

FFWPU USA: Remember Who We Are As God's Children and Our Purpose

Demian Dunkley

March 15, 2020



During the live-streamed [Sunday service on March 15](#) at the Family Church of New York City, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA President Rev. Demian Dunkley gave a sermon on FFWPU co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon's imprisonment in Danbury, Connecticut.

Tune into the live-streamed Sunday services at live.familyfed.org or on the [FamilyFed Facebook page](#).

An international outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has prompted mass restrictions around the world. Stay up-to-date with the latest information provided by [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) to protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19.

In the U.S., a statewide stay-at-home order is in effect for California, while Las Vegas has shuttered its casinos and Times Square remains empty. A call for 'social distancing' from government officials has led to ghost towns across the nation, with closed restaurants, venues, gyms, movie theaters, and more. But now, more than ever, it's important for people to band together in such times of crisis.

Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, co-founder of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) and affectionately known as True Father, always looked at the positive side of everything -- including his own wrongful imprisonment for tax evasion in July 1984. "I was at East Garden estate with True Father on the day that he left for Danbury Prison," said Dr. Thomas Ward, president and professor of peace and development at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in New York. "He was bright and optimistic;

he was laughing and doing everything he could to inspire the people who were with him."

Dr. Ward, along with two diplomats, were among the people who visited True Father in prison. "It was shocking to see him in an old army uniform and second-hand tennis shoes," said Dr. Ward. "Immediately when True Father saw us, he ran to us and embraced the ambassadors and thanked them for coming." Instead of looking inward, True Father focused outward. He was more concerned about society than his own circumstances. "We were sitting at a dingy wooden table inside the prison, and the whole time True Father was upbeat and radiant. His whole heart and motivation was to inspire the diplomats with how they could contribute to the providence," said Dr. Ward.

Major crises -- like the COVID-19 pandemic -- often trigger feelings of fear, panic, anxiety, and hopelessness. But in the face of prison gloom, True Father felt tremendous love and responsibility for the world and all people. True Parents have been especially steadfast during times of hardship. "True Father faced death so many times, but he was fearless and always had confidence," said FFWPU Senior Pastors' Association President Rev. Richard Buessing. "He gave you confidence."

Though it's easy to feel overwhelmed during chaos and uncertainty, it's important to remember who we are as God's children and our purpose. "It's a good time to think about why we are alive," said Rev. Larry Krishnek, FFWPU-USA West subregional director and pastor of the Bay Area Family Church. "We always run into things that can shake our faith, but if we center on the Divine Principle and fulfill our responsibility, this can be a positive opportunity." The Divine Principle is the core teachings of the Unificationist movement.

While many early Unificationists recall True Father's imprisonment vividly, it is his resilience and positive mindset that stands out more than anything else decades later. "True Father had the kind of personality to venture a difficult course," said Dr. Michael Mickler, vice president of UTS. "He was always looking to see what God had prepared and how to help Him. True Father went this crucifixion course in Danbury prison, but there was definitely a resurrection at the end where he came out victorious."

Although True Father was released early, everything leading up to -- and after -- his imprisonment became a turning point for the Unificationist movement. He gained grassroots support from a range of civic and religious groups for being unfairly prosecuted. "We would hear these beautiful stories about how True Father won over the hearts of prison guards and prisoners," said Mrs. Majorie Buessing. "There is always a crisis in human life, but it doesn't last forever. We must stay prayerful and keep going. We can do three things for the providence and call three people each day, for example."

True Father lived a life of testament to God, demonstrating how an individual or communal upheaval of any scale can lead to renewal. It is simply up to us to find the silver lining. "As representatives of True Parents, we must keep hold of that truth," said Dr. Mickler. "God loves, God cares, and God never forgets us in any situation."

With the pulse of the country -- and the world -- beating to a new rhythm, the opportunity for change is at hand. "There are always mountains and valleys, but True Father always said the most fertile ground is the valley," said Rev. Buessing. "In times of crisis emerge the greatest leaders, ideas, and lessons we can learn."

True Father taught many things, but he led by example and left a lasting imprint on all who knew him. "As we left the prison, one of the diplomats said to me, 'Rev. Moon may be in prison, but he's a free man,'" said Dr. Ward. "A free man walks with God and lives for the sake of others."