

Open Letter to Parents - My Son Also Joined the Unification Church

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You and I, no matter who you are or who I am, where you are or even what we are have things in common.

You and I are parents, are from the same generation and we share a common bond -- a son or daughter who belongs to the Unification Church. This places us all in an unfamiliar new position. Do we hide our faces from people when Rev. Moon is mentioned? Or do we stand up to be counted?

Some of us do, some of us are afraid, some of us reject completely and some of us have gone even further than that. Some of us have even gone so far as to have a "deprogrammer" snatch a son or daughter of ours off the street and "work them over" in our presence.

I feel I know us -- you and me. We are cut from the same cloth...

Our generation has been one of pulling ourselves up "by the boot straps," We have struggled through a depression, through wars and some of us great personal pain to arrive at last to the position of parents of young adults, yes adults.

We have wiped away their tears, stood up for them, handed to them all we were able to give -- with one prayer in mind: "Heavenly Father, make their lives easier than it was for us." Finally, the finished product emerged. Now we could relax, we had given our all -- Sunday school, civic pride. P.T.A., patient guidance around or through the evils their generation seemingly created (drugs, free love, long hair) and at last, through our sacrifice, placed in their hands the gleaming jewel of an education. Ah! Such pride filled our hearts; no matter what we had been through it was worth it. Now to just sit back and watch what wonderful things they would do to make us even more proud!

Then one day, as it was with you so it was with me, it happened. A telephone call... a letter... a meeting. The result of which was most emphatically put, "I have found a new way of life." He was happy and I who had directed him around stumbling blocks, over hurdles, found myself standing alone in my self-erected tower (from which I had directed the traffic of his life), my baton still in my hand, as my son went off into the sunrise, following Rev. Moon and giving his life completely to God and God's work. Leaving all my carefully constructed dreams for him behind, tucking the gleaming jewel of education (the one I had sacrificed so much for) in his pocket, to be used at a later date.

Some of us knew at this moment, without any doubt, we had two choices to make: (1) to caution or demand that he (or she) not deviate from my planned path for him or if he would not listen to reason (my own, of course) he must endure my disappointment, wrath, or suffering for my "poor, misdirected child." (2) To admit to myself that I was not listening to a little boy any more with his wild dreams or an adolescent with his extreme daily changes, but to a man. Young yes, but a man. Here he was in a new light and a very interesting person. He had his own principles, thoughts, independence, courage and ambition. (Wasn't that what I wanted him to be all along?)

The Unification Church, Rev. Moon, well now that was another matter. What was it all about? We as parents could not for the life of us make a connection between what was being written in newspapers and what things the young people were telling us. What was missing?

It just must be our nature to be driven to find these things out for ourselves. Maybe it's all the "cross talk" and too much mudslinging. I don't know. All of us have pretty much the same story. We went to find out, we had to know everything (at different times of course). My own story went something like this.

Armed with nothing more than deep love and sincere respect for him, carrying a real disgust for some of the lousy press Rev. Moon and the people who followed him were getting, and a few fears rolling around in my brain, like "Did someone finally manage to brainwash that stubborn kid of mine? Is this whole thing a lake?" I went to the center where Jim was living and met all the members that stayed there and met some parents too. I heard Rev. Moon's teaching; I questioned, I listened, I learned for a week. I went with him for a weekend workshop. Again I listened, I questioned. Again, no brain washing, only food... spiritual food. I received many answers to things that have puzzled me profoundly ever since I heard that first school lesson many years ago. The saints became suffering people. The prophets became more alive to me. I felt I was in touch with something -- so good, so big, so new, and at the same time, as old as time itself. I was both very happy and relieved at once. Idealist? Maybe. Optimist? Why not?

Parents around here are now getting together to study more Divine Principle because there is really something wonderful to be learned in this. What's more, we are being taught by your sons and daughters. They come all the way up here to teach us, for the center is a long way off. They come sometimes once a week or every two weeks. They love us, and we know it.

My son is working in Washington, D.C. now, along with hundreds of others of our sons and daughters. We are all so very proud of ours. If you are fearful, you don't have to be, because we have enough love for them all and we are proud of them for you. You see, we understand a parent's heart. How could we not?

I want to assure you that the things you read in the paper are really about 95 percent untrue. I want to assure you that the Unification Church is open to all. There are no closed doors. I want to assure you it is possible to reach a clear understanding with your offspring as we have with ours. I want to assure you that your experience will fill you with pride and joy as it has all of us. And I want to assure you that there is a list of parents as long as from here to where you are now that will be given to you freely who can reassure you that all of the things I have written here are so.

Some of you I am certain have heard through your children about the Washington Monument. It is a great and wonderful day that is being planned for you and me and all the people in this country by Rev. Moon and all those that work for him -- my son, your sons, your daughters. I am convinced after coming to know them as I have, one thing that would bring them the greatest joy would be for you to stand together with them that day. I guess I'm hoping for you to hear the same thing my son said to me, "Oh, you will come? Mom, you're wonderful! I just can't wait for everyone to meet you. You're special, Mom, and I love you."

I pray I will see you there. I will indeed be looking for you. We will be there, hundreds of us parents. We'll be standing with our children, proud and happy, searching through the faces for you. If we don't see you, you'll be missed by us all.

May the Heavenly Father be with you.