

Golden Age Newsletter - September 2024

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
September 8, 2024



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Unification through English Lessons, Forming a New Habit and a Personal Testimony regarding the Matching and 3 Days Ceremony - read this month's shared articles!

This Month's Message

The True Work Of Unification

by Michael Downey



All Photos credit: Michael Downey

I recently learned that there are around 160 refugees from North Korea living in my hometown, Hanam City. Once refugees are able to reach South Korea, they go through a process of resettlement. They spend their first three months with the National Police Agency where they tell their stories and are vetted as genuine refugees. Next, they go to Hana Foundation, a government agency for education to help them adjust to their new environment. This takes about four months.

After they graduate from the Hana Foundation, they are released into South Korean society but, as you can imagine, they still need lots of support. They are given a small stipend for a couple of years and are assigned an apartment to live in. In the past I have been aware that many were settled in the area between southwest Seoul and Suwon. I assumed that this was due to the availability of low cost housing.

In the meantime, the city of Hanam, an eastern suburb of Seoul, has gone through a housing boom in the newly developed district known as Misa. Many thousands of housing units have been constructed and a percentage of them are designated for low-income occupancy. Thus, it is no surprise that Hana Foundation began placing North Korean refugees there two years ago.

The progressive, proactive Mayor of Hanam, Kim Sang Ho, decided that it would be appropriate for the city to do something to support the refugees. He initiated the Hanam City North Korean Refugee Commission and asked me to join.

On October 25, 2019, Mayor Kim convened the first meeting. Various local organizations sent representatives including the local refugee group, Social Welfare department, the Lifelong Learning Center, the Police Department, the Hanam Global Center, and others. They each gave proposals of what they could do to support the refugees.

Here is the talk that I gave.

Hello everyone. You may be surprised to see my foreign face at this table but I do have more than three years' of experience working with North Korean refugees and I would like to share with you.

As a TNKR (Teach North Korean Refugees) volunteer English teacher and speech coach, I have come to know more than 20 refugees. TNKR is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded six years ago by an American, Casey Lartigue, and a South Korean, Lee Eunkoo. They specialize in matching volunteer English teachers with North Korean refugees. The matched pairs meet, one on one, for a minimum of three months to study English. In addition, TNKR also has organized 10 English Language Speech contests for refugees. I have coached and mentored four ladies in preparing them to deliver their speeches.





More than 70% of the refugees who reach South Korea are women. Due to their vulnerability, they often suffer abuse during their sojourn through China and other countries. Since they are classified as economic migrants and not refugees by China, they have no legal protection and are often sold into the skin trade or as second wives to Chinese men. In order to survive, they have to do things that may scar them for life.

Those who are sold to Chinese men become trapped not only by violence and threats of violence but also when they conceive children that anchor them to some pretty dark circumstances. Some have to leave these children behind in bad situations in order to flee to South Korea. There are a whole lot of guilty feelings, regrets, and self-recriminations there. In most cases, they can't or don't want to reveal such things.

I've heard reports that refugees experience significant discrimination in South Korean society. Mr. Ken Eom, a TNKR student, was warned after his Hana Foundation education to be careful about his northern accent and what he revealed about himself. He tells the story about the time he applied for a job at a gas station. Because of his accent, he was asked,

Where are you from, China?

I'm from North Korea, he sheepishly replied.

We'll get back to you, he was told.

Ten years later, with a master's degree in media from Korea University, he is still waiting for that call, he says with a big grin.

He didn't finally overcome his shame and embarrassment over where he was born until he went to Canada to study English. There were students from many countries, including South Korea, in his ESL class when he reluctantly revealed his birthplace. To his surprise, everyone including the teacher were excited to know someone from such an exotic place. He became a star and learned the value of self-acceptance.

I often ask NK people when I meet them:

Are you North Korean, South Korean, or Korean?

Usually, they are taken off-guard by this question and have to think about it before

answering.

In order to make one nation again, there are several key ingredients – land, sovereignty, and most importantly, people. After 70 years of separation, the Korean people have become strangers. The real work of making one united country is to bridge this gulf and become one people again.

As for me, I see a great opportunity to begin that work right here in Hanam. The people born in the north who are our neighbors now are our greatest asset in that work. By reaching out to them, welcoming them, and making real human relationships with them, we will be doing the essential work of the Unification Commission to best serve our new neighbors? Educational, social welfare, and recreational programs can all be used to facilitate social networks between people. I would like to see small groups form where South Koreans can get together with our new neighbors for a cup of coffee and a piece of cake. Through genuine connections between people, many barriers can be erased. We can learn a lot by listening to folks.

These words are from Yuna Jung's speech at the 10th TNKR English Speech Contest:

We need to be proactive and approach them (South Korean people) first. We need to give them opportunities to meet North Koreans and adjust their thinking. Playing soccer together, singing together, and talking together are natural ways to come to understand each other. We need to change their impression.

What do you think would happen if unification suddenly occurred? Our new, united Korean peninsula would become a very exciting country for generations to come. And we, born in the north and living in the south, can be the bridge.

Through authentic personal relationships we can overcome the problems of preconceptions, ideological differences, and social economic issues. I can't help feeling that this is the work we have been born to do.



Dawning of a New Age

New Habit

by Jeanne Carroll



Photo credit: Jeanne Carroll

It's Labor Day weekend. I'm on the train going to Long Island to see James Taylor perform at Jones Beach with my sister. The trains are free, a gift from the MTA to repent for a long hot summer of interrupted and irregular service. Thank you. The hiatus from fares inspired more passengers than I expected to join me on my trip. Great.



Photo credit: Jeanne Carroll

Spending time among other humans never used to be an issue. But these days I find myself not wanting to share airspace. I hear music, personal conversations, TikTok snippets, angry motorists and political points, jabs actually. A plethora of auditory and visual prompts set my brain spinning. Each new tidbit must be dealt with. It lands in the common room of my consciousness. If I don't address it right away things pile up. Anxiety and stress begin to build. To take action, energy is required. Even if the language is different, my brain tries to decipher what is being discussed. Is it just me?

[To read the whole article, *please click here!*](#)

Testimonies

The Matching and Three Year Separation

by Larry Krishneck



Photo credit: Larry Krishneck

The first marriage Blessing that was held after I became a Unificationist, was in 1975. 1800 couples were Blessed in Korea. That made things more real for me because a lot of my seniors in faith participated. Prior to that I was in awe of “Blessed Couples” in an unrealistic kind of way.

Four years later, in 1979, I participated in the matching (engagement) of 705 (I think!) couples. The Venue was the Grand Ballroom of the New Yorker Hotel. I had six years of front line church activity under my belt and was no longer a novice. I was an MFT Commander in Indianapolis, Indiana. We had been preparing for our Mother’s Day flower campaign when we got the news of the Matching. It was painful to have to see so many flowers wasted, but what was ahead of us erased those thoughts very quickly.

[To read the whole article, *please click here!*](#)

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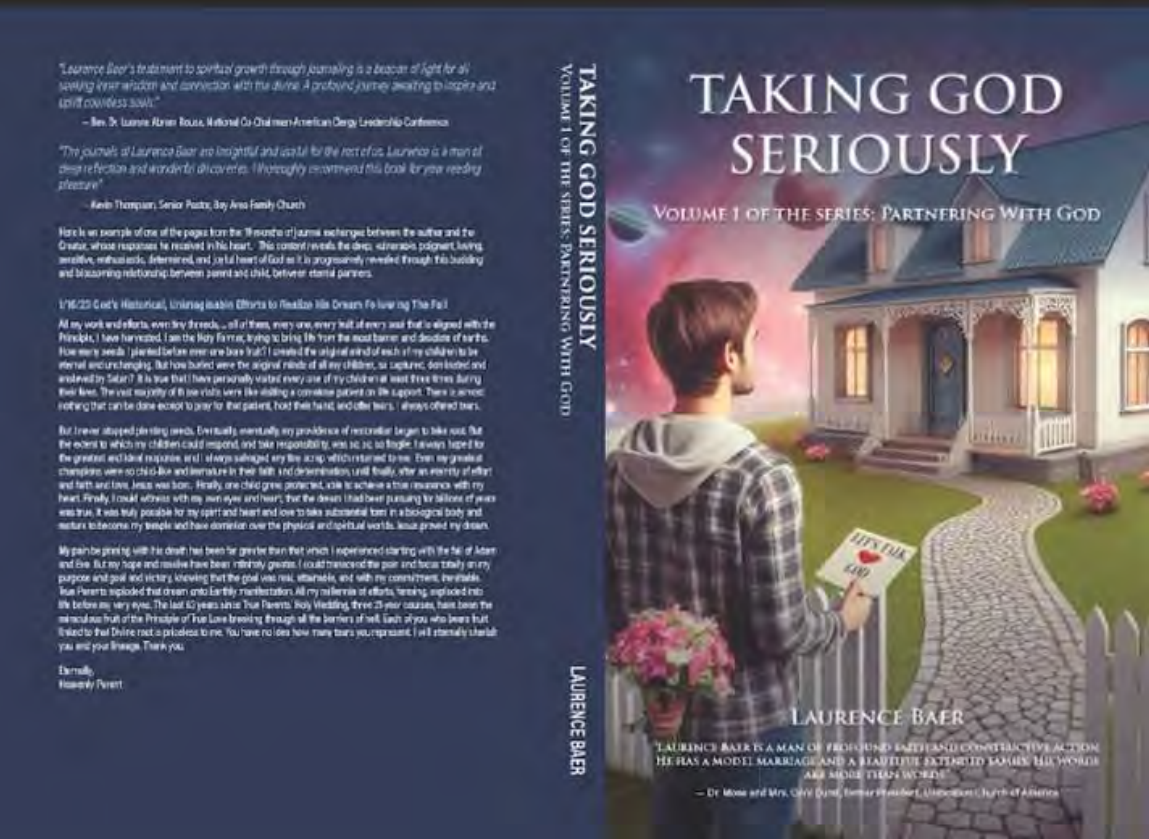


Photo credit: Laurence Baer

A Teaser from the Introduction of Taking God Seriously

by Laurence Baer

...In the late 1990s, our movement began a new type of Marriage Blessing – one which extended that sacrament to couples in the spiritual realm. My wife and I participated in this effort. As conditions were successfully set by Rev. and Mrs. Moon, this grace was able to expand to more and more generations of our ancestors.

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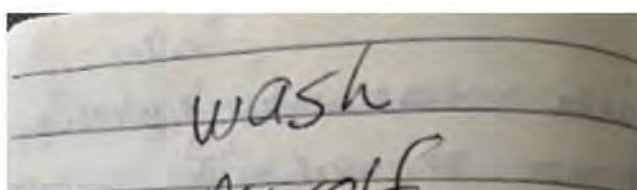


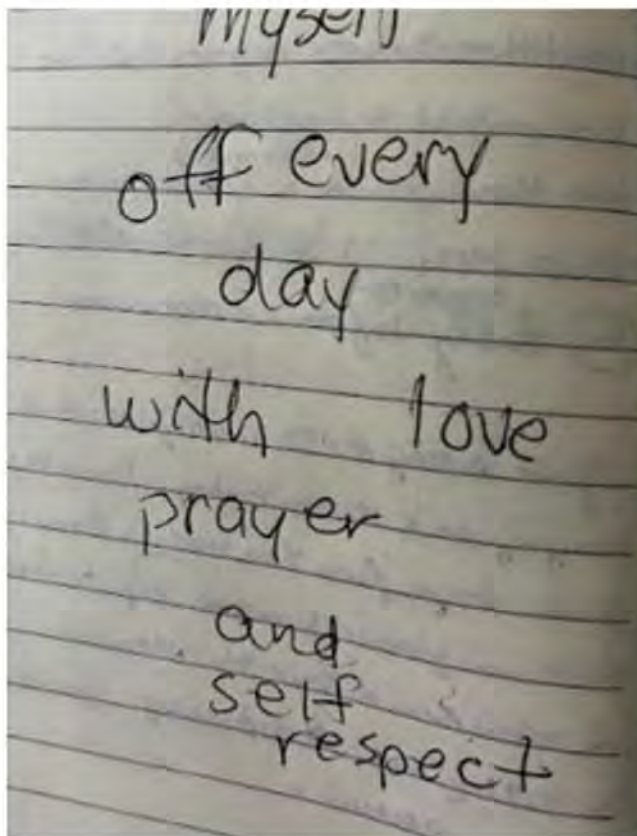
photo by Jeanne Carroll of James Taylor singing

Spending time among other humans never used to be an issue. But these days I find myself not wanting to share airspace. I hear music, personal conversations, TikTok snippets, angry motorists and political points, jabs actually. A plethora of auditory and visual prompts set my brain spinning. Each new tidbit must be dealt with. It lands in the common room of my consciousness. If I don't address it right away things pile up. Anxiety and stress begin to build. To take action, energy is required. Even if the language is different, my brain tries to decipher what is being discussed. Is it just me?

In order to stay sane something had to change. My go-to crew for group discussion are my heavenly homies, a group of friends, relatives, thinkers, doers, saints and sages that I discuss stuff with in my internal meeting room. When I have matters of great importance, I ask angels and My God to offer advice and support. For this 'How do I quiet my mind?', I asked God.

The answer came as I was driving at night, in torrential rain. I was just turning onto the highway when the inner insistent voice spoke, 'Wash myself off, every day, with love, prayer and self-respect.' I frantically groped for primitive tools, paper and pen and scribbled the words. Since I had just reintroduced prayer to my spiritual diet, I knew this was God because we have been remembering and discussing its value.





I'm not a hoarder. I do like to keep things. Moving from a whole house to a mini apt downstairs gave me lots of chances to get rid of stuff. Some junk, some memories, most are not missed. Seems I have to do that to my inner life as well. I have to go through piles, clean out the corners and wipe off the counters. So much uninvited and un-addressed stuff rolls in and sits in my mind. Too many YouTube videos, reels, text messages impact my happiness level. They breed anxiety, comparison, restlessness, second guessing.

In the past, I used a physical representation to remind me of an invisible change. I'd post a note or do something else to remind me. When I left the house with my reminder bracelet on and returned without it, I knew I had to put more effort into this proposed change. It required more of a mindful determination. I enlisted the aid of my heavenly homies. I asked for them to poke me when I needed to be reminded to wash myself with love, prayer and self-respect. It works! Bubbles, breezes and whispered support have lifted me in a way I never could have imagined. Just this simple change has cleared out the piles of crap in my mind. I am able to sense the simplicity of living with intention, with God. Once again, I feel like I can do what God needs me to do. The inner clutter can be washed away with a breath, if I remember.

This life is such an adventure. I eventually learned how to use my new phone instead of chucking it across the room in exacerbation. Paying bills without using a check is natural now. These are all new skills I developed due to changes in technology. We all change to accommodate physical demands. I have to remind myself to caress my growing inner self, to put into place a new habit that will support growth and change. I find that making inner peace a priority, encourages self-love. The more I stir love into my life the more positive and life-giving energy courses through my day. Then I notice things slowly synchronize to a happy creative buzz of life. This is good for me because once again I feel like I am walking with my God. This is my happy place.





photo by Jeanne Carroll with friend

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The Matching and
Three Year Separation

To Glimpse the Sublime

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The Matching and Three Year Separation

by Larry Krishneck



The first marriage Blessing that was held after I became a Unificationist, was in 1975. 1800 couples were Blessed in Korea. That made things more real for me because a lot of my seniors in faith participated. Prior to that I was in awe of "Blessed Couples" in an unrealistic kind of way.

Four years later, in 1979, I participated in the matching (engagement) of 705 (I think!) couples. The Venue was the Grand Ballroom of the New Yorker Hotel. I had six years of front line church activity under my belt and was no longer a novice. I was an MFT Commander in Indianapolis, Indiana. We had been preparing for our Mother's Day flower campaign when we got the news of the Matching. It was painful to have to see so many flowers wasted, but what was ahead of us erased those thoughts very quickly.

I believe the matching took 2 days to complete and it was amazing! Watching True Father work and then seeing the reactions of people as he grabbed them, pulled them, pointed to them, looked them over and then slammed them together, was an unparalleled spectacle.

The room was arranged categorically. I couldn't tell you how, all I know is that I was farther back than I wanted to be. I believe Father started with matching interracial couples. He asked who wanted to be Blessed with black brothers or sisters. Then he carefully questioned the volunteers prior to granting the request. Early on, he began matching Seminary students to Japanese. I began to get antsy at this stage because I had a very strong compulsion to be Blessed to a Japanese woman. I felt, from my experience, that I would be best complemented by a Japanese person. So, in a very uncharacteristic way, I left my assigned position and began to work my way through the crowd of male bodies to the front where Father was at work. I need not have made the effort because at that point the MFT Leaders were the next group called up.

It wasn't long until my turn came. Father was being assisted by Dr. Bo Hi Pak and, because Mr. Kamiyama was our Central Figure, he was up there to answer questions and provide support. Early on, I was called up. Father looked me over, then began to scan the several rows of ladies in front of him. He gestured for one young woman to stand, as she was rising up, someone (a voice) said "Oh, she's not Japanese.." and she was asked to sit down. Try to put yourself in my position - I knew that lady and she's still around today - every time I see her face in a video or photo somewhere, that moment returns! Destiny shifted in a moment.

I had no time to ponder this, because Father looked directly below him, practically at his feet, and called on my future wife to stand. That was another shock, because I knew this lady too. She was the right hand "Team Mother" for Mr. Tate who was a high power, MFT commander with a very successful Region. I had seen her once before at a meeting but that was all I knew of her. In my mind, I had just been matched to "Mr. Tate's Team Mother!" - a scary proposition.

The Messiah had done his work and now it was time for us to decide if we would accept it. Following protocol, we went upstairs to the balcony to have our first chat. I don't remember what we talked about but Akemi recalls that I asked if her parents would be receptive to an American husband. She thought that was very wise of me; I didn't ask some "stupid question" such as, "Do you like me?" Her words!

But, it was a short talk along the lines of "Is it okay with you? It's okay with me". The final step was to go downstairs, bow to True Mother, noting our acceptance, and leave the room. As I started down, I was suddenly enveloped in this powerful feeling of gratitude. I felt like weeping and nearly lost my footing. My ancestors knew better than me how much this pairing meant and they were profoundly grateful.

This was the matching. I don't recall the actual time frame, but within the next couple of days, the "internal" part of the process was conducted which included drinking the Holy Wine. Once again, details about the meaning of this ceremony can be found at Tparents.org.

Refreshed, reassembled and somewhat rattled, we all returned to our mission areas to continue our work and to begin the three year period of separation and preparation for our

future Blessing in 1982. I know Akemi and I had very different perspectives at the start of our lives as a couple. Perhaps the only thing we shared was our faith in True Parents and our commitment to the Providence of Restoration. Other than that, we were strangers who knew that we had to figure each other out if our eternity together was going to be a good one!

Although my commitment was absolute, I was not entirely happy. As I said earlier, I had been matched to "Mr. Tate's Team Mother!" That meant she had to be a Heavenly soldier of the highest order and no one is better at filling that role than a Japanese person. I'm guessing here, but knowing my wife, she likely felt she knew all she needed to know about American boys through her experience thus far in the US. I could write a chapter on this matter alone - perhaps I will, but later.

I appreciate some romance in life. I'm not greedy; just a little here and there will do. For my 9 years of Church life, I had been remarkably pure in body and mind. Given my life previous to that, it's a bit of a miracle that I could be so transformed. I didn't open myself to give and take with the least bit of promiscuous thought or action. This matter is at the core of everything and I understood it well. So, now the door was open - though slightly, for legitimate "Platonic" engagement and I was anxious to share some heart with my precious treasure from True Parents. Sounds weird, and I can see your eyes rolling, but it's true.

Akemi, on the other hand, hasn't got a romantic bone in her body. You may suspect I'm exaggerating but you can ask her yourself. I'm sure she will confirm it. (I have some letters from those days that I will scan and add to this memoir at a later date. In legal terms, they would be "supporting documentation!")

God must have thought I needed some encouragement in order to realize her value so he provided me with a few very vivid dreams to make the point.

The setting of the first dream was an elegant dining room such as you would find in an old mansion. It was similar to the architecture of the original East Garden house. Several American guys were sitting around the table joking, laughing and having fun. I was sitting opposite the door. It opened and a woman entered and stood there. She was quite regal in demeanor and dress. She was very sophisticated and radiated a certain authority that all felt.

We immediately stopped what we were doing and collectively assumed a kind of reverent attitude with our eyes cast down. I glanced up to look at her and was shocked to realize it was Akemi! Then I woke up. That gave me something to think about.

I dreamt again, not long after this first one. The evening before I had been preparing some new Holy Salt. It's used to symbolically purify material things before we use them and there's a particular procedure used to multiply it. This was my first experience and, although I had a document guiding me through the process, I had some doubt as to how "Holy" the salt I multiplied would be.

I followed the guidelines and soon had a good amount of new Holy Salt.

That night, I dreamt of True Father - Rev. Moon. Again, the dream was vivid. He was sitting

cross legged in the middle of my bed - the very place I had spread out a plastic sheet and made the salt earlier that day. I was kneeling on the floor by the bed, just as I was when I was working with the salt.

At the foot of the bed there were several people lined up. Father called them up one by one. They would share some testimony or offer some praise of Akemi, step aside and the next person would come up and do the same. I can still see that scene, just as I can clearly visualize the first dream.



That experience gave me even more to ponder.

The third dream was different. Akemi and I were at the foot of a steep, rocky hill. There were two vehicles like ATV's there. Akemi immediately jumped on one and began to ascend the hill, tires spinning and rocks flying. I was having trouble understanding how to drive the thing so I started dragging it up after me while being pelted by rocks from Akemi's vehicle and feeling very downhearted because she was so adept and I didn't have a clue what to do.

I eventually reached the summit where Akemi was sitting on one rock, and True Mother was sitting on another. I sat down next to Mother with my head hanging down, feeling low. She leaned over, kissed me on the neck and said: "don't worry, you'll be my son someday." Still working on that.

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A Forward of Taking God Seriously, A New Book

by Dr. Achille Acolatse, Senior Pastor

Family Federation For World Peace and Unification, SR2, USA

When Laurence approached me and asked me to write the Forward for this book, my immediate response was, "Sure, I'll do anything for you." It was spontaneous and heartfelt, based on my relationship with Laurence. I am a religious leader. I serve as the Senior Pastor for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification of America's Southeast Region. Having taken the time to immerse myself in the writing of this Forward, which, for me is a great honor, I have come to recognize that it is no simple task. "Taking God Seriously" is a groundbreaking and, I believe, historic work – a profound and deeply moving extended dialogue between our Heavenly Parent and an individual. Each entry has two sides. First Laurence writes a message from his heart to God. And then, God responds. Based on this Forward, it is my sincere hope and wish that you will be able to give your sincere consideration and attention to Laurence's message and that it will inspire you to do the same.

Laurence, in his Introduction, shares his reasons for launching this dialogue, which took seven years from when the idea was first set before him, until he united with that idea and wrote his first entry on July 13, 2022. He was seeking to deepen his personal relationship and communication with God, and through this, to grow spiritually. Our Movement's Founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, have both shared deeply about God from their own personal and intimate communications with Him. And based on those communications, Rev. Moon wrote the Divine Principle and numerous related texts that explain deeply and penetratingly about God's nature and the history of God's providence. Also, in many of Rev. Moon's speeches, he shares intimately about God's heart and hopes and dreams, such as in his wonderful book *Twelve Talks*, published in 1973.

I know Laurence to be a man of highest integrity, deep faith, and a very broad, inquisitive, and penetrating intellect. I first got to know Laurence in 2019, when I was serving as the Senior Pastor for our Washington, DC church. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon had announced that each couple in our movement should endeavor to share the Marriage Blessing with 420 additional couples

in our movement should endeavor to share the Marriage Blessing with 450 additional couples, expanding the scope of the grace that could be brought to the world.

Laurence's response was unique. Based on the work he had initiated 21 years earlier, Laurence returned to BWI Airport, and established a Marriage Blessing table there, quickly completing his goal and helping many other couples to fulfill theirs. But he didn't stop there. Realizing that just offering the Blessing was only the start, Laurence organized a monthly educational program at the Washington Times Building, which he funded himself. Laurence and his wife Muriel were among the very first Cheon Bo Victor couples in America.

Only later did I come to learn more about Laurence's background and history within our movement.

He joined 50 years ago at the age of 21 in Oakland, California, and spent much of his career in the movement working very closely with Dr. and Mrs. Durst on special missions of one kind or another. He did not have a high public profile. For seven years he developed and managed businesses for the Oakland Church, launching building service companies in Los Angeles, Houston, and New York. Many who worked under him went on to take significant responsibilities in the Movement.

Laurence worked for two years on President Durst's senior staff, and then in 1983, he was assigned by Dr. Durst to organize a global conference in Geneva, Switzerland under the chairmanship of Hon. Robert B. Anderson, President Eisenhower's former Treasury Secretary and Eisenhower's first choice to run for President in 1960, rather than Nixon. The weeklong conference included 70 top global political and financial leaders and concluded with a decision to launch the Global Economic Action Institute under the leadership of Dr. Durst and Secretary Anderson. Laurence was selected as the sole staff member working directly with Robert Anderson to create and develop that organization, where he served for 10 years as Executive Assistant to the three Chairmen.

In 1997, Laurence was serving as the Laurel, Maryland Community leader when the providence authorizing members to share the Marriage Blessing first began. At that time, following a deep prayer, he was inspired to meet with the Manager of BWI Airport who assigned to him the only table in the airport designated for outside organizations. Laurence trained and assisted 40 families to fulfill their Blessing goals. Among those families were the Salonens and the Leones. Shortly after that, Neil Salonen hired Laurence to serve as his personal Executive Assistant for Blessing 97 at RFK Stadium and continuing on for 4 years.

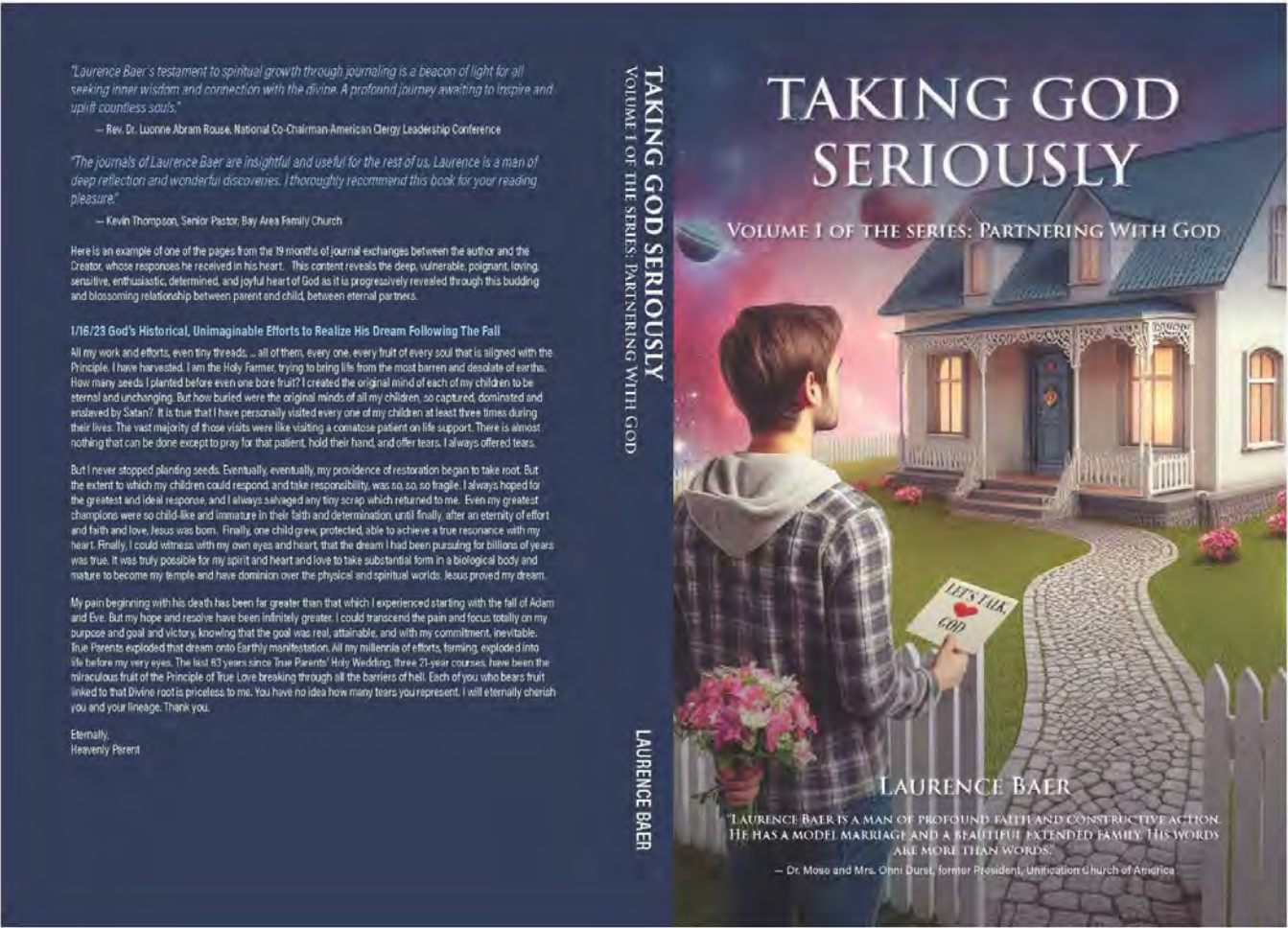
Also, during that time, the conditions were set for our members to begin Ancestral Liberations and Blessings centering on the activities of our training center in Cheongpyeong, South Korea. Laurence and Muriel took seriously Rev. Moon's guidance that we must educate and direct our ancestors in the spiritual world following their Blessing.

In late 2020, Dr. Chung Sik Yong was appointed as the Family Federation Continental Leader for North America, and almost immediately began a daily national Zoom call for prayer and study, which he dubbed "Morning Devotion". In addition to doing his extended prayers every morning, Laurence also set a condition to faithfully attend Morning Devotion every day from its

beginnings in 2020 until 2027 to support Dr. Yong. He pledged to invest his utmost each morning. He regularly shared his inspirations in the chat and also began offering his music videos. Those became very popular and, for the first time, many in our Movement got to know Laurence.

Laurence is a dedicated man for God’s Providence. He has a sincere heart to comfort God’s heart by enthusiastically sharing his knowledge of the Divine Principle with the world. Laurence is spiritual and has spent lot of time meditating and seeking insights from God. I encourage you to read this book to learn more about him and his relationship with God.

May God bless and guide each of you, your families, and your endeavors.



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A Three Generational House

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A TEASER FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF TAKING GOD SERIOUSLY

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