

Missionary in the Korean Embassy in Washington DC – Part 1

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Excerpt from "Messiah -- My Testimony to Rev. Sun Myung Moon", 2000



Principal members of the early Unification Church came to Kimpo Airport to see the Paks off to America. From left to right are the author, Reverend Moon, Mrs. Pak, Won Pok Choi, Won Pil Kim, Kil Ja Sa, and church president Hyo Won Eu

In the preface of his book, Dr. Pak writes:

I was born in a remote village in the hills of Chung-Nam Province in Korea, during the period when Korea was under Japanese colonial rule. It was an environment that afforded almost no opportunities for learning about the outside world. I was told as a child that our family had descended from a prominent historical figure, but we were a poor farming family and I could never hope to receive a proper education. To me, Seoul, the capital city, was a far-off place that I never expected to see myself. When some of the older children from the village who had gone to Seoul to further their education returned on school break, I was as excited to see them as if they had been to heaven. My only expectation in life was to grow up as a farmer's son and one day become a farmer myself.

Due to extraordinary turns of events, which he describes as miracles, Dr. Pak's destiny has proved to be quite different from his early predictions:

I led the founding of The Washington Times, a daily newspaper that has earned the respect of politicians and the public. During my life, I have met the queen of England, the pope, several American presidents, and many of the most prominent people in the world.

Colonel Pak (as he was then) was one of three missionaries sent to the United States in the early days. Though he was True Parents' special envoy, he was on another kind of mission representing his country; he was the military attaché to the Korean embassy in Washington, DC.

Following is Dr. Pak's story, drawn from chapter 10 of his book.

Nine years had passed since I first traveled to the infantry school at Fort Benning not knowing a word of English. During my stay in Georgia I never imagined that I would see America again. But after that my life took a number of unexpected turns. Not only had I been sent back to Fort Benning for more training, but I had been pushed to devote my life to learning English, which eventually put me in the position to be introduced to the Unification Principle. I discovered the true meaning of life and became a member of the Unification Church.

Now I knew that the mysterious force that had been guiding and protecting me was God Himself. He had saved my life and led me this far, but now that He had finished preparing me, He was going to send me back to America – this time as a military attaché at the Republic of Korea Embassy in Washington, D.C. Who else but God could have brought a poor farmer to an embassy? At one time my highest ambition had been to raise pigs and sweet potatoes; and now I was going to be a diplomat!

This prestigious assignment came about not because I had any special abilities or accomplishments. In fact, it was the result of yet another miraculous development in my life.

The year was 1961, and I was still a major. In those days the Ministry of Defense chose only senior officers to send abroad as military attachés. Then the decision was made to establish the position of assistant military attaché for the embassy in Washington, D.C., and majors could apply.

The Korean army had many talented officers who had served as interpreters during the war. They were the military's best experts in the English language. I had learned a great deal of English, but I lacked the level of formal training of these other officers. Many of them had university degrees in English literature and considerable experience in practical usage. Any of them would gladly be assigned to Washington, D.C.

When the Ministry of Defense announced that it was accepting applications for the position of assistant military attaché, it received dozens of applications for the single position available, so the ministry decided to choose their candidate by giving an examination. I was sure I had no chance in this competition.



This calligraphy composed by Reverend Moon was presented to the author in 1961: "The phoenix has flown to its own territory, so it will do well and be victorious ten thousand times."

I reported all this to Reverend Moon. He told me, "If it is God who has led you this far, then you should put your faith in God and take the exam. Trust the will of God. You are a person who must go to America."

I made up my mind to take the exam. I went to the appointed place on the day of the exam and discovered that I was competing with over a hundred officers. I even saw some of my old English teachers from the language school. Needless to say, I was very intimidated. As I took my seat, I said a word of prayer, "May Your will be done."

We were tested on a number of areas, about eight, as I recall. It seemed to work to my advantage to be tested on many areas at once. On the entrance exam to the military academy I got no points on the English test but still managed to make the overall minimum grade by doing well on the other parts of the test. On this test, I might not do as well as others in English, but I could compensate for that with good scores in other areas. Still, the odds were more than a hundred to one that I would be chosen.

I put my faith in Reverend Moon's advice to "trust the will of God." I told myself, "If God needs me to go to America, then there will be a way for me to go there. If that is not the will of God, then it's best that I not be chosen."

The examination took all day. We were all completely exhausted by the time it was over. Everyone had done his best. Now we could only wait.

The day finally came for the results to be announced. I received a telephone call from the office of Gen. Sun Yob Back, the army chief of staff, and was ordered to report to him immediately. I had already met General Back on a number of occasions in the course of my work as an aide to the KMAG commander. He had even visited our humble home, together with General Matthews. Still, it was unusual for the army chief of staff to directly order a major to report to his office.

The general greeted me with a big smile. "Congratulations, Major Pak," he said. "I really have to hand it to you. Based on the examination, you've been selected to be the new deputy military attaché in Washington. I sent for you so that I could congratulate you and personally hand you your new orders."

While I said the proper things to the general, in my heart I was offering a prayer of gratitude. "Thank you, God. Because of your help, I am about to go to America. I will work according to Your will."

As the time drew near for me and my family to leave for America, Reverend Moon held a farewell banquet in my honor and presented me with a calligraphy that he had written especially for the occasion. It was a writing of eight Chinese characters that means something like, "The phoenix has flown to its own territory, so it will do well and be victorious ten thousand times." Today, this writing is kept in our home as a precious family treasure.

I took the words of Reverend Moon's calligraphy to be his command for me. It was God's will that I carry out this command. I had simultaneous feelings of extreme gratitude and tremendous responsibility.

On the morning of March 1, 1961, I put on my dress uniform and got ready to head to Kimpo Airport with my wife. Before leaving, we went to Reverend and Mrs. Moon's home to bid them farewell. Mrs. Moon had just given birth to her first daughter and was recovering.

Here we received an unexpected honor. Reverend and Mrs. Moon, the True Parents of humankind, prayed and gave us the Blessing as the first of the "Thirty-six Couples." This meant that my wife and I were registered as direct family members of the True Parents. In terms of the Unification Principle, it meant that our original sin was completely cut away and our marriage was sanctified. The formal Thirty-six Couples Holy Blessing Ceremony was held a few months later on May 15. Since we were leaving for America, Reverend and Mrs. Moon made it possible for us to receive the Blessing before our departure. This was an incredible gift from God.

Reverend Moon, Hyo Won Eu, and many of our friends in the church came to the airport to see us off.



As the author waits for his flight in the departure lounge of Seoul's Kimpo Airport, he has a last chance to speak intimately with Reverend Moon about his pioneering work in the United States.

After we boarded the Pan Am Flight for America – the first time in an airplane for both of us – Reverend Moon and our friends went to the observation deck on the roof of the passenger terminal to watch our plane leave. I took out a piece of paper where I had written some words ("Ideal God's Will") and put it up against the window. I did this partly to let Reverend Moon know exactly where I was seated and also as a silent and final expression of my undying loyalty to him. I was told later that he and the others on the observation deck saw the words suddenly appear in one of the plane windows and that this was a very emotional moment for them.

Reverend Moon kept waving in farewell and watching the plane until it disappeared in the distance.

After the plane was in the air, I was as happy as I could be. I had received the highest honor by being seen off at the airport by the messiah and True Parent of all humanity. This was a much greater honor than being seen off by a head of state.

On the surface I was just another diplomat being sent by the Ministry of Defense on an overseas assignment. However, my trip to America had a heavenly significance. Of course, I was representing my country, but at the same time, I was representing the True Parents. I had no doubt that this was the course that God had commanded me to follow.

Sometime before our departure, I had had the opportunity to accompany Reverend Moon to the Daehan Theater in Seoul, where we watched a movie titled *The Emperor's Secret Missionary*. That title exactly described my situation as I left for America. I was a diplomat with a mission given by my country, but I also had an internal mission given to me by God. As I left my country, I determined that I would devote all my heart and soul to accomplishing both missions.