

The Role of the Cheongshim Family Church in Developing Chung Pyung

Interview of Dong-woo Kim
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Question: Reverend Dong-woo Kim, what does it mean to be the pastor of Cheongshim Family church in the Village of Seorak?

Our church in Seorak is the biggest religious facility in all of Gapyeong county (population 62,000). This county has many religious facilities; this is by far the biggest. Our Sunday service average attendance figure is also the highest. Most religious leaders in Gapyeong know this.

Question: How did the locals react to a Unification Church in downtown Seorak?

The main obstacle between the citizens and us is that some have prejudices. The spontaneous perception they had of our church was that of heresy and the Antichrist. Most still believed what the Korean media spread decades ago. For those who haven't received clear information about True Parents and our teachings, achievements, goals and vision, erasing their prejudice is indeed difficult.



Question: This is a rural, somewhat isolated area.

It is a rural area with an aging population. After a certain age, you don't change your concepts easily. That poses a challenge for us. The church opened six years ago as a new development in the Chung Pyung providence. We'd had the Chung Pyung Training Center for years, which was growing. Increasingly, employees were working and living here. We needed a place where members could meet as a congregation for Sunday service.

That was the main original purpose.

True Mother emphasizes educating those in our second generation. The buildings' structure and space

were made specifically for Sunday services and small classes, based on the original vision. On Foundation Day, in 2013, things started to change.

True Mother began to guide the Chung Pyung providence directly. She gradually decided to make this area the capital of Cheon Il Guk. She wants to build the tangible center of Cheon Il Guk.



Question: Members used to see Chung Pyung as a spiritual retreat, quite separated from the world, so even for us, this is a revolution in our perception.

True Mother coined the expression "HJ Cheonwon." It contains a spiritual and a physical dimension; both are important. The Training Center still plays a central role in HJ Cheonwon. True Mother wants to build a complex that is an extract of various international aspects.

On the other hand, True Father often climbed Jeonseong Peak, behind Cheon Jeong Gung. Sharing the treasure of this area with all humankind was Father's dream. We should know what prompts True Mother now: she wants to substantiate True Father's dream, not just for Seorak residents or for Korea. A global vision is behind it. This is to be a model.

Question: It presents an additional challenge for the local people.

Indeed. They were used to huge gatherings around here once or twice a year, with hundreds of buses releasing thousands of people for big events. They did not know what we were doing. But we can take time to explain our vision of making this place international and attractive, so they can feel a part of it.



Question: I doubt employees in HJ Cheonwon will do this grassroots' communication among the local population, but the pastor and the Cheongshim Church staff are on the front line.

Exactly. Mother wants to establish a model and make HJ Cheonwon the capital of Cheon Il Guk. The church here is on the border between "inside" and "outside." Inside it is part of HJ Cheonwon; outside, it is the gateway for the local people and for South Korea.

True Mother sent me here in January 2016 with two main objectives. Her first request is to let Seorak and Gapyeong people learn about and follow True Parents. True Mother always emphasizes that we are so happy because we are with True Parents. The main organizations in HJ Cheonwon are focusing on erecting the building complex, but the church mission is outreach to the local people so that they know and follow True Parents.



Question: For most people working here, this is not their hometown.

Right, but everybody here first focuses on fulfilling Mother's directions. The HJ Cheonwon staff clearly has the mission to attend True Mother and serve the world providence.

This is their number-one duty, but True Mother asked me to take care of restoring the local area. Who is going to do that? It is a challenge. Anyway, I have to unite with whatever True Mother asks me to do. I had to develop some specific education so that members become owners of Cheon Il Guk and are ready to go out to fulfill their mission of tribal messiahs.

We have to strengthen members' spirituality, life of faith and the level of their hearts. That was my first concern. Second, we need to build a system, because this church consists of 470 families. It is a mega-church, and a mega-church does not work without a system guiding members increasingly to have their own mission and responsibility. I have been focusing on these two points for more than a year. We are building a tribal messiahship system.

Question: Is there a theological work on building the capital of Cheon Il Guk and the role of the church in it?

True Mother told me, "I am sending you to church number one." I was embarrassed. What does True Mother mean? I prayed and then developed my thinking on HJ Cheonwon. This is Mother's special input for the Cheon Il Guk providence. If this church becomes number one, those in this congregation must qualify to live in the ideal world -- become a Cheon Il Guk owner. We need to clarify the measurement, the scale of such a person. With that, I can check myself and enable others to evaluate themselves.

Trying to clarify the life of a Cheon Il Guk owner led me to clarify the educational track, step by step. Those who pass through the educational track, albeit imperfectly, finally will know what he or she has to do as a Cheon Il Guk owner.

Question: This educational track is beyond Sunday service, presumably?

Sunday service is not the right venue for this kind of education. There are three steps. The first is a vision seminar for all members, a seven-day evening program to clarify how True Parents' providence has developed and where we now stand. What is the meaning of Cheon Il Guk? What should our life of faith be in Cheon Il Guk? Members reflect, see that their life of faith must change and that they must adjust course to become a tribal messiah.

Question: What is the main challenge on this track?

Our members are used to hearing good words, but few are ready for action. That is the challenge. A Divine Principle school follows the first seminar. We meet once a week over nine weeks to study the first

part of the Divine Principle, but not in lecture form. Our traditional way has a subject partner lecturing object partners, who just listen. All participants have to be subject partners. They all read together and then have a discussion. Members say they thought they knew the Principle, but using this way, they become completely confused, because how people understand it is not similar. I want members to have "lifetime questions." Now, they like to do that. Those who graduate from the Divine Principle school can join the twelve-week Hoon Dok School to understand the application of the Divine Principle in daily life.

Question: Please describe the outreach to the population.

We are not reaching to the local population primarily in terms of religious needs. We try to identify the people's own needs. This is an important point, and I am sure that our entire movement, in terms of tribal messiahship, should change its mindset in this area. We have to do something that fits people's real needs, not our needs. For a year, we have been trying to do that, and we have seen that people do change. Those in the local government can also change. Many people, when they see and interact with us start to change their views.

Question: What are peoples' needs?

There are many. We want to stress our strong points, where we can make a difference. More than forty church members in our community are nurses in nearby Cheongshim Hospital -- strong womanpower! To mobilize this resource, we focus on old, single residents that are concerned about their health and often isolated. Of Seorak Village's ten thousand people, 27 percent are over sixty-five. Many feel lonely and are grateful when we visit to show our love. We have been using Happy Health machines successfully. We show them how to use them, and they appreciate our concern.



Question: How have the local authorities reacted?

The Seorak Village mayor realized that the Gapyeong County cannot ignore Cheongshim anymore. Without Cheongshim's support, it's difficult. He knows he has to remain competitive in relation to other mayors. Without working with Cheongshim, he cannot grow. He knows that. It is

the same with other villages.

Almost everywhere in Gapyeong, the population is aging. Here, we have young people; there is energy. If he works with us, with our manpower, assets and qualifications, he will be more successful. Other mayors are becoming aware of that. Seorak Village is growing mostly because of Unification Church members.

Question: Question: Many foreign members with missions in HJ Cheonwon live here.

Indeed. We have Japanese and Filipino wives with Korean husbands who are not here for a temporary mission. Most Japanese wives master the Korean language after a few years. We may have around twenty-five Filipino women, some of whom speak fluently.

The number of Westerners fluctuates. Some are here working at the international school or at HJ Cheonwon. They are often so busy with their mission that they don't have much time for church activities. Some Westerners not involved with HJ Cheonwon live here, but if they don't speak Korean, integrating them into our activities is difficult. They desire to be involved, but not knowing Korean limits their outreach.

Question: I imagine that in a rural area with many blessed families around, the blessed children are in a protective environment.

Sure. Especially here, our teenagers in our second generation are the majority in their classes. No other community is like this. Therefore, I want to change the rules of the game. We are the majority here.

Question: It would be interesting to do a field study of their experience.

That's why, besides the home groups for older members who have to break through in tribal messiahship, we have to make programs for the younger ones. Our young people are not accustomed or trained to work as tribal messiahs. I want to guide them in social work, so they can reach out to the society and work in the society. Based on their strong points, I want them to interact with the local population. At first, it may not be easy, but gradually, we are going to become the major social group here.