

The Providence to Engage Christianity – Part 5

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Kevin McCarthy teaching the Divine Principle at an ICC

The presence of the Holy Spirit was a constant reality in our Interdenominational Conferences for Clergy. Each manifestation of the spirit of God appearing in our midst could be seen as one more reminder for the ministers that these manifestations, if they were to be understood, would require something more than the limits of conventional doctrines could reveal. I am confident that the ministers could not avoid wondering how Rev. Moon could bring them so many spirit-filled encounters if he was not of God. Each one made our message that much more powerful and undeniable.

There were a number of encounters with the powerful spirit of God. One of those took place at a joint Sunday service at the headquarters church at Cheongpa-dong in Seoul. Keep in mind that when the majority of the clergy arrived in Korea, it is not likely that they were expecting to be overwhelmed with a profound and comprehensive bible-based truth. "Aren't these Moonies? Isn't this a cult? Why would God be so powerfully present in our midst? How could it be?" I do not think they were expecting to find themselves in the midst of a spiritual tidal wave rushing over them.

The church service began quietly, calmly. Our ICC group filled a large part of the church seating, but there was still plenty of room for our local Korean members to fill in. Everyone seemed happy to have the ministers in attendance. The service continued through to the sermon, for which interpretation was provided for our group. As the service moved toward its conclusion, the ICC staff gathered in the back to double check the after-service plan. Everything to this point was an entirely normal worship service.

Then it happened. She came to the podium to offer a closing prayer. I didn't know who she was; I'd never seen her before and I've never seen her since. She was an unassuming middle-aged Korean lady, and she began to pray in a manner I had never experienced before in my entire life. She started praying, her voice low and slow-paced at first. Then, it was as if she had gently pressed the gas pedal, popped the clutch and off we went on a spiritual journey none of us would soon forget.

I began to feel a spiritual sensation building up, surging, somewhat like the space shuttle when it launches. We were going up, straight up and fast! She started to omit sounds like a steam engine, sssssssssshhhhhh... I don't know what that indicated, but I started to notice that all around our area the ministers seemed to know exactly what it meant. I could hear them, one by one, going off just as popcorn starts to pop here and there. Then, before you know it, the popcorn is popping all over the place. I started to hear several ministers omitting little yelps and shouts of "Praise the Lord!" followed by "Yes, Lord" and "Yesshh Lord Jesus. . . Thank you, Jesusss." They were getting louder and louder. Now the ministers were standing up with their hands in the air. Some ministers were pointing at the prayer lady and shouting, "That's right... Go ahead on!" At the podium, the prayer lady started to rock back and forth, and then it was as if she throttled up the booster rockets to the maximum setting. I swear I felt the floor begin to shake and the windows start to bow outward. This house was rocking in the spirit, and it wasn't just those in the clergy, it was all our members too. These Korean Unification Church members could pray up a cyclone!

Suddenly, I saw a minister running down the center aisle flailing his arms and jerking his head front to back. Two lady ministers in the front started to dance a spirit jig. I saw another minister in some sort of gymnastic floor routine of hops and skips. Another was lying on the floor vibrating. Everybody -- American, Korean, Japanese, white, black, yellow and brown -- had their hands in the air, calling on the name of God, praising his almighty name. We had all broken earth's gravitational pull and were flying in a realm of spirit that was timeless.

I believe that all this had a profound effect on the ministers' perspective. We were no longer just a cult that had nothing to do with Christianity. We were the Holy Spirit Association, with the emphasis on Holy Spirit.

I am sure that by the end of that day, more than a few ministers remained awake in their beds and pondered, "How could it be? I experienced this rich and profound spirit, an unequivocal presence of God,

in a church that I was told was a cult. How? How could it be?' Another brick had fallen from the wall, another ray of light was shining through.



Some of the deep spiritual phenomena that Rev. McCarthy describes provide the background to this dinner banquet that True Father hosted for participants of the Interdenominational Conference for Clergy.

The airplane flight to Busan

Traveling in a nation not your own is always an adventure. Korea was no different in that regard for most of us. Whether we traveled by cab, van, bus, train or plane, the feeling that something unexpected was waiting around the corner was always with us. In nearly every case, something was.

That was certainly true on one excursion to southern South Korea. We were scheduled to take a morning flight to Busan, and then to journey from the airport to the hills surrounding the city where on the side of one of those hills were Father's first church and the holy ground at the Rock of Tears.

As we sat on the tarmac in line for take-off, a few of us noticed that several of the flight attendants had gathered by one of the side doors. They seemed to be engaged in a very serious discussion. The door handle of the main entrance side door seemed to be the subject of their discussion. One flight attendant would grab the handle and move it to the right. Each time he did so, I could distinctly hear a beep, beep, beep of some sort of indicator. He would then move the handle back to the left and the beep would stop. Several times one of them moved the handle to what I assumed was the locked position. Each time, the distinct beep-beep sounded. Even though I didn't understand more than a few words of Korean, I guessed they were discussing whether the door was properly locked or whether it was just a problem with the alarm.

As the plane lurched forward and lumbered down the runway, I began recollecting news articles about airline disasters. If a door were to blow, my memory was that at least three rows of people would be sucked out of the gaping hole in the fuselage. I was sitting in the second row nearest the door.

As the plane lifted from the tarmac, retracted its wheels and headed into the first layer of clouds, all appeared normal and calm. Calm still reigned as the flight attendants began dispersing to deal with their normal duties -- passing out magazines, preparing for the beverage run. The captain's soothing voice came over the intercom to welcome us aboard for our short hop to Busan. As we passed the ten-thousand-foot level, I started to relax and began to feel a little silly for my unwarranted bout of pre-flight anxiety.

That's when it happened: Beee uuu whoop whoop! -- Bee uuu whoop whoop! An alarm was triggered because of a problem with the door. It was not the mere beep-beep that I had heard on the ground. This was a siren proclaiming that an emergency had befallen us. Trust me, it was not a sound you want to hear at ten thousand feet.

The flight attendants sprang into action, running up and down the aisles. The Fasten Your Seat Belt sign came on and announcements were made about being calm. We all dug our nails into the armrests; especially those of us within three rows of the door.



An ICC participant receiving a warm welcome from a Korean member on his arrival in Seoul

Next, the captain's voice came over the intercom. He calmly explained the problem. The door was not engaged properly, and thus we could not ascend higher than ten thousand feet "for safety reasons." It would be low and slow for the duration of the flight to Busan. My eyes stayed peeled on the door.

Then, a remarkable scene began to unfold. We had approximately three hundred members of the clergy on this flight. Ministers of the cloth, as you know, generally have a very close relationship with the hereafter.

In such a situation, any minister worth his salt knows what to do -- it's time to have church. In fact, the alarm was like a church bell calling all the faithful to worship.

Sure enough, over the intercom came the familiar voice of one of our own ICC ministers. "I'd like to ask everyone to bow your heads as we offer a pray for our pilot and for a safe journey." He proceeded to express a memorable prayer to all the passengers, several times imploring the Holy Spirit to maintain us aloft and to enable us to settle back down to the earth as gently as a feather. I do recall hearing one minister in my row reassuring the Lord that, although we all longed to be with him someday, we would prefer that it not be today!

A chorus of "Amen" and "Thank you, Jesus" filled the passenger cabin as prayer, praise and song kept us aloft the entire way. We arrived safely at our destination, touching down "as soft as a feather" just as the minister had prayed. As all wheels touched the ground, a thunderous applause filled the cabin.

In a very mysterious way, a deeper bond had been achieved. We had suffered a common crisis and had come through it with prayer and faith. There could not have been a better prelude to our visit to the first church and the Rock of Tears. Later the ICC staff would joke about how to arrange for a similar emergency each time we journeyed to Busan!



Sunday service at the Headquarters Church with visiting ministers and Korean members could be occasions of deep spiritual revival.

The first church and Rock of Tears

For church members coming for the first time, the journey from the airport into the hills of Busan was filled with anticipation. For the ministers, however, the feelings could be mixed. There was a sentiment of resistance among many of them. They questioned why a journey to Busan was necessary. It seemed presumptuous to them that we would expect them to find significant the location of Rev. Moon's first church, a mud hut covered in cardboard that is long-since gone, and his mountainside prayer location, the Rock of Tears. I recall one minister snorting with disdain, "I don't ask other clergymen to visit the place where I pray; why should I visit Rev. Moon's prayer area?" That question would later be answered for him in a most profound way.

As we journeyed up the hill, the streets became narrower. The neighborhoods were filled with small, neat houses and shops pushed together and only occasionally separated by a narrow alleyway. It didn't seem possible to find room here for a museum, but there it was, nestled unassumingly in the midst of tiny houses and shops. In fact the only indication that we had arrived at our destination was a banner that had been strung across the narrow street, which read, Welcome Clergy.

We could tell by the astonished expressions and intense stares of the local Koreans that it wasn't every day that five large buses filled with foreign religious leaders appeared in their neighborhood. It started to feel as if we had descended in a flying saucer. As we were about to enter the church facility, I turned toward the street and observed a growing number of people darting out of their homes and shops and running up the street toward us. I thought to myself that these neighbors were going to have to adjust to this phenomenon, which was sure to occur with increasing frequency in the coming years.

After a brief presentation on the history of Rev. Moon's course in Busan, we toured the facility. Getting a first-hand glimpse of the suffering, struggling course of Father's early years provided a powerful context from which to observe his modern achievements. It was just one more example indicating the presence of God in the life and mission of Rev. Sun Myung Moon. How could a man come such a long way, overcoming such obstacles and not be of God? I believe this thought was in the minds of many of the ministers as we were directed out a side door and began our climb up the hillside to the Rock of Tears.

As we made our way up the mountain trail, scores of our local Busan Unification Church members lined the way. They were there to offer guidance and especially assistance, by pulling and pushing for some people that found mountain climbing too daunting a task.



Visiting ministers present flowers to True Father and Un-jin nim.

As we neared the top, I noticed up ahead that one lady minister had broken from the line and suddenly started to sprint to the top in full stride. As we drew nearer to the top, we could hear a woman's voice crying out in grand praise and exultation, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" She was standing on the side of the Rock of Tears, facing Busan Harbor below. Her hands were extended outward and her face was toward the sky. "Thank You God. Halleluyah, hal-le-lu-jah!" Everyone was watching her as we waited for the few stragglers to arrive. What was this woman experiencing?

She turned to face us and began to tell her story. In 1961, she had had a vision in which she was walking up a mountain when she came upon a simple mud hut. Inside the mud hut was "a Chinese man" wearing a

crown. He told her that she should go into the ministry and that one day she would meet him again and at that time he would give her an important new mission.

She sold told everyone, "I now know that the man I met was not Chinese; he was Rev. Sun Myung Moon and this is the mountainside I was climbing in my vision. I remember those mountains and the harbor below; it is exactly what I saw in my vision." The ministers that had previously felt it presumptuous of us to bring them to Rev. Moon's prayer ground perhaps found cause to rethink their initial assessment.

This trip to Busan became a main component of our ICC schedule. Each time, it seemed, some type of inexplicable, powerful phenomenon would occur. The presence of God hovering over that collection of rocks is indescribable. Many people testified that praying there reminded them of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land in Israel. They felt the powerful presence of Christ in our prayer and fellowship there.

One other memorable phenomenon that took place involved the skeptical clergyman who had made the flippant remark about inviting ministers to come to pray at his prayer ground. We noticed him toward the end of our prayer meeting. He was standing alone, off by himself, a few steps behind the main group, which had gathered at the rock. He looked disturbed and perplexed. He was sweating profusely. His eyes were unfocused and he seemed to be gazing into empty space. As we ended the prayer and began to make our way down, he remained frozen where he stood. At this point, we surmised that he was in the midst of a medical emergency.

A few of us made our way over to where he stood. A Korean staff member put his arm on the minister's shoulder and asked, "Reverend, are you okay?" He gave no response and continued staring blankly into the distance. Finally, after several attempts of calling his name, he slowly showed signs of partial cognition of his whereabouts. He looked disorientated and confused, as if he had awoken suddenly from a deep sleep. We had to find a way to get him down the mountain, because we knew no ambulance would be able to get to where we were.

A team of attendants assisted the minister down the mountain. Slowly, like a toddler learning how to take his first steps, he made his way down the mountain and back to the bus. A quiet murmuring could be heard as he boarded and made his way to his seat. He sat quietly, not having uttered even one word to explain what had happened to him at the Rock. When he finally did speak, three days later, what he would reveal challenged the Christian leaders to the core.



Through the ICCs, some ministers had an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with True Father.

Father speaks to the ICC

I cannot begin to describe the measure of excitement we all felt when we received news that Father would address the fourth Interdenominational Conference for Clergy. Just about every encounter up to that moment between those in our movement and Christian leaders and their devout followers had been

fraught. As I mentioned in my previous articles, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Marxists and Christians were the ones who most prominently and vehemently protested against our movement.

Of course, even before that was the sad history in Korea of our movement's effort to embrace the Christian community and to be understood by it. Central to that was Father's personal history, including the suffering that befell him because of the breakdown of relations with key figures in the providence. Those figures were meant to restore the foundation that was originally to have been established between Jesus and the providential people of his day.

Now we would be witnesses to this moment of reunion between Father and some of those who constituted the Christian foundation in America. Would the ministers be receptive? Would they be polite? Would they jump up in protest as many did in the Divine Principle lectures? These were the thoughts that raced through our minds. Most of all, we were concerned about whether we had done enough to prepare them to understand and embrace this historic moment.

We had taken the ministers on an unforgettable journey of highs and lows, joys and sorrows, anger and reconciliation, trepidations and new found bonds of trust. We had taken them out of their comfort zones to places and experiences they couldn't have dreamed of. One day we would be in Japan, the next day in Korea. One day we would be getting love bombed by ten thousand young Japanese, the next day staring across the Demilitarized Zone of a divided Korea and being warned repeatedly not to point or gesture toward the North.

Every day anything could happen, such as the time in Japan when our innocent Japanese staff thought it would be a good idea to bring the Christian ministers to a Shinto temple and have them do a ceremonial bow to the god Meiji and thereby break several (at least) of the Ten Commandments.

Challenges to understand each other, to reconcile cultures, paled in comparison to the incredible challenge the ministers faced to reconcile with the Divine Principle. It was as though we had walked into their theological home, sat down in their favorite chair, picked up their television remote control and just began changing channels.



Father speaks at the ICC dinner, with Dr. Bo-hi Pak interpreting.

Did God plan for man to fall? They say yes; we say no.

Is the fruit literal? They say yes; we say no.

Was Jacob in disobedience to God? They say yes; we say no.

Was Tamar a defiled woman? They say yes; we say no.

Was Israel meant to kill Jesus? They say yes; we say no.

Was John the Baptist a great saint? They say yes; we say no.

Was Jesus coming again in the clouds? They say yes; emphatically, we say no.

Yet, here we stood, together in the presence of a loving God, bonded in a way none thought possible. It just did not match expectations, given the extreme areas of theological disagreement. Indeed, how could it be?

Amidst that disparity, however, a seed of possibility was emerging: that what we had been sharing and what they had been experiencing could be true. Thus, it was with a humbled and reflective spirit that they found themselves at the Little Angels Performing Arts Center that evening, sitting in front of the man himself, Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

Father's speech title was How to Become One with the Almighty. I could see within Father such a special joy and excitement in this moment of sharing his heart with the ministers. He was beaming and pouring out his enormous heart toward them. Father spoke to them like a sincere friend, like a brother. The atmosphere was so high and the ministers seemed to feel close to Father and to start to like him very much.

Father's speech was about God's love and that God needed a "circuit of love" for the purpose of love to be fulfilled. It was Father at his best -- not just speaking about love but projecting the love of which he spoke.



Rev. Milton Reid at an ICC; he became a close friend of our movement

There were a couple of very significant moments in this speech. The first was when Father began to speak of Jesus. He suddenly paused and gazed at the ministers for a moment to make sure they would hear what he was preparing to say. "What I am about to say will probably affect you, and because of it I have been persecuted my entire life." He then began to explain very clearly and openly that Jesus came to take a bride on earth and to begin a family and lineage:

Suppose he had taken a bride and together they had created a new lineage of their own, a new bloodline of humanity. Do you think God would have been displeased by that? I don't think so. What if Jesus' descendants had multiplied like the stars in the heavens and the sands on the beach? Do you think God would have been displeased? In the sight of God, one true descendant of Jesus would be of far greater value than all the multitudes of people here on earth combined. God was delighted to see his true son Jesus. Didn't He also want to see His true grandchildren and His true great-grandchildren? Think about it.

Father spoke softly and very earnestly. He looked directly at the ministers in the front row the whole time. Never before had words such as these penetrated the heart of clergymen. Never had it been so clear to us who teach the Divine Principle that this was the essential message that would lead Christianity into the future and toward the fulfillment of its global responsibility. I hope all those who teach today and work with ministers will never forget the immutable truth spoken that day.

Another very significant moment was as Father was ending his speech. He suddenly paused and looked around the room with a faint smile on his face. "So then, who is Rev. Sun Myung Moon?" Father asked the question that he knew each minister was thinking. They all instinctively straightened up and leaned forward. Father continued to answer his own question, "Rev. Sun Myung Moon is..... nobody."

You could almost hear the air escaping from their lungs. Rev. Moon is nobody? Some started to look my way as if to say, Hey that's not what this guy said. Nobody? I have to admit, it was not what I was expecting from Father either. Father continued, "I don't know much, but one thing I do know is that every cell in my body, every drop of my blood, every drop of my sweat, and every ounce of my energy is exclaiming and crying out with joy over one thing -- I know God and His true love. I experience His love to my bone."

The room was completely still, silent. The ministers appeared dumbfounded. Perhaps they knew it was true. That is who he is. We didn't just hear it, we felt it. It made perfect sense. What else could Rev. Moon's motive be for all that he does and for all that he has gone through? Throughout their entire experience in Korea and Japan, they had been confronted with the disjunction between what rumor and theology was leading them to conclude about Father on the one hand, and evidence of the presence of God in Father's life and work on the other. Now, in a simple statement, Rev. Moon had made it all clear. Finally, they could see how it could be.

Father concluded his speech by thanking the ministers for their support during the time that he was in Danbury prison. He then summed up his position with the following:

In this seminar for the American clergy you may have listened to many lectures and testimonies. You can forget them all, but there is one thing you should not forget: Rev. Moon is trying to build a nation of true love so that the kingdom of heaven can be built in our society and in our world. Then your church will prosper, your nation will be blessed, and the world will become the kingdom of heaven on earth.



A minister testifies during the ICC, while Rev. No-hi Pak interprets

Sitting unnoticed in the back of the banquet hall was the minister whom we had not seen for three days, since our trip to Busan and the Rock of Tears. He had remained in his room the entire time, praying and fasting. He was not stricken by a medical emergency at all, as we had initially thought. He was, however, deeply stricken by a spiritual emergency of epic proportions.

After Father's speech, he came to our office to deliver a ten-page written testimony of the experience he'd had at the Rock of Tears. He said that at that time he had been struggling to accept the notion that Rev. Moon's prayer ground was significant. In the midst of this inner conflict, he told us, he decided to stand to the side, away from the Rock of Tears, not wanting to fully participate. That's when it happened.

He said he saw a light from heaven pour down upon the center of the rocks. Out of the light appeared Jesus. Jesus began to walk directly to where he was standing. In Jesus' hand, he could see a rolled scroll. Jesus held the scroll out to the minister and said, "This is the Master Plan of the Universe." As soon as Jesus had said those words, suddenly another figure appeared standing next to Jesus. It was Sun Myung Moon. The minister said he then watched as Jesus handed the scroll to Father. Father received the scroll from Jesus and then turned to the minister and held the scroll out to him, just as Jesus had done. Then Father said to him, "This is the Master Plan of the Universe."