

## Global Citizen of Peace: The Life of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon

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May 28, 2015

International Peace Education Center

To the 7-Day Divine Principle Workshop participants



Welcome, thank you.

My name is Michael Balcomb, and I'm going to be presenting to you one of my absolute favorite topics, the life and the mission of True Father, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

Actually, my real goal is to ask you three questions, or share with you three questions. I call them the "three what's". The first one is, what are the facts? I'm going to share with you some of the highlights and milestones of Rev. Moon's life.



Then I'm going to ask you the next question, which is, so what? Why is that important? Why do I care about it? Why should you care about it? After all, we're talking about just one person amongst 7 billion people on earth. Why is that important? Why is it worth learning more about this one person's life?

And then, my last question is going to be, now what? What should we do about it? What's the next step? What is our opportunity presented by God at this time?

## True Father's Early Years: A Wake-Up Call and Mission from God

Here we are today at this building that really was Rev. Moon's final project in his lifetime. He chose this site by the power of the spiritual realm because he was just meeting somewhere here to go to another place that had been chosen for the possible site. This was an easy place to meet, but when he came here he said he felt the power of God telling him this is the place.



That was about four and a half years ago. We are, in a way, standing on holy ground, but my presentation starts in Korea in 1935. As you read in True Father's autobiography, he lived in a pretty ordinary family. He had a lot of brothers and sisters, originally 13, but five of them died in just one year. That was unusual, but it wasn't so rare. At that time, almost every winter families could lose a child because of starvation and hardship. At that time, most people didn't know where Korea was. If you asked anyone in America or Britain or France where Korea is on the map, they probably couldn't tell you. It was known as the hermit kingdom because it had so little interaction with the outside world and was almost unknown to the West.

Five years earlier, around 1930, True Father's family had converted to Christianity. Christianity in the early part of the 20th century in Korea was spreading like wildfire, even though to be a Christian meant that you would have to go against the Japanese government, and possibly put your own life and your family's well-being at risk, but people didn't care about that. They saw in the Christian message hope for their country.

As he said, on Easter Sunday morning, after an all-night prayer on a mountain near his home, True Father had this amazing vision of Jesus. Now, this wasn't the first time he prayed all night, of course; in fact he would regularly go into the mountains to pray. But on this morning, he had this life changing encounter with Jesus, who asked him to do three big things.

Jesus didn't come to just say read your Bible more or go to church more or the sort of small things that sometimes we feel we're asked to do, but three big things: One, to unite all of Christianity. There are thousands of denominations. Then Jesus wanted him to unite Christianity and other religions like Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, to heal the divided human family. That was something that he saw every day, people betraying and hurting each other just to stay alive, just to get ahead. And the last request was possibly the most unusual of all: comfort the grieving heart of God. This was eye opening to him because, like most people throughout history, he'd always imagined that God lives in Heaven, sits on a throne in Paradise and is in charge. But what he learned from Jesus was that that is not the case anymore because of the Fall of Man, which you've studied in the last few days.

True Father said that encountering Jesus was actually really scary. He was only 15 years old, and this wasn't the gentle Jesus, meek and mild, wearing a white robe and with his hand a sheep, or some of those pictures that you see. His was a Jesus who himself was troubled and very serious, telling him, "Not all is right with the world, and you are being asked by God to do something about it."

True Father said, “My encounter with Jesus completely changed my life. His sorrowful expression was etched into my heart and I could think of nothing else. From that day on, I immersed myself in the Word of God.” Now, as a young boy, like most of us when we were young, True Father didn’t spend his time just studying the Bible or in church. He loved nature, he loved fishing, he loved to learn more about nature, and of course he was busy in school, so this was a transformative experience. He said later that he kind of had to grow up 20 years in one day to take the task that God had given him seriously.



### **Becoming a Spiritual Teacher**

After he graduated high school, he joined some of the larger churches, went down to Seoul, and found he was really good as a Sunday school teacher. He found that he could take a Bible passage and share it in such a way that young people thought it was better than any story in a book or novel. He made them laugh, and so he was very popular in churches as a Sunday school teacher. However, when we tried to share with the senior pastors and ministers that he had had a new revelation from God, suddenly he wasn’t so popular anymore. Suddenly they were worried about what he might be teaching, and slowly and steadily he became excluded, and was no longer able to speak freely.

Then, something even more dramatic happened: the country started to divide and separate into a Communist north and a Democratic south. Most people were running from the north to the south to escape what they felt would be a very oppressive regime. One day, God called on True Father and said he must go to the north. “Leave your family behind and go and preach. Don’t worry, I will be with you.” Of course it’s easy to think that if God told me to go to a very dangerous place—let’s say, “Go to Syria and preach; don’t worry about ISIS, don’t worry about the civil war, I will be with you.”—I would like to think that I would have the confidence to say, “Yes, I will,” but I’m not sure my family would see it the same way. I’m not sure if I would be able to keep that faith, but that’s what True Father did.

He went to the north and began to speak strongly and clearly about God’s will, and pretty soon, he was arrested and tortured, and you can read more about it in the book, but at the end of it all he spent almost three years in a Communist death camp. The purpose for those camps, frankly, was to work people to death. Every year about half the prisoners were dying. True Father shared how one of the saddest things was that, if a prisoner would die during mealtime, the other prisoners would take the food out of his mouth to eat it themselves. It’s hard to imagine, when we’ve lived such comfortable lives, how desperate men and women were driven to be.

True Father didn’t die at the camp. In 1950, that camp and all the surviving prisoners were liberated in the dramatic UN assault on the town of Hungnam. It was a massive bombing raid, and the backstory is even more interesting because, knowing that the end was coming, the prison guards had decided to execute the prisoners one by one. They didn’t want them telling their stories after they were defeated. There were hundreds and hundreds of prisoners. They started to execute prisoners, in order of the length of remaining sentence, and the very next day, October 14, was True Father’s scheduled execution day. However, late that night, around midnight, the prison fell to the bombing.

So, what did he do? He didn’t try to visit his mother and father and his surviving siblings, even though they were only about three or four days’ walk away, but he spent the next 40 days trying to visit the few followers that he had in the city of Pyongyang, the capital of Korea. However, he found, as people often do, that they were no longer so interested in coming to church or reading the Bible. They were thinking

about how to eat, or how to flee to the south. By that time, in fact, almost the entire nation of Korea were refugees, and one of the tragic outcomes of this time was that his family was broken apart. His wife and son remained in the north; they came to the south, but he didn't see them again for many years.

Finally he arrived in Busan, the very southernmost part of Korea as a refugee in January 1951, True Father really didn't have anything—nothing to eat, only one set of clothes, and nowhere to live. There was nowhere to live. The population had risen from 25,000 to 2 million in two months. Refugees were everywhere, and in the end, he built this shack of mud and Budweiser boxes on a lonely hill by a graveyard. Koreans are pretty superstitious; nobody wanted to live next to the graveyard, so he found a space, and this was the first Unification church. And even then, in 1950, he had a vision that one day the entire world will come to Korea to learn about God and to learn about peace.

True Father was the only one who had that vision. Even his few friends thought, “You're crazy. This country will not recover, and people will never come here. They will never want to come to such a poor and miserable place.”



### **Two Steps Forward for Every Step Back**

One lady, Rev. Hyang Shil Kang, was herself a missionary from the Protestant church at the bottom of the hill where True Father's hut remained. She went to visit him, thinking, “I will recruit this young man; he seems to have some power, but he's obviously confused, because he's teaching this strange message that Korea was going to become the central nation on earth.” So she went to visit him and this was her testimony:

*The place was built of mud and stone, and the rain was leaking through the roof. Then a young man came in. “Christianity and all religions of the world can be united!” He said. I was suspicious. You can't even gather a handful of people, I thought. At that time, there were only about three or four people. With three or four people you say that you're going to unite the world and all of Christianity... it seems like a dream.*

So, he was separated from his family and scorned by his countrymen. Many men would've given up, poor, hungry, defeated, and alone. But he didn't. And this is a theme that I want to show you, developing through the life of a man of great determination who, when ordinarily other people would give up, carried on. Against all the odds, the church did begin to grow. Word spread about this man and his strange teachings, and a lot of people came simply to gossip, simply because they were curious, but they left being convinced that there was something worth fighting for.

At the end of the Korean War, True Father moved to Seoul, and right away controversies started to develop. The young students, like many of you on the 7-day Divine Principle Workshop program, of two prominent Christian universities, Ehwa for women, and Yonsei for men, began to come to church. Now, universities back then are not like universities today. In Ehwa university, every student was required to come to morning service chapel every day, and authorities kept a record of who came and didn't come. If they didn't come, they were in danger of losing their place in the school, their scholarship and everything. So when those excellent young students began to choose to come to the Unification church instead of their own chapel, the authorities got very worried. In a way, it's easy to understand.

True Father was quickly arrested based on charges of draft evasion, and there was a great deal of media coverage. He and a few other disciples were arrested, paraded through the streets, and taken into custody. The newspapers did all that they could to show True Father as a bad man, a criminal, and convince people not to follow him. He had something to say about that, but at the time he kept silent. Three months later, he was found not guilty. He was not guilty of draft evasion, because in the time period in question he was a prisoner in North Korea in a Communist labor camp. Somehow, the newspapers failed to cover his innocence and his release, and hid the story on an inside page. Koreans had a saying, he said, that a person insulted by others lives a long time. “If I were to live in proportion to the insults I’ve received, I could live another hundred years. My stomach has been filled, not with food, but with insults.”



### **A True Love Movement**

Fast forward five years to 1960, he married True Mother, who we met this morning. She was a young woman of just 17 years, the daughter of an early disciple. Very quickly, their family began to grow, and True Father began a new tradition of marriage and family by giving the Marriage Blessing—blessing the marriages of his followers. This later spread to the world. In fact, the number of people pursuing these marriages grew so quickly that the term “mass marriage” came to define his work and his vision.

Of course that also caused its own share of controversy and prejudice. Despite this, the church began to spread, and he spent most of the year travelling to the different cities of Korea to preach and encourage the members. However, Korea was still rural, so every summer they would go back to the countryside to plant the rice. It was not like today, where people go to the city and never go back, but there was that close connection to the land that could not be left behind. But True Father knew, “I’m not going to fulfill the task that Jesus gave me if I remain just in Korea. I have to find a way to reach the world.” So, in 1959, he began to send out missionaries—first to Japan, and then to America, to 40 countries by the end of the 1960s, and in 1975 to 120 nations. A big part of his ministry was the publication of the Divine Principle—which you’ve been studying all week—especially when it was translated into English. It took nine years to receive that message from Jesus, but you can study the whole content in just seven days.

In 1971, True Father came to this country answering the inspiration, a call, from God that America should be one nation under God, and that this country’s mission, its vision that had started from the Pilgrim Fathers, could be revived. There were a few church members here at the time, a small group of early disciples, and he began to pull them together and to encourage us that big things were possible. He began a campaign called the Day of Hope tour, and began to speak in the major cities of America. This was his message:

*Americans have lost the love that they have received from God. Unless America recovers its spirit, it has no future. I came to awaken your spirit and save America from destruction. Repent! You must repent and return to God.*

If you think about it, that’s the same message that Jesus gave to the people of Israel when he began his mission, “Repent! For the Kingdom of God is at hand.” He didn’t speak any English, so he relied entirely on interpreters, and began his first seven-city speaking tour starting in New York.

He didn’t just talk about religious things. At the same time, he began investing in bigger questions, and one that really worried him was the question of scientific development, because too often scientific advancements end up creating worse conditions; particularly when it’s diverted to military use.

He called together Nobel Laureates and others, and asked them to think about how we can make sure science leads us in the right direction. One of them was the Nobel Laureate from my home country, Sir John Eccles. He said individuals have an urgent responsibility in the task of rebuilding society with values as a supreme guide.

You know, most scientists don't think that way. Most scientists think the pursuit of truth is everything. Business people and economists think, "yeah but show us the bottom line, where can we make money?" It's rare that people think a little deeper than that: will this benefit everyone in the end? We are not being benefitted by the development of the atomic weapon, for example. Right now, there are people spending billions of dollars developing new ways to kill and harm each other, and to destroy our enemies.

In 1976, almost 40 years ago, True Father declared his vision for God and America before 300,000 people at the Washington Monument. The year before that, he created the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in New York as a place to conduct interfaith learning. You might think that Rev Moon, who's a religious leader, when he would go to the Seminary he'd have long boring sermons, but that's not the case. What he actually liked to do was teach people how to fish, and he developed a new and very dangerous method of fishing which involved creating huge long nets, nets that would fit right around this building, and wading out into the icy waters of the Hudson and waiting for the tide to go out so the fish would be trapped. For those who participated in that kind of extreme fishing, it was an unforgettable experience.

He also started newspapers which tried to expose the truth about Communism and the danger of selfish individualism. The day before the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, his newspaper among all other newspapers in America correctly predicted that Reagan would win. Some people thought that this was great news, and one of them was the late Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, who felt that religion should play a more important role in public life. True Father and General Haig became friends, and it emerged that actually Alexander Haig was among those who led the bombing attack on Heungnam all those decades earlier which allowed True Father to be freed.

But True Father never missed an opportunity to say something controversial. When the Watergate Crisis was at a peak and America was trying to destroy its president, he gave the message: Forgive, Love, and Unite. The words are nice, but nobody agreed. "No, we should remove our president, we should root out this corruption." Some people really saw him as an enemy, and one of them was a US Congressman, who accused the movement of being a front for the Korean CIA.



### **Unity through Overcoming Hardship**

Eventually, True Father was indicted. He had a choice: to come back to America to face the charges (he was in Korea at the time), or to leave the country and face trial. Reflecting on that in his autobiography, he said, "All I did was to try to reestablish the morality and spirit of an America that had fallen into degradation, and restore it in line with God's will, but I was accused of not paying my taxes"—actually, \$7,000—"I was well past my 60th birthday at the time." He went to jail at the age of 64 for allegedly not paying those taxes, despite having invested millions in the mission in the USA; and investment that continued right up to the creation of this building, the International Peace Education Center.

A lot of people didn't agree with the charges. Many Christian churches, Muslim groups, and others filed a petition saying that True Father had been wrongly persecuted and was treated unfairly. One of them was Morton Kaplan, a very prominent professor at the University of Chicago, and he said, "I know how the real Rev. Moon is. He's a man with a heart to forgive anyone who injures him."

But you know that wasn't the extent of True Father's struggle at that time. That very same year, True Parents' second son died in a nighttime car accident at the age of just 17. It was a really shattering blow to the family. Heung Jin was widely seen as the one most likely to take up his father's work. So, having lost his beloved son, having been indicted by the US government and convicted of a crime he really did not commit, and walking into the prison, again many men would have given up. But he didn't give up, and he decided that stepping forth out of that prison experience he would make a new beginning for the movement here in America.



By the time he was released in 1985, public opinion had changed dramatically, and the US Senator concluded, injustice, not justice has been done in the case of True Father. Christian leaders, both white and black, like Jerry Forwall here, and Joseph Larry, supported him and encouraged him, reminding him, "they great people have gone to prison and come out filled with the fire of God—Martin Luther King, Jr for one, Saint Paul for another. To be in prison is not a mark of shame if the reason for being there is that you wanted to live for the sake of God."

He also started to take action. That was the height of the Cold War; many of you were too young to remember that, but for those of us who did, it was a very worrying time. Russia was moving nuclear missiles into East Germany. Many of us felt there's a real danger that this could go badly downhill, and that the world will find itself catapulted into World War III.

But True Father's vision was that people only fight when they don't understand each other, and if he could encourage the journalists and scholars and students from each country to have exchanges, maybe everyone could calm down this spirit of conflict and difficulty.

In 1990, he went to Moscow and began a friendship with the most unlikely couple, President Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev. Atheists were welcoming True Father, a staunch anti-Communist and spiritual leader, to Moscow. And the following year, he met him again in Korea, and told him this: "One hundred years from now, the Russians will not remember Marx, or Lenin, or Stalin. The person they will remember is you, Mr. President Mikhail Gorbachev, because you have saved your country from bloodshed, warfare and ruin, and we have the possibility to bring world peace."

The following year, he went to North Korea to reconcile with Kim Il Sung, a man who once tried to kill him back in the concentration camp in 1951.

The Little Angels dancers, the children's dance group that he founded in 1962, went to Moscow and North Korea to bring the message of truth of beauty. True Father said that many foreigners don't know anything about Korea; they just think it's a poor, ignorant, foolish country almost ruined by war. He

wanted to show them that Korea has a culture that's worth knowing about and a history that they could be proud of.



### **What Can We Be Proud Of?**

What can we take from this man's life and put into practice in our own life, so that 100 years from now people remember your name? How many of you think 100 years from now, people will know your name? Anyone feel confident with that? I'd like, by the end of this presentation, for everyone to confidently feel and say, "Yes, 100 years from now people will remember me, not because I was great, not because I was rich, but because I did something that will bring a change to America and the world."

That's the lesson that I take, and I've taken, from my encounter with True Father over the last 40 years. He never said try to be successful, try to be well-known, or famous. He said to try to sacrifice yourself, try to do things for the sake of other people. Make yourself small so that others become great. He called that philosophy the philosophy of living for the sake of others. It's not that easy because, honestly speaking, we almost always want to live for ourselves. We care about how hungry we are, how much sleep we got, and how much money we get paid. We don't think about what God put us here for, which is to love others and to help them to be our real brothers and sisters.

I hope this leaves you with a renewed personal conviction about how our lives can make this country, and the world, close to God. Thank you very much.

