

In the Name of True Love - Part 1

Henri Blanchard

July 1986

Republished by FFWPU International Headquarters September 13, 2024

From Henri Blanchard's autobiography "In the Name of True Love," published by l'A.U.C.M., Paris, France, 1985

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1975: Father and Mother in Vaucresson, France, with Mr. Henri Blanchard

Testimony of Henri Blanchard



Henri Blanchard the first French Unification Church member

On their wedding day, Louis and Amandine Blanchard determined to offer all their children to God. The seventh, Henri, born on April 22, 1943, was meant to actualize their pledge to the fullest.

Raised in a pious home in which "each day started and ended with prayer," Henri developed a great fondness for the rituals of the Catholic tradition. His deepest experiences with God occurred while vacationing in Brittany at his maternal grandmother's home. While wandering in nature or talking by the fireplace with his grandmother, he discovered the best qualities inside his heart: his love for God, for others, and for nature.

His happiness was suddenly shattered when his grandfather was murdered by a neighbor gone insane. His tragic discovery of the reality of evil reinforced Henri's desire to become a missionary and spread the love of Jesus.

In 1953, he entered a pre-seminary school. With the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Picpus, he led an austere life of prayer, adoration of Jesus, and sacrifice for others, seeking to harmoniously merge contemplation with action. While reading "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a Kempis, Jesus appeared to him and awakened his spirit.

Intellectually, Henri Blanchard was deeply impressed by the theologian Teilhard de Chardin, who inspired 20th-century consciousness with his vision of science and religion united in a civilization of love. Bible criticism led him to discover another Jesus underneath the garments of glorious theology. Confronted by the political and religious environment of Israel at that time, he saw Jesus as a vulnerable man who had nothing substantial to work with but his bare hands. Two thousand years of Christian history made Henri understand that a total victory over evil had not been won in the physical realm. He saw Christianity losing ground in a non-religious world. The appearance of liberation theology and the theology of the death of God hastened his decision to leave the religious order in March 1967. He started to look for God in the world.

For one year, he was not able to find Him. For the first time in his life, he struggled with mundane material problems and with the demons inside of himself. It was his period of trial in the spiritual desert of the world. He found that he was capable of doubt, anxiety, egoism, and revolt. In the depths of his despair, he thought about either getting married or committing suicide.

At the end of 1967, God led him to the top of a hill overlooking the city of Paris, and he saw the city spiritually engulfed by fire. He realized that God was calling him to help. He started to live again for God and for others. He decided to get rid of all his books and journals in order to start anew, and he determined to put his life and future into God's hands.

In March 1968, Henri Blanchard met a stranger who wanted to introduce him to a new philosophy from Korea. Henri refused, tired of experimenting with so many intellectual dead ends. But the stranger offered to teach him German and English, so Henri finally made an appointment to meet him again.

When Reiner Vincenz opened the door, his broad smile welcomed me. The German lesson didn't last for more than five minutes. My host invited me to study a series of diagrams on a large sheet of white paper. I read distinctly: God, Adam, Eve, children, Kingdom of God. It was only then that I discovered the true intention of Mr. Vincenz.

He knew how to put my mind at ease very quickly and initiated an exciting dialogue that lasted the whole afternoon. I challenged him with many questions which he always answered to my complete satisfaction. I was literally captivated by the perfect logic of the Principle. He told me: "God is our Heavenly Father; He is eternal, unchanging, and absolute. He wants all humankind, both men and women, to become like Him. When God created Adam and Eve, He had a precise purpose for His beloved children, which was to bless them in marriage after they reached spiritual maturity. These first ancestors would have multiplied to become a divine society. In such a world no evil, no hell, no sin, no suffering, no conflict, and no murder would have existed. Churches, religions, philosophies, theologies, and dogmas would not have been necessary." My teacher repeatedly drew the same diagrams in his book, showing me clearly the stages of spiritual growth that our first ancestors should have passed through victoriously.

"Man is destined to reach perfection!" My newfound spiritual guide said this over and over again. Was my intense desire for purity and unity with God about to be satisfied by His new message? That was my sincere hope, as I listened to this truth I felt I knew already. Perhaps God's truth had rested on the bottom of my subconscious all along, awaiting the day of liberation.

A special emotion overcame me, a harmonious mixture of inner peace and gratitude for this enlightening revelation, a free gift that could only have come from heaven. There was a deep, peaceful feeling in my soul that did not leave me. When we had to part that evening, we were no longer teacher and pupil, but two new brothers united in God.

Power over Satan

On the following evening, it took Reiner only a few minutes to tell me about the tragedy of the fall. He told me that Adam and Eve didn't reach the state of individual perfection but formed an illicit union without the permission and blessing of God. This brought about the multiplication of children of sin generation after generation, and the fallen history of the kingdom of hell on earth, with Satan as its ruler. Everything finally made sense to me! I realized that Satan was responsible, along with our first ancestors, for that wrong relationship that cut us off from God. Satan could accuse God and humanity without punishment as long as his crime was not discovered. Therefore, the knowledge of Satan's crime had to be a very powerful spiritual weapon. Reiner said that the Principle could give us the power to accuse Satan of his terrible crime, which has caused God and humanity the greatest suffering.

This understanding liberated a force within me that I knew would help me control "attacks" of evil much better. But by then Reiner had already introduced another topic: the mission of Jesus. One sentence caught my mind: "The cross was not the will of God." The winds of Pente-cost started to blow in my numb soul. Something powerful had awakened me. I could hardly hear the voice of Reiner: "It was blindness and ignorance that killed Jesus Christ. Paul's testimony confirms this: 'None of the rulers of the age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory'."

I couldn't control my tears. Everything suddenly became clear. Our Heavenly Father had sent us His son Jesus in the position of the Second Adam, hoping to recreate His original dream here on earth—a perfect family, perfect children, and a perfect Kingdom centering on the love of God. My tears intensified when I realized that millions of men and women trapped by secular and false doctrines had remained orphans, unaware of the wonderful but broken heart of their Father. Actually, these were not my own tears but those of my Heavenly Father, who suffered incredibly, having been separated from His beloved children for such a long time without having had the chance to embrace them even once. They were also tears shed for the Father and His child, for this day of reunion.

I found this truth to be so obvious and so simple! How had it been possible that the belief that Jesus came to die on the cross had become the very foundation of Christianity? What great suffering it must have been for God and His Son to be misunderstood by Their own children for so long!

My prayer that evening was moving in its simplicity and sincerity: "Heavenly Father, Your heart is so big, overflowing with love for all of Your children. How could I have lived during all those years at the seminary in total ignorance of the reason for humankind's deep suffering? This evening, please receive the love of Your returning child."

A true revelation of God

This first experience with the personal love of God opened up to me the royal path leading to His heart. God was my father, a true father, invisible of course, yet very real, caring tenderly each moment for the small details of my internal and external life. Since He was my father, He ardently wished to reveal to me His main desire to share His parental love with all His children in joy and freedom. I understood very quickly that the Principle was neither an abstract philosophical system nor another theology, but a true revelation of the living God.

When I saw Reiner for the third time, he invited me to dinner. I was overjoyed because I felt that God and Jesus would also be with us. After we had finished our simple meal, I waited impatiently for Reiner to share other secrets of God's heart. "Henri," he began, "I was very happy yesterday to see that you realized how much God has suffered and is still suffering due to the separation from His children. This time I would like to go over the history of salvation, to help you to understand the providential meaning of the time in which we are living."

Reiner made me feel again the excitement and incredible hope of Heavenly Father in the Garden of Eden. Through his talk, I discovered even more deeply the great despair of God after the fall of man. "Heavenly Father lost His children, whom He loved above all things," Reiner said. "When God lost Adam and Eve, He lost His ideal, His joy, His Kingdom, His creation. His heart was completely broken and inconsolable. There was no one with whom He could share such suffering."

Reiner stopped when he saw that I was deep in thought. Actually, I was beginning to understand the hidden meaning of the Bible. The Old Testament and the New Testament were actually the records of the long history of the blood, sweat, and tears of our Heavenly Father, searching for His lost children. When Reiner noticed that my internal meditation had finished, he said, "Jesus could not establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and God's heart was pierced once again. The resurrection of Jesus represented an alternative, chosen by God to open the way to spiritual salvation. Yet the body of humankind had to stay nailed to the cross and continue to suffer. Christians find meaning in actively preparing for the return of Christ, who is to bring the full salvation of both the body and spirit."