

Blessed Families and Self Reliance

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Excerpts

To New York Area Blessed Couples



Photo date and location unknown

On the last day of 1977, December 31, in preparing for a national conference, I showed Father the results of our witnessing. The results were basically not very good. Nor were they exceptionally poor. Our family has been growing steadily. New members are joining, especially in the states, where we have a kind of frontier atmosphere. It's easier for people to come into a very simple, home-like environment where they can receive a lot of personal attention. But the numbers have been far below the standard that we need to meet.

In the beginning of the conference, Father gave a great deal to the state leaders. He kept them together for several days, through Ye Jin nim's birthday celebration and through playing Yute with them. Finally, he had the business of the conference on January 4. Father's basic theme was this: On the True Parents' birthday last year he had proclaimed the beginning of the new history, the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven, the beginning of the Year One. From that time on, whatever we did was to be our responsibility. Father felt that whatever he had to do for us he had accomplished by that time last year. Although there may be many other things that he wants to accomplish, and there may be other elements of his mission that he wants to see fulfilled, in terms of his relationship to us he has already fulfilled his responsibility by creating a certain foundation. Under his guidance and direction up to that time we had indemnified the past, indemnified the failures of Christianity, indemnified the failures of our own nations, and indemnified the failures of our own movement. So as of True Parents' birthday last year Father announced the beginning of a new history. We were starting at the zero point.

From then on, whatever we did, whatever we initiated, whatever we accomplished stood as a positive achievement. On the other hand, whatever we failed to do, whatever we lost became our personal responsibility.

Many of the things Father said last year probably didn't sink in deeply enough to us, and even if we thought we understood them, we're understanding them at deeper and deeper levels. There has been a big change. At conferences all last year Father said, "Now I am going to focus on economics, I am going to fulfill the responsibility to my own family. You are to go ahead. I have shown you the way. I have given you the push, I have given you the instructions. The responsibility now is on your shoulders. Now is the time for you to take over."

Americans -- and maybe everyone in the fallen world -- are very independent, and it took quite a bit for us to join this church and commit ourselves to it and decide to follow. In doing so, many times we may have abandoned our personal initiative or our personal creative understanding. Sometimes we simply became those people who just follow and wait. That is the child's position. It is necessary to take that position in the beginning, but it is not adequate to stay in that position forever. If we just remain in the child's position, eventually we become a burden to Father. It is his desire that we become representatives of the True Parents, that we ourselves assume the parental position in our missions, whatever they are.

At the conference after God's Day, then, Father looked back on the year 1977 and said basically that we cannot say we have been successful. In 1975 we sent out our members as foreign missionaries. In 1976 we sacrificed everything to do the God Bless America Festival. But starting in 1977 he had told us to be responsible to fulfill our missions, particularly in witnessing and evangelism. Again and again Father emphasized that the responsibility of everyone, regardless of whatever else they may do, is witnessing. This is not just to make the movement grow, but in order to qualify us to set up our own families.

Many times we think of setting up our families only in the external terms -- where we are going to live, how we're going to support ourselves. But none of those things, strictly speaking, have any meaning if we haven't set up the internal foundation for our families by fulfilling the requirements of the Divine Principle. If we haven't done that, then nothing else we may try to accomplish can be sustained.

As Father reviewed the past year, it was a very serious time. Everyone felt that there were so many ways in which they hadn't fulfilled either the things that father had asked, or even the things that they themselves had pledged. Throughout the year all of us know we have made determinations, and I doubt that anyone can say he has fulfilled everything he pledged to do, that he's been exactly the person he promised to be.

Cassette tapes have been made of the Divine Principle, but not many have been given out. Many people say, "Well, it's not a very good way to witness to people." But then few people witnessed in a more effective way. Then Father had the book published and asked that the books be given out. And again, many people said, "That's not a good way to witness to someone. That's not a good way to teach them the Principle. I'd rather witness to them directly, personally." But how many members did we gain by doing that?

When I think of the tapes and books, I feel very heavy, because I think that it is sad that we have come to the point where the best idea Father has of reaching everyone is to drop off a book. At least that will help him feel that he has been responsible in delivering the message of truth, the message of life to people. As individuals we had the freedom to do things many different ways, but no one can stand up and say he was gloriously successful. Therefore, Father's instructions are opportunities for us to indemnify our own failures and fulfill our own responsibility to spread the Word, to have the opportunity to receive our freedom again.

So it was based on Father's love that he made a forty-day condition starting from January 10 to indemnify our failures of the past year. Father can give us the opportunity to be successful, but he cannot be successful for us. If Father goes into business and makes a lot of money, it may help our movement, but it doesn't help our families.

Regarding blessed families, I can see more and more clearly that there isn't anything else Father is going to do with the movement that is going to make our families prosper or fail. Each family must take the responsibility to live up to the standard that Father has set. Of course we still need guidance from him, and we still need the support of one another, but Father is not responsible to solve our family problems.

As I have traveled all over the East Coast and as far west as Indiana during these 40 days, I have met so many members who are feeling a desperate sense of repentance that they had been waiting for still more instruction from Father, always leaving the burden on him. Now they are working hard to fulfill all the direction Father has given. But that still may not be enough. Just to move from the position of not having done what Father asked to the position of having done it, is not enough. Father's instructions just form the foundation of what we are supposed to accomplish, and in addition to doing whatever he specifically asked, it is our responsibility to fulfill the meaning of those instructions. That is, to bring the result Father desires. The same applies to all of us here.

Our life comes from the Divine Principle. Father's gift to us until the time of our blessing is the Divine Principle. Without knowing the Principle we cannot understand the blessing. Yet for most of us, once we have heard the lectures a few times, they seem dry and old to us. Few of us could claim to study the Divine Principle every day. On the other hand, we are not perfect in our understanding, so we cannot represent Father. And we cannot even relate to one another correctly. It is a problem that is killing us, and if we don't solve it we cannot survive.

Whenever I see a group have difficulty or a Center having problems, of course I can always find external manifestations of the problem -- people can't get along, someone is selfish, someone is domineering, someone is too passive. But those are just the problems of life. If we are close to the Word, we can cope with any of those problems. Nothing seems too difficult. But if we are not feeling full of the life of the Divine Principle, we are overwhelmed by problems. People who know and feel close to the Divine Principle have an automatic desire to witness and to teach. But when we drift away from that understanding. We don't feel like doing any of those things. We begin thinking only about our personal situations.

When we think about our personal problems, there is no end. No one in the world can solve his personal situation. For everyone there are always the problem of insecurity, the problem of taking care of his family, the problem of finances. Those problems always exist for everyone, and in fact they are the major sources of strife within families. Of course our situations have those pressures built in, but if we are close to the Principle we have the strength and the vitality to cope with our problems without resentment or despair.

The Principle is the source of our life. It is what holds us together as a group. It is what holds our marriages together. If we don't understand our marriages based on the Divine Principle and try to form the relationship on some other basis, the marriage will be very insecure and no different from any other marriage in the world. And the Principle is also the only thing we have to offer our nation for the solution of its problems.

As I have been traveling this past month, I expected to encounter a lot of opposition, which we did. But what I didn't expect was to be reminded so pointedly of how much people want to understand God, and how receptive they are to finding a solution for their problems. When our members walk down the street to witness, they are looking usually for somebody who seems to be unattached. I know on the West Coast they look for someone with a backpack or a sleeping bag, someone who looks as though he had no roots. That is all right for gaining some kinds of members, but that person then becomes just one more person in the Unification Church. Jesus said one life was worth the whole universe. But I have recently had many experiences with people in high places in their professions, and I know even theologians can be reached if we try. I had a meeting with the Dean of the Boston University Theological School, and he asked for someone to come and teach him the Principle.

I feel that our church -- and the blessed couples at the core of the church -- has gotten so busy with our missions and with our personal lives and with resolving the two, that our own vitality in the Word has run down, and we are failing to serve our people.

People say, "Well, there should be programs for blessed couples, to educate them." But that is still the child's mentality. How much longer do we need someone to do things for us? When are we going to be ready to do things for ourselves? Christians who are really close to the Word witness because they are highly motivated, because they have made a commitment, and they take the responsibility to stand up for it. In doing so they are automatically in the position to give out the truth.

I feel that we need to make a much deeper personal commitment, and that our fellowship as blessed couples has to be to encourage each other and to inspire each other. But we shouldn't expect that someone is going to make one more schedule or one more program for us. We are supposed to be adults, the representatives of our True Parents. Nobody makes a program for Father. Nobody gives him a schedule of what to do. He feels a responsibility, he senses a need, and he responds to it.

I think we may have misunderstood. Perhaps we felt after we joined the church that there were some kinds of decisions we were not in the position to make for ourselves. More and more we are coming to see that the understanding is wrong.

What does it mean when Father tell us to be financially self-sufficient? Many times I think people have felt resentment about this. They feel in a sense, they joined the church, put their whole lives into the church, and they expect the church to take care of them. That way of thinking makes many of us liabilities to the church. The amount we threw in compared to how much it is going to cost the church between that time and when we die doesn't add up to a very good deal for the church. That's not what Father means.

We are supposed to create something that we give to the church and to the world. At the end of our lives we should feel, "This was my life, this is what I gave. This was my offering." When you present yourself before Heavenly Father, you want to have something to show: "This is what I gave. This was my life's achievement. This was my life's work." Nobody can take the responsibility to plan your life's work.

So the theme that I have been stressing to all of our state leaders is self-reliance. What is it that the American character has that we are supposed to develop? If anything, it's the tradition of self-reliance. When President Kim lectured he stressed that the movement in Korea was the Formation Stage, in Japan the Growth Stage, and in America it had to become the Perfection Stage.

What is the purpose of our movement? In Father's own words, at times, it's to make us "little Sun Myung Moons." He wants us to go out and be him. Why? What is it that he wants to leave behind him when he goes? He wants to leave people who are carrying out his work -- not people who are just living according to his rules, but people who are doing his mission. And more than anything else he emphasizes teaching the Principle.

In America individualism became selfish perhaps in this generation. But that isn't the way the country began. It wasn't selfish people who came here 200 years ago. They were foolish if they were selfish,

because their lives were ones of sacrifice. Life was hardship. They came because of their hope for the future. Throughout the last 200 years, until we became successful as a nation, a great deal of energy, a great investment was required.

Now, it feels good to be concerned about everybody and to want to give them money and feed them and do everything for them. The idea of taking care of everybody in the world feels nice. Here in New York City, however, because of what is sometimes a "guilty liberalism," our welfare system hasn't worked out. We feed the poor, so people move here from all over the country to get on the dole, and we have a million people on relief in New York. If we could afford it, perhaps that would still be fine. But we don't have enough money to pay for police for the protection of elderly people, for example. They are robbed and assaulted and beaten and murdered.

This is the kind of hardship we have to endure as the price for feeding other people. The theory is in welfare, you give people dignity and then they aspire to it. But that hasn't been the result at all. I believe people should be generous to one another. I don't believe in the "right to starve." But if we don't make people self-sufficient, we haven't really done anything for them. And if we fail to do that in our church, it's even worse. If we create a group of blessed couples in the church who expect to be taken care of, then we will have the same kind of cancer in our church that we have in society. That would be the worst tradition that Father could leave behind.

We have to find the way to make ourselves independent, in the same way that the early pioneers did and that some religious groups still do. The pioneers understood the meaning of everyone's pitching in to help raise a barn for one family, they understood the meaning of everyone's sacrificing to build a school for all, but they also understood the meaning of pulling their own weight and standing on their own feet. That is the tradition. That is the kind of individualism that built America. That was the spirit of self-reliance that made this a prosperous nation, where people had dignity and self-respect in front of one another because they didn't owe anything to each other.

Father is forever saying to the American family, "I never want to be indebted to you." Because from the moment he owes us something, his ability to lead us is compromised. He can no longer give us instructions freely because we would feel that he was obligated to us in some way.

As blessed families, it is very difficult for us to know how to solve all these kinds of problems. But we have to begin. Otherwise the future of our church is really burdensome.

All of us have some mission. All of us have responsibility. Especially after our families start having children, then in addition to everything that we want to do for the church, we have to acknowledge very directly that we have to take care of our families, and then we have to fulfill our responsibility to contribute to the church. That doesn't mean that your family comes first and you sacrifice the church. I mean that you are not even free to make a contribution to the church until you are able to take care of your family. You can only offer yourself as a self-sufficient individual and as self-sufficient families.

Last October at the conference in Los Angeles, Father directed that in those Centers where blessed couples are living who are not the directors, especially when they have children, they should live outside the Center. One parent should work to support the family, and the other one should dedicate himself to church activities. They should decide between them which is making the most significant or irreplaceable commitment or contribution to the church. That person should be supported by his or her spouse.

Don't give up your responsibility as a husband or wife. You are responsible. It's fine for the women to think, "I should do it. I don't have to burden my husband." That's a good attitude for wives. But the husbands should think, "I've got to take care of my family. I have to make sure my wife gets what she needs. Somehow I've got to do it, either by talking to my department leader or by going fundraising myself or getting a job." Don't let the problem slide. Then everyone gets frustrated, and it becomes an accusation to the entire church.

In New York the application of this rule is more difficult. But the same basic policy applies here too. If your work director feels that you are irreplaceable, then he must either arrange to support your family, or give you the freedom to go out and get a job to support your family. This is something you should face up to now. It's very difficult when your wife is six or seven months pregnant to think about which of the two of you is going to get a job. There are many special cases, so there may be a lot of individualized solutions to be worked out.

However, you yourself must decide what kind of sacrifice you are going to make. If we are going to be responsible for solving our problems, we have to be frank, and we have to face up to what our real situation is. It shouldn't be Father's burden to solve our different family problems. Now many babies are being born. Who should take care of them? Of course, the mother has to take care of them. Now, if the mother really has to fulfill another mission, then someone has to help her. But no mother should just automatically assume that she has to do something other than take care of her children. The couples must

decide which of them has the responsibility for full-time church work.

There was one couple on our staff who were expecting a baby. They really felt that their family should go out to the field because they felt that in a state they could help the Center in a lot of ways, and the husband could work to support his family and still make a big contribution to the local church. I think Father is pleased with that kind of solution. That doesn't mean that I believe everyone should or would come to the same conclusion and that all the families would move out of New York. But there may be some people here who, when they analyze their situation, would want to request to Father that they be given some responsibility helping a Center in the field. There is a great need for the help of mature members in the states. The state leaders are working very hard, but they need people who are family-oriented to help them.

Each one of us has to assess his real situation, who we really are, what we can really do right now, and ask himself, "How can I give something to Father?" If you feel that here in New York you are not giving something, if you just feel frustrated and can't find a way to solve your problems, then you should volunteer to go elsewhere. This whole country needs us; the whole world needs us. There is no need to let your life become filled with frustration. On the other hand, if you begin to think realistically, you may discover ways that you can solve your situation here.

You can never wait for the group to solve your problems. You yourself must do it. It's your family. When you have children, your children are not going to accept the answer that you're waiting for the church to decide whether they can have an allowance or not, whether they can do something or not. You have to decide. If you decide to live in such a way that you have no money, then you have to take the responsibility for telling your children, not that somebody's not giving you money, but that you decided to live in the way you do because you feel it has value.

The theme is, you and your family have to decide. Ten years from now you can't go back and accuse the movement for things that your family went through. You have to decide what sacrifice you can make and willingly make it. Make it a pure offering. That gives you dignity in front of everyone else. You don't want to be the object of other people's pity.

The most important things for us in our present thinking are self-reliance, and our responsibility to be Father's representative. That means the bearer of the Word, the witness to the truth, the solver of his own problems, the person who takes dominion in his own area. Then we can consult with one another. But the blessed families are not supposed to be another department in our church. It is the fellowship that gives us vitality to pour our energy and strength and spirit into the areas of our missions. Father thinks of us like anchors in those places. So whether you work for the News World or for the New Yorker house staff, or for Interfaith or for the Headquarters staff, or anywhere else, you're supposed to be a real rock representing Father in that place. If you can't be that kind of person, then you should think, "Maybe I should go to another place or another mission, maybe there's no shame in that." You have to find the place where you can make a real contribution.

It's all right to meet together and help take care of our needs cooperatively. But that isn't the right place to look for all our solutions. You should always be thinking in terms of, "How can I solve my own problems?" And there may be someone who doesn't want to participate in a group system, who wants to do everything on his own. I don't think you should treat that person as someone who is rejecting the group. The goal is self-sufficiency. If we can help each other, that is fine. But that should never be another pressure to make everyone buy their diapers the same way or their food the same way. We don't want to institutionalize things to the point where another system controls your life and makes your decisions. That is exactly the pattern we should be breaking. You yourself should decide where and how you are going to buy your diapers.

From the beginning to the end we must understand, "I am responsible for me." And in addition: "I want to shoulder whatever I can of Father's load. I can cut down on my own needs to do this so that I can give this much more to the movement." But never think, "I will give you everything, but now you have to take care of me."