

True Parents' Life

Michael Downey

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"Looking back, my life has indeed been like a dream. At the youthful age of sixteen, with nothing but the buoyant spirit and aspirations of youth, I was called by Heaven and began to live for the will of God. This left no room in my heart for any worldly ambitions I may have cherished. It has never been an easy path, but I have followed it for more than eighty years, looking nowhere but straight ahead. This was the life I was destined to lead, with no choice but to shake off the embrace of my beloved parents, brothers and sisters who clung to me, wanting me to stay with them. They endured great self-sacrifice and walked a thorny path of sorrow and suffering for my sake." – *Moon Sun Myung*



photo credit: Michael Downey

I also heard the call and shook off the embrace of my parents, brothers and sisters, the society and nation. I joined the Unification Church when I was 21 years old. In those days joining meant all in as a full-time missionary. I dropped out of Ohio University and moved into the center. The opposition in America at that time was mostly the far Left and Christians. With the help of the mainstream media, the hate for the Unification Church, Moon, Sun Myung, brainwashing, and the word *cult* turned the whole nation vehemently against us. The whole nation included my parents and brothers and sisters, who all had some hope for me. They hoped that I would become somebody and not a despised cultist. They must have suffered a lot. My grandmother blamed the Marine Corps for not taking care of me when I got out. For me, I had a righteous calling and all the negativity was simply wrong. But my family suffered when I turned away from them.

In 1992 I was in New York, building fiberglass boats. My parents were in North Carolina, close enough for a Christmas visit. I made all the arrangements including money from the company for bus fare. At the last moment, due to a rash of kidnappings by parents, Moon, Sun Myung ordered that no one should go home for Christmas. Mr. Kamiyama enforced it literally. I had to call and tell my parents I could not come. We cried on the phone. This was a big break.

I continued following my calling but I knew the disappointment was huge. Of course, they couldn't be proud of me. There was nothing I could do and communication became spotty. Many years later, I followed Rev. Moon's direction and returned to my home town. There was a lot of hope that I could repair the damage done but it was not to be. They welcomed me home but the gulf was still huge. We couldn't talk about anything significant. I was 40 years old with no education and no job. Selling flowers on a street corner was not enhancing my reputation in my family's eyes. I struggled along until my father passed away. Then I returned to my calling. I worked for a church-owned company in Seattle and became the local pastor and state leader.

Finally, I received another call. In the Old Testament, Elijah was taught that God was not to be found in the thunder, lightning, or fire but in the still small voice. My calling came in a still small voice to come to Korea. I made the announcement, packed my stuff, said goodbye to my family and left for Korea. My wife asked how long I would be gone and off the top of my head I told her 10 years. She thought I was joking and laughed. I was gone for twenty-one years. After three years my wife followed me but my son stayed in America. By clinging to me, my wife saved our marriage. As I look back now, I see that my move could be interpreted as neglect or even abandonment. It had to be difficult for him. I know high school, where it is so important to fit in. It had to be tough to have a father who was the pastor of a despised cult. I was sure I had my calling but I still feel the consequences of my actions. Today I am living with those consequences. For many years I didn't take care of my body, didn't eat right, or exercise. I'm living with those consequences too. As hard as I work now, it's uphill. When I look back, I'm sure I've led a life of meaning and value.