a believer.

## **2. Can you recount the momentous occasion when you first met the True Parents?**

The first time I saw True Father speak was during the eight-city tour in Chicago at the Arie Crown Theater. This was, as I recall, November 12, 1974. Of course, Father was speaking in Korean and I remember Bo Hi Pak was translating, but I felt something like Father is speaking directly to me. Again, it seemed that my prayers were being answered through what I was hearing, which was reinforcing my belief. I then went to the seven-day workshop, 21-day workshop, 40-day workshop, and 120-day workshop at Barrytown in the summer of 1975. The first time I had a real face-to-face with True Father and True Mother was after the Washington Monument campaign. I didn't know much, but I was learning, and I thought all of this was confirming a certain truth. All of this began to help me realize God is real. God is answering my prayers. I felt that God was guiding me in various ways to find the truth, to see the truth, and to understand who the True Parents were.



## **3. How did you become conductor of NY Symphony Orchestra?**

When I was in high school I really became enthralled with classical music. In 1965 my high school band and orchestra came to New York City. This was a field trip in which we visited museums and went to a Broadway show and a ballet performance. At that time I had a dream that I would go to New York and become a symphony orchestra conductor. That was my dream in high school. However, when I joined the church I gave that all up for about two years. There was no real opportunity for me to do music at the time, although there were performing arts groups - the New Hope Singers and Sunburst, the Sunburst rock band and the Korean Folk Ballet. So there were some performing arts groups, but nothing that I could really participate in. In 1975 Father sent many of us from the 120-day workshop to prepare to be pioneer missionaries around the country. Just prior to the Yankee Stadium rally, the Go World Brass Band was formed. I joined the Go World Brass Band for the Yankee Stadium campaign and then the Washington Monument campaign. After the Washington Monument campaign, I was asked, along with several other musicians from the Go World Brass Band to audition for True Parents to join the New York City Symphony. Father, a year earlier, had acquired the corporation New York City Symphony, and he

was developing it. True Parents became the patrons of this orchestra at that time. This orchestra was founded in 1926, but in 1974, through various circumstances, True Parents became the primary patrons of the orchestra.

Bo Hi Pak became the chairman of the board of the orchestra with the idea of fashioning a first-class orchestra in New York that could perform in the major concert hall. I auditioned to play in the orchestra, and that was my first real encounter directly with True Parents. True Father chose me and four others to join the orchestra at that time.

I was in the symphony team for two years, but then we received a call that True Father had sent half of the Go World Brass Band to England and they started the Go World Brass Band providence in Europe. The other half of the band stayed in America and in 1978 I was sent to work with the Go World Brass Band in Boston. A year later Father asked me to join CARP to take the brass band from America, to join with Reverend Chung Goo "Tiger" Park. I spent three years under Reverend Park, and then in 1981 I came back to New York, continue to work back in the performing arts in New York. But then in 1985 I got a call from my central figure and he said: "*David, Father has decided you should become the music director of the New York City Symphony*". It's the story of Abraham and Isaac, right? Abraham was asked to offer the thing he loved the most, his son, and he was willing to do it. He had the knife, but the angel came and said, you have proved your faith. We need Isaac, for without Isaac, there'd be no Jacob, Esau, no lineage for Jesus to come in this sense. All of a sudden my high school dream had come true. I'm a conductor in New York City. So my dream came true, but in the most circuitous of way.



#### **4. Could you describe the activities and initiatives you pursued in the U.S. under the True Parents' direction?**

One objective that True Parents had for the New York City Symphony was to gain professional credibility in New York. When I started working with the orchestra True Parents provided a budget which allowed us to hire the best musicians in New York - some of the top-level freelance artists. We could play concerts at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the United Nations. We were doing major concerts and after two or three years, we started getting very good reviews from the New York music press. Soon, other producers and artists started calling us, asking, "Can we work with you? Yes, we heard your orchestra. We love the orchestra and we'll help pay to work with your ensemble." As a result, I did many concerts in New York that were collaborative efforts between other producers and production companies, in which they were paying between \$10,000 and \$30,000 to have us appear as part of their productions.

#### **5. True Parents Culture, vision for the Arts, and Culture**

I think it's interesting that the two Korean leaders who were very much involved in New York and with the performing arts were Bo Hi Park and Joong-hyun Park, and they both had a deep appreciation for Western culture. Bo Hi Park's daughter, Hoon Sook Nim was a great ballerina.

And so they were very supportive of the idea of developing the classical arts as a way to witness and to testify to the vision of a culture that represented some kind of providential and heavenly initiative. They were very supportive of what we were doing. During that time, I would always mention in our program booklets for our concerts that True Parents were the patrons of the orchestra. This was an endeavour to shed a positive light on True Parents. Both Bo Hi Park and Joong-hyun Park were very supportive of this.

In 1988, the New York City Symphony came to Korea. We performed at the Seoul Olympic Arts Festival and we also did a tour in Japan at that time. We did four concerts in Japan and this was an attempt to use art and culture to highlight the importance of music and culture in the efforts to witness, but also to bring the truth to humankind through beauty.



#### **6. Musical Bonds: Any cherished memories of collaborating with Hyo Jin Nim in music or other projects?**

A few years prior to 1991, Hyo Jin Nim became hugely involved in the development of Manhattan Center and built three beautiful recording studios and a television studio. I was asked, along with Kevin Pickard, to join Hyo Jin Nim's team to work at the Manhattan Center. One of the first things Hyo Jin-nim emphasized was that we needed to learn the new computer technology that was emerging at the time. For those of us who were classical musicians we were asking, "What? Computer technology in music?"

But quickly we realized, "Oh, this is a great tool." Hyo Jin Nim really pushed us to learn the technology, and to this day, I use computer technology in all of my work. When I create score I input the notes into the software, and the software prints out the music. We now have virtual orchestra software that replicates sounds like a real orchestra (but it's just your orchestra and your computer.) Hyo Jin Nim really pushed us to do that. In her memoirs, True Mother states that it's not politics, but rather it's art and culture that change the world, because through beauty people's hearts are opened, and they can receive new things, new ideas. And then she says, even political regimes can change as a result. That's something I believed in before I met our church.

#### **7. What led to your relocation to Korea and involvement with significant projects like the Holy Song Compilation Committee and the Hyojeong Cultural Center?**

In December of 2015, I got an email from Reverend Ki Hoon Kim. In the email he said True Mother wrote a short poem that she would like to see if I could set this to music because the birthday celebrations are coming up in 2016 and she would like some kind of Hymn based on this poem. I said, okay. I got the poem and it was in Korean. I had a friend of mine do the phonetic (the Anglicized phonetics) of the poem. The words are: "찬미하세 찬양하세 참부모님 성탄 할렐루야 할렐루야 참부모님 성탄" Right there, I noticed a rhythmic pattern "Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da Da", so the words had a built-in rhythmic factor and it took me just 5 minutes to work out a melody to accompany the words. I fleshed out the basic arrangement in just 15 minutes and then I made a demo recording that I sent it to a friend to record a vocal track, I gave the recording to Bishop Ki Hoon Kim. The next day I received a call from Bishop Kim and he said, "Oh, oh ... True Mother really loves this. And it's almost exactly like what she was imagining it should sound like.

You should come to Korea. We will have a big choir and we'll do it all, you know, we'll perform this piece." So just like that! I travelled to Korea in 2016 for the birthday celebration and I conducted that piece with a big choir - I think maybe a thousand singers. Now we use this music often at the birthday celebrations. It's become like the Hallelujah chorus. But now we should attempt to fashion our own music in the same spirit - King of Kings, Lord of Lords and honor True Mother. I felt that this composition represented that spirit.

#### **8. As you prepare to return to the U.S., how do you feel about wrapping up your work in Korea?**

There's a saying we have in English when you're going to become a parent: expect two things: long days

and short years.

Because when you're a parent, you have some long days with your kids. But I can't believe my two daughters are already 28 and 32 years old. I remember them as young children. Where did the time go?

That's how I feel about my time in Korea. It went by so quickly.

Two weeks ago, our cello students in the Hyo Jeong Youth Orchestra prepared a piece of music for me, and they played it for me. It was very touching. I made a video and I showed it to my family. They were moved by how we've developed the youth orchestra here. They said they understood the value of what I was doing in Korea. Of course, they're happy I'm coming home.

But in reflecting on it now, the fact that when I was asked to come by Mother eight years ago, I came without hesitation, I think somehow that may have really touched True Mother's heart. I remember at the time I was talking to my wife about this. My family has been completely supportive of this direction. We talk all the time. I said to my wife that if I claim to be a filial son, and if True Mother asked to come, I can't say no. Right? You have to say yes.

Otherwise, you can't claim to be filial. I think somehow that True Mother was touched by that. Maybe that time, and only that time, that was the one time in my life where I attained a certain sense of direct dominion then.

For now, I'm going back. Yet already True Mother mentioned to me that in 2025, for the opening of Cheon Won Gung, she would like new music composed specifically for that event, and she would like me to compose something.

Interestingly, there is some opportunity for me to work on a project that the Japanese performing arts team have been developing for some time, and they need some musical assistance. I have a certain skill set that can help them now. So, they've reached out to me to see if I could help on a freelance basis and I will work with them.

**9. When you reflect now being about everything, what is your testimony to your life? What do you what comes to mind? What do you want us to remember?**

True Mother always says three important things in our life of faith: Number one, Be grateful. Number two, Be grateful.

Number three, Be grateful. Therefore, gratitude is important. Learning to be grateful even for the difficulties we have, helps us on our path.

One reason the world has so many problems is that people aren't grateful. They become resentful. We might agree that there are many things to be resentful about. But if you allow resentment to dominate your heart, resentment becomes poison. When we study Divine Principle and the course of motivation of the fall, we understand how resentment can be our downfall. But gratitude is like the medicine, in a sense, or the remedy to help us overcome things that might make us resentful and negative. We need to try to always have the heart of gratitude.