

Love and Marriage in the Unification Church

Hillie Edwards

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"Love and Marriage" is a topic that's really close to every one of you. Whether we're parents, children, husbands or wives, we're all part of a family somehow, somewhere, and I think it's in family life that we all hope to experience the deepest joys in life. A career is very stimulating; hobbies are also exciting. But there's nothing that can replace the relationship between parent and child, husband and wife, mother and father.

Reverend Moon said in 1974 something that struck me very much, especially after my husband and I became parents. He said there are three things most precious in your life: your parents, your own mate, and your own children. That's really it, isn't it? No matter what you're doing, if things aren't right in those areas, if things aren't fulfilled, if things aren't working, if things aren't growing -- then we're not happy. We're not really, deeply fulfilled. These are the most intimate, tender areas of our life, these relationships.

Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet* said something very beautiful about finding God. "If you live life without finding God, you may laugh, but not all of your laughter; and you may cry, but not all of your tears." When I was growing up, that book meant a great deal to me. When I found that quote, I determined that from that time on I wanted to live a life where I could laugh all of my laughter and where I could cry all of my tears. I wanted to find the way to live life to the very hilt. I wanted to find a life that was a genuine article. I was searching for the heart of reality, and I didn't even know what it was.

Today, I think I can say that the heart of reality is God, and the heart of God is the family. This was the answer to my search. It just happened to be the Unification Church that led me to this conclusion, and I've never changed my mind in the last ten years of being in the Unification Church.

God has an ideal in His heart, and I believe His ideal is husband and wife, parent and child. To us, as to many religions, God is Father. God is the universal parent. He has the heart of both mother and father. From Him came mother and father, and from them came children. So God is the first parent. Some of you are second or third or 50 billionth parents, and your children will become 50 billionth and one parents. It goes on, but God is the oldest one. Reverend Moon said one time, "You have to respect elders, you have to respect older people because God is the oldest one. They, in a sense, know God better than you do because they understand what He's been through better than you do."

I've learned to understand that it's true. When I see my son at age two, I realize that the parent of a 15-year-old or the parent of a 20-year-old has it all over me in terms of knowing the joys and sorrows of parenthood. It took the birth of my son to teach me how far I have to go in life, how much I have to learn about love and about sorrow, about tears, about hope, about dreams. The deep care I have already for my two-year-old simply teaches me how much deeper I'm going to be as he continues to be my master, my teacher, my professor of life. I think this is a process God set up from the very beginning.

In the Unification Church we believe that God created a first man and a first woman. Through the truth -- whether it's through Einstein's searching or Gandhi's searching or Muhammad's searching -- God is trying to reveal Himself all the time, any way that He can. He wants to choose, ultimately, a final instrument through whom His love can come in the deepest way, His truth can come in the most refined and most fulfilled way.

As we journey through life looking for someone to show us the way to be happy, we come to the same conclusion: each individual must create a family and we must create, finally, a world family.

God's ideal through Adam and Eve was to actualize His dream: the dream of a husband and wife united, centered on God's love. Though we approximate it, we feel we've never reached this ideal the way God intended us to reach it. If there had been no fall of man, then the first man and woman who were capable of understanding God in a conscious way would have realized a divine love, a divine marriage. The children of that marriage would have known God -- not through any intellectual stimulation -- but, like radioactive fallout, through the parents' love. Can you imagine a world like that.... Where a marriage was so centered on God's love, the husband and wife were so united, that the entire world that followed this pattern -- all races and nations could really actualize the sense we've had for a long time that this is one planet and one family, one humanity.

As the poet said about the astronaut, "We're riders on the earth together." We have to work it out as a family of man, and we have to start on the individual level with ourselves: "What kind of husband can I be? What kind of wife can I be? How can I continue to grow through life with my mate? To grow through life with my children? To grow through life with my parents? To be committed on all levels -- to our parents, to each other, to our children?" This is our mission in life, in a way.

Your sons and daughters have been out fundraising, or witnessing or campaigning for Yankee Stadium. They may have done many things. But basically, we feel the Unification Church members are preparing most of all for marriage and family life. That is our goal: to be a good husband, a good wife; a good mother, a good father. To practice, we're trying to develop into good sons and daughters. I don't know how much you can testify that we've made it. Maybe you can't. But that's our goal, too. Though there have been misunderstandings between us and you, we're reaching out, now. According to the Principle we follow, we cannot know joy unless we have harmony with our parents, harmony with our mates, and harmony with our children. That is the basic essence of the teaching that we follow.

Someone approached me between sessions and said, "Your ideals are nice; but what about your reality? I didn't have letters this many times. I didn't have visits this many times." This was one person, especially, talking to me about the inconsistency between our ideals and our reality. There's no excuse, there's no justification, if there have been inconsistencies. But, ideals are ideals. They cannot be tarnished. You can't darken light -- light is light. And for me, our ideals are life; they are truth, they are real. And they are what we are reaching for. No matter how many times we've fallen down, we have to keep going, toward the light we see. And we have seen a great light in the Unification Church, as have many of you. We feel that we've seen a path that points definitely in the direction of God.

Because of this, we can't turn back. We are imperfect individuals, and may make many mistakes. But how can we turn around just because we make a mistake? How can we give up just because we do things that are wrong -- really wrong, sometimes -- as your children, or, if we as a church fail to be empathetic toward you as parents. Thinking only of our goals, we fail to see your heart sometimes. We can only learn from what you tell us, or from your tears, your anger, your anxiety. Whatever it is, we can learn from you and try to correct ourselves, because we still are pursuing our ideal and that life is not a genuine life unless it includes you. For us, God is not the God of the Unification Church. God is the God of all mankind. And if we've been narrow in pursuing our goals, if we've neglected you as our families, or neglected to help you understand why we live such ardent lives, such narrow lives in your eyes maybe, then we've been remiss and this is our time to reach out to you.

In this world today, look around you and see the state of family life. I'd like you to pick up the paper, or the vital statistics department report of divorce rates in the country. Talk to young people on the campus, who are eager to tell you their moral values. You'll find that aside from decent religious young people, most young people today don't have a hope for marriage. Many have come to regard marriage as a hypocritical institution. They, like all of us, are looking for perfection. They look around at the marriages of their friends, of their parents or of their parents' friends and they don't see the perfect ideal. But they're really longing for it, because it's God's ideal.

If the fall of man hadn't taken place, we'd see a world bright with the love of marriages and really perfect families. The perfect family unit means that we know love -- with God and with each other, a love that won't quit, a commitment that won't stop. That for us is the kingdom of heaven on earth. We'll still have mountains to climb, but we want to climb them in the love of God and in a real commitment to each other.

Young people have looked at marriage hoping for this perfection, and they haven't seen that perfection is something you have to work for, and try for, and sweat for, and even shed blood for. They think perfection is something that should just be! So they give up and say, "Well, let's try something new." Very serious sociologists are describing some merits of group marriage or trial marriage. Noted sociologists like Margaret Mead and others are advocating things like this, so you know that this is a time

when traditional morality is being questioned, challenged and tested. Especially in recent times, you don't see good results. Almost 40 percent of marriages end in divorce. In California, the divorce rate exceeds the marriage rate. We're in trouble as families, we're in real trouble. I feel it's because we don't have a spiritual and moral direction. We don't find the reality of God in our marriages.

In the Unification Church, we're trying to take some rather drastic measures to change the direction that young people, especially, are taking in relation to marriage, morality, and the family unit in general. If your marriages are happy, growing ones, that's great. But it's no good if we have happy marriages, if we can't help the whole state of marriage. Suppose everyone in this room could rise up in unison and say, "My marriage is OK! My marriage is growing! My marriage is dynamic." But what about the statistics? What about the attitude of many youth today? How can we take some responsibility? Even though we're OK, if the family unit continues to disintegrate in society at large, what's going to happen to America? What's going to happen to the world? There's a serious problem here. We're trying, in the Unification Church, to cope with it, especially among youth.



A panel composed of, left to right, Dr. Moses Durst, Mrs. Nora Spurgin, Dr. William Bergman, Mrs. Hillie Edwards, and Mrs. Lola Sayre (a parent) answered questions. Mike Warder, right, was moderator.

Some of the drastic measures we've taken involve some unusual customs we have in relation to love and marriage. First, when we come into the Unification Church, we don't flirt or date anymore. When I first joined the Church, I was really a person reaching out for love. But in this search, I couldn't find direction. When I came to the Church, one of the first things I realized -- nobody told me! -- One of the first things I realized was, "Gee, I think things are a little different here than what I've been accustomed to." In my search for true love -- and I was searching for true love -- I had about three steady boyfriends at three different colleges. "This is a different road! This is the path saints walk, and most of the saints didn't get married... Ouch!" I didn't like this idea.

When I heard the Divine Principle, when I studied the Bible in the light of the Divine Principle, when I prayed, I heard the call: "You're being asked to walk the historical path of the saints of history." And I began to realize that the saints in history were not great by their own nature. Moses couldn't speak, he was angry with God and resisted God. The saints of history were like you and like me! There's absolutely no difference in your qualifications -and their qualifications, basically. Anybody can be a saint, and that's a scary thing to realize. I thought, "Ohhh, no! Not me! Take away the call! I don't want it. Let me go back and sit on the hilltop and read a book. Let me do anything! But don't ask me to take this kind of responsibility -- to let God rule my life." That was scary to me.

But God was calling me, and I could hear the call. I spent a lot of time crying. If you go to a workshop you'll find that the Divine Principle is a deep and powerful system of thought. That couldn't make me change my life. You can find in many members here an attitude of service and love and joy. But even that fellowship couldn't make me change my life. It could make me come back again and again to visit. But, that's not what happened to me. God was saying to me, "It's me.... I'm on the phone and I'm calling you." That it happened through the Unification Church doesn't matter so much. I experienced God calling me.

I had been a Christian all my life, but in college I'd gone through the inevitable religious crisis and gotten into the Eastern religions, which are a beautiful argument against being responsible, especially Buddhism interpreted in a Western way. Just this moment counts -- nothing else -- and it's all beautiful. Just become one with the moment, one with reality, and one with the beauty of life. When I first heard the Divine Principle -- which called me back to a Christian commitment -- I argued with God. "Wait a minute! Buddhism is true. Let me stay in this! Then I can go to Europe with my friends this summer."

But I found an answer I didn't want. There was another person directing me, and that person was God. The answer that I received was, "Yes, Buddhism has truth. You do experience my energy, but I want to

communicate with you." There was nothing I could do. God had told me He was real, that He had just as much ability to communicate as I, His creature did, that He had just as much desire for relationship as I did. That hit me like a ton of bricks. Once I knew He was real, once I knew He was personal, how could I leave Him? Whether He was remote from me or close, I had to keep on, I had to work it out with Him. That was how I got hooked on the Divine Principle, seeing God as a Heavenly Father, someone who was making demands on me. That took me time to sort out. As long as God was a concept, I could leave him in a corner, but when He said, "Hey! I want to talk to you," I thought, "Oh, really?" I didn't believe it, I didn't buy it, but finally I accepted it and decided I would at least explore it until I reached a dead end. I'm still exploring. He's never let me go. He's been angry with me, He's given me love, He's given me hope, and sometimes I feel like He's left me alone with no babysitter. But I have to go on. This Father won't let go of me, and I can't seem to let go of Him.

So far, this may sound like a Dry religious life, just one person and the Invisible Being. One complaint that man has against God sometimes is, "If you exist, why can't I see you?" Well, we all like someone to touch, we like eyes to look into, a hand to hold. God understood this, and what do you think He did? That's where the ideal of a family comes from.

In the Unification Church, we're committed to God's ideal. We go a narrow way. For the first three years we live in the church, we don't date each other or anyone else, and we devote our lives to God. Then, if we're around 24, 25, or 26, we're fully eligible for marriage. At this point, everyone can make application to participate in one of our mass wedding ceremonies in the Unification Church.

You may or may not have heard that Reverend Moon selects our mates. In Europe, in the Orient, and even in America in our first founding days, we often got permission from our parents before we married. In countries and civilizations where marriages are arranged, there is almost virtually no divorce. In our country, where we go to the marketplace and pick out someone, we find in the end that we have a high rate of divorce. Unification Church has taken drastic steps to reverse the course that marriage is now on, and to hold up marriage as a high institution and one we honor with all our heart. Knowing that another person loves God with all his energy and all his creativity is a great reassurance to any of us who might find a mate in the Unification Church.

Arranged marriages are nothing new in the world, nothing new in history. It happened to most people in history, until this young country got on its feet and we were so influential that we started spreading the word about free selection. This caught on: it's modern, it's progressive. But what do we have: trial marriage, group marriage, promiscuity and free love. That's where we're at today. The end result of this freedom and of relating this way has brought us to the point where we're in trouble. There's nothing wrong with free selection itself, if God is at the center, or since strong ethical feeling of faithfulness, stability, and love. But if youth have no moral direction, no standard, no God and no parents with whom they have the kind of relationship so they can intervene, those marriages often don't work out.

In the Unification Church, what will our life-style of marriage be? How can we make happy and successful marriages? For us, God is the answer.

When I joined the Unification Church, I knew there would be no dating and I cried a lot because this was my way to find deep relationships. So, OK, forget that part. I'll study and I'll read and I'll witness and I'll teach and I'll work hard, and I'll love my brothers and sisters, and love God. To tell you the truth, it was a wonderful three years. Can you imagine that kind of life, the focus, the depth of relationship with God, and service to brothers and sisters based on the fact that they are real brothers and sisters, that's it. You're not looking for what's in it for me, you're looking for what can I do for you?

That's the best kind of training for marriage there is. Isn't it the tendency to want to know what's in it for me? How are you going to fulfill my needs? Now that we're married, you'll take over all the emotional chores of my mother and father, won't you? That's sort of what we ask of each other. And when I'm busy you can be my child and I'll tell you to get out of the way. In the Unification Church, we get trained to put in to marriage by our three years of service. We learn by serving people on the street, talking with them, taking abuse or rejection and trying to love them anyway. Fund raising is not eternal. When the Kingdom of Heaven is here, witnessing is not eternal. But marriage is eternal, love is eternal and that's where we're all heading.

My husband is full-time director of publications in Washington and I've been a regional advisor this past year, which means I travel for a good deal of the time. My son is in a church nursery. There are only 20 couples in America who've been married in the Church, who have children. Of these, only about five or six couples are travelling. The rest are at home, living as a family and taking care of their own children. But I want you to know clearly that this is not a long-range way of life for us. It's something that's temporary, something that costs a lot in emotions. We feel that at this time there is a crying need for us to go out. We know our children are in good hands, though we realize nothing can replace the love we have for them, and nothing can replace the love they have for us.

But I'd like to tell you a second, more internal answer of who takes care of the children or who takes care of our whole family life when my husband is in Washington and I'm in Chicago and my son is in a nursery in New York. God really takes care of our family life. I don't think it's God's desire for families to be apart. It is certainly Reverend Moon's desire and our desire, as well, for us to be together. There is no value in itself in being separated, except that at this critical time in history we feel we can reach out and save the country. It's only a few people who live this way, and it's not a permanent thing. In the meantime, we see each other at every opportunity.



And I want you to know, when you're away from your family, if you're on a trip or in the hospital, your love can really deepen, especially if God is watching. When I'm with my husband we have our ups and downs just like any married people, but when we're apart I can really see what is almost like the essence of my husband's or my son's heart or spirit. I can feel it in prayer, and I can sense it with my intuition and emotions. When we're together, my son can wear me out. When I'm with my husband, there can be friction, though I accept it as part of growth in marriage. Yet when we're apart it gives us time to see each other in perspective, to realize the value of being together. And I don't feel that in the long range, with God watching, that any harm will come. That's my faith.

The question has been asked whether total strangers ever marry each other in the Unification Church? I'd say no. Do you know what intuition is? Have you ever met someone and at the first handshake you felt an immediate attraction, not just romantic, but just attraction. You wanted to talk to this person more. You wanted to get to know this person more. Maybe you find out after some exploration that there were some limits, but at first you wanted to reach out to this person. Also, have you had the experience of meeting someone and right away you felt, this person and I don't have so much in common.

In one case I'll tell you about, the girl had been in the movement a long time and at different times she had thought of different people, but at the time of the wedding of 1,800 couples in Korea in 1975, she went thinking, "No, I don't know anyone, but I'm going on faith that God may lead me." You don't have to be married. Some did come back without marrying because they honestly couldn't find someone who they really felt was right for them to marry. In this girl's case, she was asked by Reverend Moon three times: Is there anyone that you would like to marry? And three times she said no, please suggest someone for me. He's a man whom we feel is a prophet of God, an instrument of God. God really is the one who sees our heart and knows our needs, but Reverend Moon we feel is an instrument of God's will. So she asked him to suggest someone. She intended to look straight at him while he did this, but her eye happened to hit on one man and the thought entered her head, "He might be all right." That is the man whom Reverend Moon suggested and whom she indeed decided to marry.