

Fund-Raising as a Form of Meditation

Charles Wheeler
July 1976



For Unification Church members, fund-raising is an integral part of spiritual life, whether as a full-time mission, on a part-time basis, or as something to be avoided and therefore a source of spiritual pain. Whatever viewpoint one has toward fundraising, its effects on the spirituality of the church are unmistakable and far-reaching. For some Unification Church members involved in a spiritual odyssey before joining, the sacrifice of various methods of spirituality is certainly a great one. Undoubtedly, new members may experience a spiritual shock upon being confronted with the prospect of selling flowers and candy in lieu of previous spiritual practices. One may even reflect on the seemingly unspiritual and materialistic aspects of this method. These observations, however, are surface ones and do not characterize the deep, spiritual nature of fund-raising.

In a time of unprecedented spiritual emphasis in our society, one is constantly confronted with the advantages of Transcendental Meditation, martial arts, encounter and sensitivity groups, yoga, and any number of other spiritually oriented activities. As a form of meditation, fund-raising offers possibilities for deep, satisfying communion with one's inner self and indeed, with God.

Fund-raising can easily be divided into two parts: internal and external. In the latter are considerations of selling area, produce, weather, time, results, etc. Our main focus, however, will be the internal, spiritual aspect of fundraising. Beyond the obvious purpose of fund-raising, which is earning money, lies a far deeper, spiritual significance.

Obviously, if the Unification Church is to prosper and become a vital and influential organization, a firm monetary foundation is necessary. If, however, the only consideration was money our energies could certainly be channeled into more productive areas. Ultimately, God does not need simply the money that is gained by our efforts. God certainly does not need, or even desire to have as His children those accomplished only in flower selling. What God does need, however, are young men and women with strong bodies and clear minds. He needs people that possess qualities of deep faith and heart, and unity with and acceptance of themselves and their fellow brothers and sisters.

Fund-raising offers opportunities for unparalleled strides toward spiritual maturity and stability within oneself and with God.

Meditation Defined

Meditation can be defined in a number of different ways. The Western or Christian understanding of meditation is different than that found in the East. One definition of meditation is that it involves a "relaxed, expanded awareness which results in an expansion of awareness-consciousness." This expanded awareness is said to be reached in a variety of ways. Claudio Naranjo, in *What Is Meditation?* said, "In

the Christian tradition, meditation is most often understood as a dwelling upon certain ideas or engaging in a directed intellectual course of activity; while some of those who are more familiar with Eastern methods of meditation equate the matter with a dwelling on anything but ideas, and with the attainment of an a conceptual state of mind that excludes intellectual activity."

A useful definition for our purposes is that meditation is a relaxed, expanded awareness attained through focusing one's consciousness on a purpose external to and higher than oneself. This definition will be used as a foundation for our understanding of fund-raising as a form of meditation.

Generally speaking, meditation can be divided into three basic classifications:

- A. Concentrative -- the way of faith in which one fills the consciousness with the idea of God. Positive thoughts, feelings and actions are emphasized and give and take with negativity is overcome. This is the Christian method by which one realizes detachment by attachment to God.
- B. Self-surrender -- the way of catharsis in which negative material (thoughts, feelings) is brought out so that the positive, essential self can be freed and become operative. This is a psychological method.
- C. Negative Way -- the way of detachment commonly used in the East in which no thoughts or feelings are given energy by identifying with them; the Zen Buddhist method.

Perhaps the three forms of meditation can be better explained by means of an analogy. If the self is viewed as a flower garden, then in the concentrative method, only the flowers (positivity) are watered (allowed give and take), and not the weeds (negativity). In the self-surrender method, both flowers and weeds are watered in the belief that in the end the weeds will die and only the flowers will remain. In the negative way, neither flowers nor weeds are watered with the belief that only the flowers will survive.

Within these three general classifications of meditation are many variations and types of practices. Many forms of dynamic meditation involve breathing exercises, chanting, or walking. The somewhat stereotyped concept of sitting cross-legged on the floor with one's thumb and forefinger in a circle does not reflect the many aspects of meditation.

Fund-raising

Let us look at some of the aspects of fund-raising to determine if there is some relationship to meditation. Earlier, meditation was defined as a relaxed awareness that results in an expanded consciousness. Church members with even limited experience at fundraising will remember a time, if only momentary, that while selling they experienced a feeling of relaxation and a sense of awareness of and unity with everything around them. In this state, one is completely aware of what one says and how one's words, thoughts, and feelings are affecting others. This relaxed awareness, centering on a higher purpose, is characterized by a unity of mind and body and a sense of harmony between oneself and God. This level of consciousness is of the same nature as that which is the desired result of meditation.

Fund-raising also involves self-transcendence, as does meditation. In other words, to be successful, one must "sacrifice" oneself for the higher purpose. There are many forms of this self-transcendence or "sacrifice" in selling. If one is concentrating on giving God's love to the people, then it can be said that a "sacrifice" of oneself takes place in order to be an instrument of God's love. To be unconditionally giving, one has to transcend his own feelings and thoughts to focus primarily on how to be a channel of God's love. This self-transcendence is a main goal of meditation.

Detachment

Another goal of meditation is detachment from the self-centered and egotistical desires of our fallen hearts and minds, and attachment to God and His will. This detachment from one's fallen or sinful self and attachment to God takes place in the concentrative method of meditation. The means by which to reach this state of attachment to God is positive interaction (give and take) and an emphasis on only the rewarding or fruitful aspects of one's experience. If, in fund-raising, one dwells on the difficulty of the mission, the poor attitude of the people, or the condition of the carnations after three days in the back of the van, it is extremely difficult to feel connected to God and His higher purpose. However, if one is able to be aware of these "realities," but at the same time detach from them and focus on the positive aspects of the situation, a connection with God can be made and the goal of meditation attained.

An additional aspect of this detachment is the separation of one's sense of well-being and self-esteem from the results of one's effort. If, for example, constant attention is given to the monetary result, then one can lose the proper attitude of ego detachment. This is not to say that awareness of one's results is unnecessary or that a goal should not be set and strived for, but rather that results should not affect one's attitude. In other words, if results are coming, then one has the right to feel good, but if the results are not

coming, one doesn't have the right to feel bad. A detachment of one's ego from the results of one's effort is the desired attitude. One should strive for an unconditionally positive attitude in the face of the conditional circumstances of a typical selling experience. This detachment of ego from result is characteristic of the approach of meditation. In meditation, as in fund-raising, emphasis is placed on one's attitude or inner posture rather than just the desired result. If one's attitude is right, results will be forthcoming.

The goal of meditation is a state of consciousness in which one is able to experience life to its fullest degree. In its highest form, meditation desires to bring this higher level of relaxed awareness to all aspects of life. True meditation is not characterized by the guru who sits alone in a cave high in the mountains, but rather, by the person who experiences a deeper awareness and a broader consciousness and then applies this experience to everyday life situations.

In a similar fashion, the insights and lessons learned in fund-raising can be used in whatever mission or endeavor that one has thereafter. Meditation and fund-raising both seek to develop faith and trust in God and in life itself.

Spiritual Growth

Reverend Moon has spoken very distinctly about the proper emphasis with regard to spiritual growth. He states, "Some people try to grow spiritually, develop their own spiritual life and reach God through meditation, self-disciplines, etc. This is not the way. The one who goes to God the fastest and achieves the closest position is the one who loves others." By way of further guidance, he adds, "Unlike the other religious leaders, instead of meditating and meditating, I'm an activist, always acting and putting my theory into practice, even moving God." The point, clearly, is that the way of spiritual growth is through loving others and by expressing that love through action.

The point that fund-raising and meditation have in common is the end result. The goals of both approaches are very similar. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two lies in the means to reach this common goal. Fundraising obviously stresses action external to oneself, while meditation embraces a more introspective approach.

Acceptance of fund-raising as a legitimate form of spiritual expression is gained through knowledge of its common ground with meditation. Fund-raising, in this light, can be seen as an action oriented form of meditation. A reconciliation of the two approaches can, on some levels, be made.

It should be clearly emphasized that meditation is not a substitute for prayer. Meditation can serve to enrich one's prayer life, but prayer is a much higher level of personal communication with God and should not be sacrificed for any form of meditation.