

## My beef with the heavenly calendar

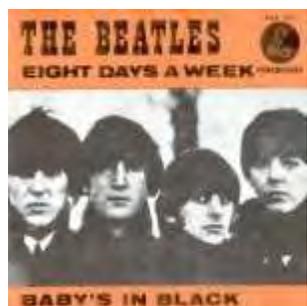
Matthew Huish  
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If you're a member of the Unificationist community, do you remember the True God's Day celebration of 2011? Give yourself a moment to think about it: ...

Recall anything yet? If you're like me, your memories of all the holy day celebrations may be blurred so that they all seem like the same celebration. However what I'd like you to recall is that something quite fascinating occurred in 2011: We celebrated True God's Day twice. The first celebration took place on 1st January 2011, the first day of the year as was the tradition ever since the first celebration in 1968. The second celebration, however, took place on 3rd February, which was the 1st day of the 1st month of a new lunar calendar which True Father had announced as the "Heavenly Calendar".

Although True Father had started using the Heavenly Calendar already in 2010, it wasn't until 2011 that the full impact of this lunar system came to affect our community. No longer did we follow anniversaries according to the Gregorian Calendar; now we followed a so called "Heavenly Calendar" which, for all intents and purposes, was identical to the Chinese lunar calendar.



I'd like to make it clear that I have no beef with the introduction of this new calendar. Since 2004 we were already accustomed to having our regular scheme of calculating time interrupted by messianic decree: The introduction of an 8-day week, with a Sabbath called 안시일 (*ahn shi il* or "day of settlement & attendance"), was announced at the [ssang hab ship seung il](#) (marking the beginning of the era after the coming of heaven) on 5th May 2004.

The New Adam, who is the new origin and genesis for all humanity, has the authority, I believe, to start history all over again, rejecting the systems of the old world of fallen history (the era before the coming of heaven) and creating new systems suitable for the new history of God's Heavenly Kingdom, 천일국 (*cheon il guk*). The creation of an 8-day week or the creation of a lunar calendar are acts recreation.



The start of a new calendar, and a new system of dating years, is not unique to our own faith community. Virtually all faith communities have a system of calculating the current year based on the beginning of their faith. The Jewish Hebrew calendar is in year 5773, the number of years since the Creation; the Muslim (Hijri) calendar is in the year 1434, the number of years since the prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) emigration from Mecca to Medina; the Sikh (Nanakshahi) calendar is in the year 544, the number of years since the birth of the 1st Sikh Guru, Nanak Dev; the Hindu calendar is in the

year 5122, the number of years that have elapsed since the Lord Krishna returned to his eternal abode; the Christian (Gregorian) calendar is in the year 2013, the number of years since the birth of Jesus Christ. In many ways, the nomenclature of the year denotes the most important beginning in one's religious historical narrative.



For Unificationists, we are in year 1 now. This is the first year after True Father's *seong hwa* (seong hwa or ascension) after which he began God's heavenly kingdom in the spiritual world. Leaving behind True Mother temporarily on the earth, True Father's ascension started an era centring on the feminine. Antonio Betancourt proposed an interesting interpretation that the shift from a solar (and masculine) calendar to a lunar (and feminine calendar) indicated a shift in the era emphasising the role of women. This transition is the most important historical event in our community's narrative, and we acknowledge its significance by relating all historical moments in relation to this one event.

I also want to note that in many historical records, the year was calculated according the length of the reign of the contemporary monarch. China described the year according to the length of the reign of the emperor. The books of Kings and Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible also describe the year with reference to the length of the reign of the current king. A contemporary analogy would be to recognise the end of Sir Alex Ferguson's management of Manchester United FC as the end of an era for the club, and for football more widely, and the beginning of a new era, the David Moyes era. As a club, they are now entering the 1st year of the reign of Moyes.

If we acknowledge that God's sovereignty began in earnest with the victorious completion of True Father's life, then the beginning of the era of God's reign started with True Father's ascension. We are now living in an extraordinary epoch in which God rules over both the spiritual and physical worlds through his appointed, anointed Lord and King, the True Parents of Heaven, Earth & Humankind (천지인참부모님, *cheon ji in cham bu mo nim*).

Allow me to repeat that I have no beef with the heavenly calendar itself. My beef lies with the way the date is expressed.



For example, today is Friday 17th May 2013 according to the familiar Gregorian calendar. According to the heavenly calendar, today is the 8th day of the 4th month of the 1st year. This could be written as 4.8 (the former number indicating the month, the latter the day) or, if using Chinese character, as 4月8. What I abhor is when this date is given the inaccurately designated the 8th of April, on the assumption that the 4th month must equate with the name April. Here is the problem: the names of the months of our Gregorian year are unique to the Gregorian system, and have their roots in Julian and earlier Roman calendars. Just as the month of Ramadan is unique to the Muslim calendar, or the month of Nisan to the Hebrew calendar, the names of the months are only relevant to the system they describe. It is erroneous, in my opinion, to force the appellation of the Gregorian months on the months of the new lunar calendar.

My rant is now over. As long as everyone now adheres to describing the heavenly calendar in the manner I proposed, either with a full stop in between two numbers or the insertion of the characters representing month & day, then I will be happy.