

Challenges of Transference of Faith to the Next Generation:
Insights from the New England Puritans, the Mormon Missionary Program,
and their lessons for the Unification Movement.

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Spring 2022

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Masters of Arts in Religious Studies Thesis

Unification Theological Seminary

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Introduction

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

The Unification movement is currently in a delicate and critical time of transition. The charismatic founder, the Rev Sun Myung Moon, has transitioned to the spiritual world, leaving his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, to take on the leadership of this worldwide movement.

Historically, new religious movements and religions have struggled to pass on their faith from the first generation of visionary spirit-led disciples to the members of the next generation, who are either born into it or joined later on. This new generation tends to have very different perspectives, characters, and life experiences. The Unification Church is no exception. Many of those called the “first generation” joined in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s and are now getting older or have passed away. Many of their children are often estranged, or struggle to be engaged, while others are very involved, even taking on leadership roles.

This is not a new phenomenon, and multiple religious movements have wrestled with similar issues. For the sake of simplification, we will focus here on two historical examples, the first being the Puritans who settled in America. Having been severely persecuted in Europe and risking their lives to cross the Atlantic, one can say that their faith was tried and tested. However, their children had easier upbringings. Most of them did not have the experience of being touched by God's grace which would qualify them to be called “saints.” By the next generation, the Puritans were faced with a dilemma: maintain their membership standard and persist as a small

and exclusive community, or compromise to retain and attract more members. That concession became what is called the “halfway covenant.” They saw themselves as city upon a hill, a light for others, and chose to widen the gates. They understood that they were not only entrusted with preserving the seed, but also with multiplying it.

Next, we will look at the Latter-Day Saints, who from humble and challenging beginnings have grown to become one of the fastest growing and most well-established churches. There are multiple keys to their success, but here we will focus on their practice of training youth by sending them out as missionaries to the world. This has not always been a tradition of the Mormons; it is a relatively recent development. We will learn how in the last 50 years the LDS have established a conversion track like no other: an intentional and systematic approach to training their youth through missionary activities. Most Mormons will agree that the best outcome of their young missionary ventures is not the result of witnessing, but the profound transformation that takes place in the hearts of the missionaries.

Finally, we will look at the efforts of the Unification movement to retain and engage their youth. The history of this relatively new movement has also been turbulent. Throughout the Rev. Moon’s life and ministry, battles were constantly being fought and the movement was in a perpetual state of providential urgency. Reflecting on his life at a birthday address he spoke, “looking back, my life of seventy years has been an indescribably thorny path. It has been a path of constant struggle and adversity.”¹ In the midst of this turmoil, the second generation were not made a priority. Programs for youth have existed and young people were included and invested into, but it is only recently that a big emphasis is being made on raising a new generation of

¹ Moon, S. M, Seoul Korea, Feb 4th 1990, <http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/sunmyungmoon90/SunMyungMoon-900204.htm>

leaders. Specifically, we will look at Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's initiatives, as she stepped up to take on the leadership of the worldwide movement upon her husband's passing. With a heart of a mother, she has set her gaze on creating a sustainable movement where the next generation is prioritized.

As the saying goes, "success means having a successor." This thesis addresses the topic of conversion of subsequent generations: how to create an environment that is conducive to conversion? As many of the first-generation Unificationists testify, it is that life-changing experience that led them to commit to the spiritual path fully and gave them the conviction to build a movement in the midst of adversity. In the *Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*², the renowned sociologist of religion Rodney Stark differentiates between "primary" conversions and "secondary" conversions. Secondary are those who joined Christianity through affiliation, which are mostly through family ties. Stark argues that secondary converts were a major factor for Christianity's rapid growth. But the path and characteristics of secondary and primary converts are different. Perhaps when it comes to secondary converts, it is more sustained education and training, rather than a conversion experience, that leads to their eventual awakening and commitment? What common success traits can we draw out from the example of the Puritans, Mormons, and Unificationists? What lessons can we gain from history that we can apply today, in this critical transition time, for the second and third generation Unificationists? These and other issues will be examined in this thesis.

² Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*

Chapter 1. The New England Puritans and the Halfway Covenant

It's part of the generation work of every Christian, to do his utmost that the Lord's Name and Honor may be held up to the succeeding generation – Eleazar Mather³

a) Historical background

The year is 1630, ten years after the historic journey of the Mayflower to Plymouth. After a long two months of sailing in rough seas, about 700 Puritans under the leadership of John Winthrop land in 'New England' and settle what will be called the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Within just another ten years the successful colony will have grown to become a thriving Puritan stronghold of 20,000.

'Puritan' was the derogatory name given to them in England. According to the Anglican point of view, they criticized minor aspects of the Church which harmed no one. But the Puritans referred to themselves by other names, such as 'Saints' because they felt they were practicing true Christianity.

Steeped in the Bible, and seeking guidance and strength in God's word, they imagined themselves re-enacting the story of the Exodus. Onboard their flagship *Arbella*, John Winthrop had reminded them of their duties and obligations under the covenant: by honoring their obligations to God, they would be blessed; however, if they failed to do so, they would follow the terrible fate of the Jamestown Colony. To succeed in the New World, they would have to abide to the social contract. Failure to build this ideal community would result in a shipwreck, which was a convincing metaphor, given the location of this sermon.

³ Eleazar Mather, "A Serious Exhortation" (1678), p14.

Unlike the Plymouth settlement which included a combination of separatists and Anglicans, this new colony was comprised almost exclusively of Puritans. Governed by Puritans, it was closer to a theocracy, as only those who exemplified Puritan values participated in civic life. Citizenship was not universal in Massachusetts, and dissenters were often persecuted under the law by the Standing Order. In seeking to maintain their standard they were not very tolerant of strangers.

The Puritans believed God had chosen "the elect," for salvation. The rest of humanity was condemned to eternal damnation. But no one really knew if he or she was saved or damned; Puritans lived in a constant state of spiritual anxiety, searching for signs of God's favor or anger. The experience of conversion was an important sign that an individual had been saved. Faith, not works, was the key to salvation.

Those who undertook the great migration to the wilderness must have been a determined type. According to John Carpenter in *New England's Puritan century: Three generations of continuity in the city upon a hill*, "the common experience of crossing the 'rude waves' and fashioning new communities in the wilderness based on common, vigorous faith, made New England Puritanism a resilient cultural force, far more resilient than the English Puritanism it left behind."⁴

In a sense a new breed of Puritans was born on the American continent. Even though some churches migrated in groups, most of the Puritans who undertook the "errand into the wilderness" came from all over England. Carpenter notes, "Puritanism ranks among the most

⁴ John B Carpenter, *New England's Puritan century: Three generations of continuity in the city upon a hill*, p 43

rigorous products of the Reformation; the migrants to New England were drawn from the most dedicated and consistent of Puritans”⁵

As a result of this process of selection of the boldest, “their rigor was proportionally intensified.”⁶ This can be likened to the first generation of Unificationists. Out of the thousands who heard the call and were inspired, only a small percentage actually persevered through the rigors of training, sacrifices, and persecution. The most tenacious and convicted remained.

Simply yearning to escape tyranny would not have made this a “Great Migration” (term coined by the second generation). They were not merely seeking for religious freedom, but they were motivated to pioneer a new society where God could be glorified and worshiped; they saw themselves as the builders of a great City on a Hill, a light onto the nations. As an eighteenth-century descendant put it, “A pure and undefiled religion was the great thing our ancestors had in their view when they cast their eye towards this wilderness for a habitation.”⁷

This group of settlers set out to establish their vision of a fully biblical order of church and state. To preserve it, they would have to keep those with unorthodox religious opinions out of the colony. Religious toleration and permissive laws, to the Puritans, only invited the judgment of God.

Within a mere six years of landing in the wilderness, the Puritans founded their own college, initially called the “New College,” later renamed Harvard. They thus demonstrated and

⁵ Ibid, p 43

⁶ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century*, p 45.

⁷ Samuel Wigglesworth *An Essay for Reviving Religion: A Sermon delivered in Boston* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1733), p 34

made a clear statement that they would not be relying on outside institutions to preserve their Puritan principles.

b) The controversy

The Puritans held a high standard of Church membership: those who qualified as “visible saints” were those who had an actual “work of grace,” a spiritual experience of being reborn. They were also expected to be able to testify about their transformational experience. Baptism, an essential qualification to be a member, was only offered to the children of such full members. So, when such a time came, how could the standards of faith and tradition be passed on to the next generations? The question became, could the children of those who fell short of becoming “visible saints” be baptized, or would they be excluded from the church that had nurtured their parents?

This very strict and high standard posed other problems. As more and more immigrants arrived in New England, how was the church to relate to the town’s unchurched residents or the native population that mingled with them?

It is important to understand the significance of baptism. It was likened to a covenant, just as God had promised to Abraham in Genesis 17:7 (KJV): “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” Embodied in that passage was God’s promise that the covenant would be passed down from parent to child, and Puritans took it to mean that baptism sealed the infant into the church covenant. Yet the Puritans’ God was exclusive, dispensing saving grace to some but not all. By doing away with the system of England and establishing a model of congregational churches, they hoped to restrict membership in their

congregations to only “visible saints.” The Puritans were seeking for a genuine expression of a living faith, and prioritized the internal covenant, or covenant of grace. Katharine Gerbner, in her work, *Beyond the "Halfway Covenant,"* explains this situation:

In the early years after settlement, Puritan churches in New England began to protect the internal covenant—the covenant of grace—by demanding that an individual experience a “work of grace.” By the 1640s, then, church membership had effectively been divided into two categories: full members, who had undergone a conversion and been admitted to the Lord’s Supper, and baptized members, who had not yet received assurance of conversion. Many of the baptized members had been baptized in infancy, but as they matured and had children of their own, not all experienced the conversion required for full membership.⁸

This was the unique predicament that the New England Puritans found themselves in: they could maintain the absolute standard, limit membership and possibly dwindle away. Or they could find an alternative way to qualify for membership, especially when it came to their own children. Something had to be done to widen the gates, or these congregations would inevitably decrease in numbers and eventually disappear. Gerbner expounds their dilemma:

Thus, ministers were faced with a predicament: did baptized—but not full—members have the right to have their own children baptized? While some New England ministers sought to emphasize the purity of the covenant by refusing to baptize the children of those who had not yet been accepted into full communion, others believed that baptism was a sacrament that should be extended to the children of all church affiliates.⁹

In 1658, Jonathan Mitchel, Pastor of the Cambridge Church, was the first to endorse “extended baptism.” In what was a controversial move, he baptized children of his members who were not “full members.” He did so primarily to aid the second generation of church members, the adult “children” who had been baptized in their infancy, to include their own children into the congregation. But as we shall see, Mitchel was also motivated to extend the covenant to

⁸ Katharine Gerbner, *Beyond the "Halfway Covenant": Church Membership, Extended Baptism, and Outreach in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1656—1667*, p 284

⁹ *Ibid*, p 285

unchurched families of the community. God's grace and salvation was to be shared. He held onto that original vision of a City upon a Hill.

This caused quite a stir amongst the Puritans and theological battles flared up. A few years later in 1662 a synod was held. Out of heated debate a decision was made that baptized children of "visible saints" (the second generation) would retain their membership into adulthood, and be granted the right to have their own children (the third generation) baptized as long as they vowed to "own the covenant." Owning the covenant involved a profession of faith and promise to uphold a morally upright life. As stated by Gerbner, "Owning the covenant provided a new way to affiliate with the church without undergoing the rigors and requirements of full membership."¹⁰ The decision was, however, highly contested, and a number of churches declined to institute the practice until the 1690s or even later.

Even when churches proceeded with the practice, individuals resisted. For example, in 1654, Henry Dunster, a prominent member of the Cambridge congregation, and president of Harvard, refused to have his child baptized and publicly denounced the practice. Gerbner explains his motivation:

Dunster was one of a number of New England residents who maintained that the church covenant was intended only for the pure and should not be extended to infants, who were not capable of proving their worthiness. Moreover, drawing a firm boundary between church and town, he saw no reason for the church to widen its reach to the community at large.¹¹

Fully knowing the consequences of his actions, he took a stand. It is important to note that leading up to this incident Dunster had long held reservations about infant baptism¹². As this

¹⁰ Ibid p 286

¹¹ Ibid p 289

¹² Henry Dunster: Harvard's Baptist President, (2013) <https://www.mbu.edu/seminary/henry-dunster-harvards-baptist-president/>

new practice was being implemented, it deeply conflicted his beliefs, and led him to take a stand and become a Baptist. Dunster was expelled from the community and made to resign from his position at Harvard.

The topic was hotly debated and emotionally intense. The stakes were high: maintaining the Puritan standard, their identity, what made them who they are, and on the other facing the risk of becoming an exclusive minority and possibly disappearing altogether.

By 1677 the practice had come into widespread use. Over the years the decision of extending the covenant was welcomed by some, but seen as a failure of the Puritans to maintain their standards by others. In 1748, the Great Awakening preacher Jonathan Edwards rejected the practice and demanded a return to the ideals of the first settlers. Some commentators referred to extended baptism as "the half-way covenant," which was originally a derogatory name but is the name that is most often used today.

c) Towards a solution

The journey to accepting the Halfway Covenant was long and tedious. Resistance came from both pastors and general membership, and the battle persisted for decades. One might wonder, what caused the reluctance to open up the doors? People are generally resistant to change, but here specifically, let us remember that "for two generations ministers had taught them that the New England way perfectly imitated the Biblical model for Christian churches, and the limitation of membership to visible saints was an integral part of that way."¹³

¹³ Robert G. Pope. *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1969. p 133

Innovation was a fearful word and synonymous to a departure from original purity, which was a core value of the Puritan faith. Who knows what other corruptions would infiltrate if one opens up the doors? Another factor is simply human nature and pride: “having themselves attained a difficult goal, many must have resented any cheapening of the church covenant.”¹⁴

It even took a long time for history to fully appreciate the move. As the French novelist George Sand wrote, “every historian discloses a new horizon”. It took the perspective gained after about three hundred years of history to cast a better light on the choice the Puritans’ made. Gregory Michna in *The Long Road to Sainthood*, highlights how Robert Pope’ research and thought in *The Half-Way Covenant* helped to gain that perspective.

Despite an enduring general lack of support (and bouts of vehement opposition), for Pope, the synod’s decision served as a necessary compromise which preserved the initial mission of New England’s puritans rather than contributing to declension through its modification of the practices of baptism and membership. By the end of the century, resistance died out as a new generation of ministers normalized the practice and churches increasingly utilized extended baptism.¹⁵

And this perspective helped shift a generation of historians. Michna goes on to emphasize how Pope’s work influenced others: “following Pope’s lead, recent scholarship has increasingly moved away from moralizing judgements in favor of greater contextualization and appreciation for the variety of social factors that shaped clerical debates in seventeenth-century New England.”¹⁶

It is to be noted, but not a main topic for this thesis that focuses on the conversion experience of the next generation, that one of the major obstacles to the extended covenant was

¹⁴ Ibid, p 144

¹⁵ Gregory Michna. *The Long Road to Sainthood: Indian Christians, the Doctrine of Preparation, and the Halfway Covenant of 1662*, Cambridge University Press article, p 46

¹⁶ Ibid p 46

the question of inclusion of Native Americans. Unfortunately, many of the more fundamental Puritans did not have a very enlightened view of those from different race or religious backgrounds. Michna explains:

Ministers who shared Davenport's high view of church covenants essentially excluded Indians who, as part of the "lost tribes of Israel," fell under the category of "Abraham's Children" who broke their covenant sometime in the distant past. Ministers who ascribed to the theory that Indians were Gentiles might still afford them the opportunity to forge a covenant, but Davenport's admonition "to keep out the Heathen uncircumcised in flesh who never were Members" suggested that ministers should continue barring Indians from churches.¹⁷

Nonetheless, for their time, and considering their elitist Puritan worldview, the Halfway covenant marked a significant shift in a more progressive direction. Carpenter points out the progressiveness of the initiative.

The Halfway covenant was a sign of the evangelistic impulse that was to make Puritanism so vibrant. The Halfway Covenant was the Puritan answer to the problems of social diversity. Because society includes everyone, including the unregenerate, a way must be found to preserve the social role of the church. The Halfway Covenant allowed the Puritan church to bring the unregenerate under its ministry without completely dissolving the line between the world and the church.¹⁸

Despite their perspective that God was very judgmental, and the only options are to be saved or damned, we here see how their evangelical drive, to bring the message to a wider group of people, is what saved them. They chose not to separate themselves but to raise the bar for others, not to remain insular, but to build a kingdom. Ministers like Jonathan Mitchel were constantly working to bring non church members to fellowship with the congregation, "which

¹⁷ Ibid p 65

¹⁸ John B Carpenter, *New England's Puritan century: Three generations of continuity in the city upon a hill*, p 49

suggests that church outreach—that is, broadening the influence of the church beyond its original members—was a primary concern for Mitchel.”¹⁹

Likewise, we will see that it is this very same evangelical spirit which has been the saving grace of the Latter-Day Saints. Carpenter writes “the widespread adoption of the Halfway Covenant sprang from the Puritan sense of pastoral responsibility for the whole world”²⁰

It is important to note that when boundaries get broken through, they lead to other innovations. Based on the Halfway Covenant, infants could now be baptized. However, they still could not partake in the other sacrament, the holy communion, unless they were able to testify about their experience of saving grace. Therefore, it was called a “halfway” covenant. Solomon Stoddard was the Congregational minister at Northampton, Massachusetts, and also interestingly the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards. Stoddard argued that all Christians, regardless of whether or not they could testify to an experience of saving grace, should be allowed to participate in both sacraments. Actually at first Edwards followed his grandfather’s practice – but eventually he became convinced that “the Halfway Covenant was both unbiblical and unwise.”²¹ Known as the “Pope of the Connecticut River Valley,”²² Stoddard had a great concern for the lives, and souls, of the second-generation. He could certainly see how they differed from their parents’ generation of immigrants: they were less interested in religion, and more concerned about economics and politics. He argued that if they were not saved, or had not been blessed with a

¹⁹ Katharine Gerbner, *Beyond the "Halfway Covenant": Church Membership, Extended Baptism, and Outreach in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1656—1667*, the New England Quarterly, 2012, p 290

²⁰ John B Carpenter, *New England's Puritan century: Three generations of continuity in the city upon a hill*, p 48

²¹ <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/jonathan-edwards-gallery-mind-shapers>

²² Ibid

“conversion experience,” taking the bread and wine might help them secure saving grace or even convert them. In 1677, he implemented this new practice.

We have seen how Puritans were able to adapt their ideals to the new realities, and find a way to include their next generations. Not only did they seek to preserve the seed, but they saw themselves as those who were called to expand and multiply the seed. Not only were they concerned about their own descendants, but they were concerned about how to save their unchurched neighbors who were more and more numerous. The Halfway Covenant was the Puritan answer to the problem of social diversity.

Raising the next generation to be upright in their faith and to inherit the tradition was a high priority, as was expressed by the Puritan preacher William Adams in 1679:

I speak now to the generation coming on upon the stage, if you or a considerable number of you do not take care to be right spirited for God, that you may duly manage his work and carry it on, and serve the Lord of your fathers with a perfect heart and willing mind, you will be like to destroy and lay this pleasant land desolate.²³

In these previous pages we have reviewed the struggles that the Puritans wrestled with, and have seen tremendous willingness and effort to extend the covenant and share grace with the second and third generation and beyond. We have learned about pioneering figures, the likes of Jonathan Mitchel and Solomon Stoddard, who took brave steps into divisive territory. However, nowhere do we find any record of an intentional training or process being implemented to help the next generation have their own “conversion” experience and be touched by the hand of God. The only direction given is a rather vague “promise to own the covenant.” Another religious group, born in America, was also able to adapt to tough realities and broke through on a new

²³ William Adams, *The Necessity of the Pouring out of the Spirit* (Boston: John Foster, 1679), p 41.

level by providing a missionary experience for their next generation, to help them have their own conversion experience.

Chapter 2. Missionary Training of Youth in the Church of the Latter-Day Saints

My dear extraordinary youth, you were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. There is nothing happening on this earth right now that is more important than that. There is nothing of greater consequence.... This is the mission for which you were sent to earth. LDS President Russell M. Nelson ²⁴

a) Historical background of the Latter-Day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of America's home-grown religions, and today one of the fastest growing worldwide. Rising from humble beginnings in the 1830s, the church now counts over sixteen million members around the world.

These days the Latter-Day Saints, or Mormons, are generally respected, well integrated, and known to be people of good character and integrity, successful in business, evangelical, and recognized for their good families.

However, just like the Puritans of old, and the Unification Church members, the Mormons are no strangers to persecution. Their prophetic founder, Joseph Smith, was raised in the midst of the Second Great Awakening. Like other restorationist groups, the LDS church believed that Christianity had strayed so far from Jesus' original teachings, that it needed to be completely renewed rather than simply reformed. Such an approach naturally engenders suspicion and fears and "from the beginning, the church suffered derision and persecution for

²⁴ President Russell M. Nelson and Sister Wendy W. Nelson, Hope of Israel, June 3, 2018, Conference Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

both exclusivity and innovation.”²⁵ Despite opposition the new movement was growing in numbers which led to more attacks, mob violence and destruction of Mormon property. In 1837 Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs issued an official decree, declaring, "the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State.”²⁶

As a result, the Mormons were chased out of Missouri or killed. Beaten, hungry and frozen they regrouped in Illinois to make a new beginning. Hopefully this would be the promised land. They set out to clear the land that they had been assigned to. Epidemics of malaria and typhoid took their toll on the struggling Mormons as they drained the swamps. There they built the town of Nauvoo (meaning “Beautiful Place” in Hebrew), intended as a paradise in preparation for the millennium. The town grew rapidly as immigrants flowed in; construction was booming, including that of the Nauvoo Temple. The Prophet Joseph Smith, mayor and head of the militia, ran the town as a theocracy throughout a period of relative calm. But peace and prosperity were short lived. Within five years, the tension and controversies with non-Mormon population of the surrounding towns caught up with them; and led to renewed attacks on the Mormons. In June of 1844, Joseph Smith, charged with treason, was arrested and jailed in Carthage, Illinois. An angry mob stormed the jail and he was violently shot to death in his cell.

The martyrdom of their prophet was a tragedy and shock to the young movement, and without proper leadership they could well have disintegrated:

Smith’s death led to a fracturing of the Latter-day Saint movement. Several sought the mantle of prophetic leadership, with some claiming visions and producing scripture in imitation of Smith. These competing claimants led some small groups to leave Nauvoo while others left the city under the pressure generated from this discord. Over the next

²⁵ Latter day Saints Movement, Harvard Pluralism Project
https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/pluralism/files/latter_day_saints_movement.pdf

²⁶ Joseph Smith Jr., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 3:175.

fifteen years, various small Latter-day Saints churches appeared across the Midwest and then vanished.²⁷

Those remaining in Nauvoo set out to complete the construction of the temple, and Brigham Young was chosen to be their new leader. By the end of 1845, it was clear that no peace was possible in Nauvoo between LDS church members and antagonized locals. A truce was settled so that the Latter-Day Saints could prepare to abandon the city. The winter of 1845-46 was the time of serious preparations for the exodus. The first wave of about 3,000 people departed early February, and their suffering was intense. People died from exposure; wagons collapsed. Those were the difficult beginnings. Young believed that his community would never be able to settle down peacefully within the United States. This led them to migrate into a rugged Mexican controlled territory, much like the Puritans, who, persecuted for their beliefs in England, had headed out a couple hundred years earlier across the seas to the untamed and unchartered territory of New World.

On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young and his fellow Saints arrived in Utah's Great Salt Lake Valley and called it home. The tough and resilient group had carried out a treacherous 1,300-mile journey across the plains and over the Rocky Mountains. Upon arrival Young said: "here we are and here we will stay. God has shown me that this is the spot to locate his people, and here is where they will prosper."²⁸ Planting and irrigating as well as exploration of the surrounding area began right away. Yet the Mormons faced many problems, which they had to overcome. Life as pioneers was hard, the Saints were tired and worn out, and the land was a desolate and forsaken spot with little rain. Although the struggle for survival was difficult in

²⁷ Latter day Saints Movement, Harvard Pluralism Project
https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/pluralism/files/latter_day_saints_movement.pdf

²⁸ Hunter, Milton R. (1937). "[Brigham Young, Colonizer](#)". *Pacific Historical Review*. 6 (4): 341–360.

the first years of settlement, the Mormons were better prepared through their experience, and more resourceful than many other groups to tame the harsh land. They had pioneered other settlements in the Midwest, and their communal religious faith led them to work together well.

Over the next few decades, more than 60,000 thousand Saints, mostly European immigrants, would follow their path. They risked everything, traveling by wagon or pulling handcarts across the harsh terrain. Many died along the way. The country the Mormons had sought to escape from expanded its borders to encompass them. In 1850 Young became governor of the U.S. territory of Utah and governed the same way Smith had governed Nauvoo, by theocracy, with church doctrines taking precedence over civil laws. By 1869 a railroad reached the city of Salt Lake and immigrants no longer needed to risk their lives. Between 1847 and 1900 the Mormons established about 500 settlements in Utah and surrounding states. Once established the Saints turned their pioneering energy toward improving church, family, and community life wherever they lived.

From these humble beginnings they built a shining and successful city and overtime assembled a worldwide ministry. Currently more than 52,000²⁹ full-time missionaries are serving in missions, most of them being under the age of 25. This sets the stage for a brief discussion on the existing foundation of Christian missionary work.

b) The foundation of Christian missions

As we focus on the LDS' youth missionary tradition, which serves as a best practice to solidify the faith of their young people, we cannot help but take a moment to appreciate the

²⁹ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/facts?lang=eng>

missionary work that came before them. Let us review some milestones of missionary work in the last two thousand years of Christian history, which serves as a foundation for the LDS missionary program.

It was Jesus himself who set the precedent for the missionary impulse. On a number of occasions, he inspired and exhorted his disciples to go out to the towns and bear witness. Initially he instructed the twelve disciples. In Mark 6:7 (NIV), “Jesus called the Twelve to Him and began to send them out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits”. Jesus sent them out in pairs, to support one another and grow together, much like today LDS missionaries do. In the same spirit he then sent out the next wave of followers to pioneer and spread the message, “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (NIV Luke 10:1). In the great commission, his final instruction before his Ascension, the resurrected Jesus gives a mandate to his disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (NIV Matt 18-20).

It was Paul’s missionary journeys that helped spread the gospel throughout much of the ancient world. Most biblical scholars agree that over the course of his ministry, the Apostle Paul traveled more than 10,000 miles³⁰, benefiting from the Pax Romana and Roman road system. Despite this providential set up, he risked his life. In his own words he describes the trials and tribulations he endured:

I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me

³⁰ <https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/scripture-and-tradition/jesus-and-the-new-testament/saint-paul-and-the-epistles/pauls-journeys/>

thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. (2 Cor 11:23-27)

Largely, thanks to the ministry of Paul, Christians began to see the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles as an essential part of God's plan, and Christianity has always relied on missionaries to spread the Gospel. In the year 596, some 40 monks set out from Rome to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons in England, led by Augustine, who later became the Patron Saint of England. Monasteries were not only bases for profound piety and learning, but also for courageous outreach to the dangerous tribes and areas of the known world. Even in the darker periods of the Middle Ages we find courageous missionaries, Dominicans or Franciscans, who were willing to endure incredible hardships, even martyrdom, to carry the message of Christ into pagan lands.

But it wasn't until the 16th century, when vast territories were being discovered, that we see highly organized and intentional efforts to prepare missionaries. One outstanding example is the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 as a Roman Catholic all-male religious order. On the foundation of much theological education and training in discipline and obedience, the missionaries pioneered and evangelized remote parts of the world. They were expected to accept orders to go anywhere in the world, where they might be required to live in extreme conditions, and they did. By the time of Ignatius' death in 1556 the Jesuits included over one thousand members, having created new communities throughout Europe as well as in Brazil and India. Growth was rapid and by 1615 the Society included over thirteen thousand members globally. Edward Smither, in his history of Christian missions,

describes the ground-breaking nature of the Jesuits' initiatives: Over time, Ignatius's vision became increasingly apostolic and global. Though the words mission or missions had not been widely used in the church during the first fifteen centuries, the Jesuits were the first to adopt this vocabulary to describe their work of preaching the gospel among all nations.³¹

In 1517 the German monk and theologian Martin Luther called for debate concerning the church's teaching on penance, unknowingly launching a revolution that would forever change the church: for the first time the Bible would be translated into multiple languages and through the development of the printing press it could be widely published and read directly by multitudes. The advent of Protestantism also opened a new doorway for missionary activities. Smither notes: "Indeed, the principle of biblical authority that Luther and the other magisterial Reformers championed provided a theological foundation and fresh vision for vernacular Bible translation that invigorated future missionary work."³²

Throughout its first couple centuries Protestantism found itself embroiled in conflicts and religious wars, and it wasn't until the eighteenth century that the Protestant missionary vigor gained its global momentum. One outstanding example was the Moravian community. One of the greatest missionary movements of all time began with the rich young ruler, Count Von Zinzendorf, who agreed to host the oppressed Moravian refugees on his land. Earnestly seeking how to dedicate themselves and serve the Lord they often met together for hours to pour out their hearts in prayer and hymns. Then one day in 1727 they experienced a powerful "Pentecost" during a communion service where the Spirit came upon Zinzendorf and the community. This experience sparked a flame of prayer and missions that would burn for decades to come. From

³¹ Smither, Edward L. *Christian Mission : A Concise, Global History*. Lexham Press, 2019, p 37

³² *Ibid*, p 40

this point onwards, the Moravians carried out a prayer vigil that lasted 100 years. They prayed continuously for revival and for the expansion of the gospel. Prayer led them to action, and “in 1732, the Moravian Church began sending its first missionaries around the world. As they were building from their Pietist roots, proclaiming the gospel of love was central to their mission focus.”³³ Within a short time, their community became a missionary launching pad from where they ventured to bring the gospel to the world, especially to the outcasts of society. Smither notes that “one of the enduring trends in evangelical global mission that began in this period is that revival and spiritual awakening often precedes significant missionary movements. Perhaps the greatest observation about Moravian mission was their commitment to prayer.”³⁴

It is also interesting to note that it is this Moravian spirituality which influenced John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, in his conversion. By the time of Zinzendorf death in 1760, after 28 years of cross-cultural missions, the Moravians had sent out 226 missionaries and served in 10 different countries.³⁵ But more important than these results, is to learn about the basic motivation, the fuel beneath the fire. Count Von Zinzendorf summarized it as: “I have but one passion—it is He, it is He alone. The world is the field, and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ.”³⁶ About one century later the Latter-Day Saints will emerge on the religious scene as a new movement and will take this missionary spirit and system to another level by implementing it as a training for their youth.

³³ Ibid p 43

³⁴ Ibid, p 44

³⁵ <https://gcdiscipleship.com/article-feed/2013/01/16/into-all-the-world-count-zinzendorf-and-the-moravian-missionary-movement>

³⁶ Ibid

c) The LDS Missionary program develops

The roots of the missionary work of the LDS go back to the beginning of the Church in 1830. Joseph Smith's younger brother Samuel holds the distinction of being the first missionary. Since then, thousands of men and women followed in his footsteps. The majority of the missionaries who served in the nineteenth century were older by today's standards and were mostly men who left their wives and families behind. Very early in their history, the Latter-day Saints also sent missionaries to other countries, even prior to the death of Joseph Smith. It is an incredible testament, that even in the darkest days of persecution, as their leaders were being imprisoned, families driven and scattered by mobs, properties burnt, that LDS missionaries continued to go out to foreign lands. A BYU account of the Mormon missionaries' history compares their journeys to the Apostle Paul's:

Although few of these more extended missions were successful during the nineteenth century, the very attempt suggests the serious international outlook and millennialism of the early church. As Paul had benefited from the law and transportation routes of the Roman Empire, early Latter-day Saint missionary work followed the paths and locations of the British Empire throughout the world.³⁷

For the first time in 1947 young adults started being recommended for missions, and a few years later in 1950 the recommended age became 20 for young men and 23 for women. As that was happening, a certain systemization of the missionary procedure was taking place:

By the end of the Second World War, as other Christian missionary groups were beginning to apply more systematic and bureaucratic techniques to their proselyting efforts, young Latter-day Saint missionaries moved to more systematically organize the missionary program of the church. The church would issue in 1953 *The Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel*, the first set of missionary lessons issued by the church to be used in all missions. The tremendous missionary success of the LDS Church, since

³⁷ Mormon Missionary work: a brief history and introduction <https://lib.byu.edu/collections/mormon-missionary-diaries/about/mormon-missionary-work/>

1950, owes much to this more thoughtful and systematic missionary lesson approach, particularly its emphasis on the Book of Mormon as a proselytizing tool.³⁸

After World War II and the Korean War, Mormon missionaries were very successful in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, and in South America. Their efforts became even more organized as they established physical establishments to better prepare their missionaries: the Language Training Mission (1976) and later the Missionary Training Center (1978) were established in Provo, Utah. In 1974, President Kimball (1973-1985) the 12th President of the LDS church, gave a landmark address that forever changed the way the LDS view the missionary service of young men. In it he declared: “The question has been often asked, is the mission program one of compulsion? And the answer, of course, is no. Everyone is given his free agency. The question is asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer of the Church is yes, and the answer of the Lord is yes.”³⁹

In the following two decades the *Book of Mormon* was translated into dozens of more languages, and Mormons were encouraged to “flood the earth” with it in order to find all those who were prepared to receive it. With conviction and consistency every President after Kimball reemphasized the same message. The next President was Ezra Taft Benson (1985-1994) who said:

The Lord wants every young man to serve a full-time mission. Currently, only a fifth of the eligible young men in the Church are serving full-time missions. This is not pleasing to the Lord. We can do better. We must do better. Not only should a mission be regarded as a priesthood duty, but every young man should look forward to this experience with great joy and anticipation. What a privilege—what a sacred privilege—to serve the Lord full time for two years with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. You can do nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Spencer W. Kimball, “Planning for a Full and Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 86
<https://latterdaysaintmissionprep.com/motivating-missionaries/every-young-man-should-serve-a-mission/#:~:text=As%20President%20Kimball%20said%2C%20the,choose%20to%20accept%20the%20assignment.>

be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait until after a young man has served an honorable full-time mission for the Lord.⁴⁰

Following his lead, the next President, Howard W. Hunter (1994-1995), re-iterated the message: “Earlier prophets have taught that every able, worthy young man should serve a full-time mission. I emphasize this need today.”⁴¹ After him President Gordon B. Hinckley (1995-2008) announced:

I throw out a challenge to every young man within this vast congregation tonight. Prepare yourself now to be worthy to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary. He has said, ‘If ye are prepared ye shall not fear’ (D&C 38:30). Prepare to consecrate two years of your lives to this sacred service. That will in effect constitute a tithing on the first twenty years of your lives.⁴²

He was followed by President, Thomas S. Monson (2008-2018) who proclaimed:

I repeat what prophets have long taught—that every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of us who have been given so very much. Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord.⁴³

And finally, the current President Russell M. Nelson (2018-) has repeated the call:

Today I reaffirm strongly that the Lord has asked *every* worthy, able young man to prepare for and serve a mission. For Latter-day Saint young men, missionary service is a priesthood responsibility. You young men have been reserved for this time when the promised gathering of Israel is taking place. As you serve missions, you play a pivotal role in this unprecedented event!⁴⁴

Young women are recently being more and more encouraged to follow the call. In the same message, President Nelson added, “For you young and able sisters, a mission is also a

⁴⁰ Ibid, Ensign, May 1986, pp. 44–45

⁴¹ Ibid, Howard W. Hunter, “Follow the Son of God,” Ensign, Nov. 1994, 87

⁴² Ibid, Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 70; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 51–52

⁴³ Ibid, President Thomas S. Monson, As We Meet Together Again, October 2010

⁴⁴ Ibid, Preaching the Gospel of Peace by President Russell M. Nelson, April 2, 2022

powerful, but *optional*, opportunity. We *love* sister missionaries and welcome them wholeheartedly. What you contribute to this work is magnificent!”⁴⁵

One outcome of this consistent message from the top for the last five decades is that today most of these missionaries are young people under the age of 25, who are serving in 404 missions throughout the world. Single men serve missions for two years and single women serve missions for 18 months. This missionary experience is providing an environment for the young people to have their own conversion experience and come to own their faith.

Since the initial call for young missionaries in 1947 the age limit has been lowered a few times, the most recent revision being in October 2012, when it was decided that men may begin missionary work at 18 (instead of 19) and women at 19 (instead of 21). One motivation of this change was to help the LDS Church hold on to its young people, a number of whom leave the faith once they attend college.

Overwhelmingly age-lowering was welcomed. One interviewee, Mike Salazar, 23, called the change “inspired.” Salazar went on his mission to Mexico when he was 19. “If I had of gone at 18, I wouldn’t have messed up so much between 18 and 19.”⁴⁶ Testimonies also abound about extending the mission opportunity to women. In her interview LDS writer and religion scholar Joanna Brooks expressed in tears: “I am overjoyed, this changes the narrative for young Mormon women in pretty fundamental ways. It uncouples church service from the expectation of

⁴⁵ Preaching the Gospel of Peace by President Russell M. Nelson, April 2, 2022
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/11nelson?lang=eng>

⁴⁶ Lisa Schencker: *Mormons lower age for missionaries*, Washington Post Oct’ 2012
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/mormons-lower-age-for-missionaries-setting-off-changes-for-parents-women-schools/2012/10/08/11c78cd8-117c-11e2-9a39-1f5a7f6fe945_story.html

marriage and motherhood, and teaches young women they should take responsibility for knowing their faith.”⁴⁷

It is widely recognized in the Mormon community that the missionary experience is not only valuable for Church growth, but that it is an indispensable training for the participants themselves to come to own their faith. It is important to note that going out for a mission is not mandatory or automatic. Many choose to take the opportunity and many do not. It is precisely this aspect of decision, or personal responsibility, that makes the experience transformative: they chose it and therefore they own it.

So how do the Latter-Day Saints inspire their young people to go this path, when it could be more appealing and convenient to start college and get ahead in a career? Theologically the Latter-Day Saints believe that they are prepared for their life as spirits before birth. Therefore, we are all born with a certain destiny to fulfill. Listen to how the then President Russel Nelson and his wife Sister Wendy Nelson address an audience of young people at a Worldwide Youth Devotional, and appeal to their conscience:

We have opportunities to fulfill our mortal missions, but we don't have to. No one will make us. We have our agency to choose how we spend our time and energy, our talents and resources. In fact, what we choose to do is actually part of our testing. The choice is yours and mine. Will we choose to do whatever it takes to fulfill the wonderful missions for which we were sent to earth?⁴⁸

He continues,

My question tonight to every one of you between the ages of 12 and 18 is this: Would you like to be a big part of the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today? Would you like to help gather Israel during these precious latter days? ...Now, participating in the gathering of Israel will require some sacrifice on

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ President Russell M. Nelson and Sister Wendy W. Nelson, Hope of Israel, June 3, 2018, Conference Center, Salt Lake City, Utah <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2018/06/hope-of-israel?lang=eng>

your part. It may even require some changes in your life. It will definitely take some of your time and energy and your God-given talents. Are you interested?⁴⁹

In the same address he goes on to share how he has seen in his own lifetime the impactful power of the missionary spirit: “In the year I was born, the total membership of the Church was less than 600,000 people, with no members in South America. Today there are more than 16 million members worldwide with nearly 3 million members in South America.”⁵⁰

D) The training and the outcomes

Now let us look at how the Church actually prepares those who have answered the calling. By now the LDS Church has developed training academies to provide a crash course in what it takes to be a successful missionary. Currently there are fifteen Missionary Training Centers, one in Provo, Utah, and the others outside of the United States. In an interview conducted by the Deseret News,⁵¹ Elder Richard G. Hinckley, the executive director of its Missionary Department, reminds us of how the Founder Joseph Smith was also young and inexperienced; yet when there is faith and commitment God works. He describes how the training has developed, and continues to do so. In the interview he states that “it's a continual learning experience. We adapt to the times; we adapt to the needs.”⁵²

He summarizes all the education and training that takes place at the Missionary Training Centers into two objectives: “language and bringing a very disparate group of young men and young women up to the same level before they travel to their fields of labor.”⁵³ If their mission

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ A look at Mormon Missionary Training Process, an interview with Elder Richard G. Hinckley, <https://www.deseret.com/2011/3/21/20180206/a-look-at-mormon-missionary-training-process>

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

country speaks their own language, three weeks of training will be enough, but depending on the complexity of the language the training could be nine or even up to twelve weeks. The objective is not just learning conversational language, but how to express and defend the tenets of the LDS faith. Language can be fine-tuned in the country, but the more internal and challenging aspect of the training is chiseling away at the heart and character. The missionaries will be unsupervised and in distant lands. Hinkley emphasized the importance of cultivating discipline:

This is a disciplined approach to teaching them that missionary life is work and that it's disciplined work — and for some of them who perhaps come from a rather undisciplined background, it may be a bit of a shock at first. But generally speaking, they come to love and appreciate the experience there.⁵⁴

There is nothing more powerful than a personal testimony, and Elder Hinkley then shares how his own missionary experience as a youth is what trained him and made him who he is now:

It had a tremendous influence in my life. It gave me confidence — I was a backward, painfully shy boy when I went out — so painfully shy that I didn't think I could do it. By the time I got home, I was able to look people in the eye and talk to them with confidence. With all of the wonderful religious experiences and spiritual experiences we have aside, it is a wonderful way for a young man or a young woman to gain confidence, to gain poise, to gain the ability to deal with people and talk with people with confidence and to face life and face challenges.⁵⁵

He then goes on to list the benefits of facing rejections and persevering through:

Missions are a place where rejection happens every day, and it's healthy — it's a healthy thing for a young person to face rejection and to develop the faith and the tenacity and the perseverance to deal with it and to overcome it and to get up in the morning, to get dressed and go out and face it again. It builds strength — it builds spiritual strength; it builds emotional strength and it builds character.⁵⁶

As we see, this missionary program takes a huge investment of time, of resources and manpower. The golden question is going to be what are the long-term benefits and results of this

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

experience? Does this transformational experience actually make a difference in their lives? Upon their return are they able to maintain their fire and adapt themselves to get back into the system?

There are certainly instances of returned missionaries, who, like war veterans, were never able to adjust back to regular life. They experienced a high paced and intense two years in a distant land, but upon their return they felt like nothing has changed, and they cannot reconnect to a regular lifestyle. This is understandable, in his article *Home from a Mission* Bruce L. Olsen describes the feelings commonly experienced:

Some missionaries undergo “reverse culture shock.” It is not hard to imagine the feelings of missionaries who have lived and taught for eighteen months or two years among people they truly loved, and who have now returned to a society that seems, by contrast, to be wasteful and ungrateful.⁵⁷

But the overwhelming majority, once they have re-adjusted to life, do testify that their mission experience has been a big plus in their lives. Here are some of the benefits gained from serving in a mission, compiled in the article *Missionary work: experiences shape the future*:⁵⁸

Returning missionaries carry home a wealth of knowledge and experiences that set the course of their life: firm faith in God; an increased knowledge of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel; an exposure to cultural diversity, even when serving in their homeland; a new language competence, possibly with a foreign language, but often with an improvement in their communication skills; an increase in confidence; and an overwhelming love for the people with whom they have served.⁵⁹

The list of benefits and competencies that are very applicable to the real world continues: “Missionaries also acquire abilities to set and reach goals, to gain a sense of responsibility for themselves and others, to concentrate on their educational studies and to build positive

⁵⁷ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1991/06/home-from-a-mission?lang=eng>

⁵⁸ Missionary Work: Experiences Shape the Future, August 2014, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/missionary-experiences-shape-future>

⁵⁹ Ibid

relationships with people of varied backgrounds.”⁶⁰ In a person’s life the years of 18 to 25 can be seen as very formative, and if well directed during that time period it can serve as a launching pad for the rest of their life. The article continues: “Many missionaries credit their full-time service with influencing the direction for the rest of their lives. Some move on to successful business pursuits; others find usefulness in the service, education or technical fields. Most also continue church and community service, with a focus on family.”⁶¹

However, testimonies and personal accounts are not always objective. Let us look at the findings from a long-term research study, published by Chadwick, Top and McClendon in *Shield of Faith: The Power of Religion in the Lives of LDS Youth and Young Adults*. They dedicate an entire chapter to the missionary service, and summarize it as such: “It is commonly believed that missionary service produces not only a strong testimony but also a foundation for success in a number of other areas of their lives. Based on our findings, there is solid evidence supporting these claims.”⁶²

The survey looks at those who went on missions and reveals that 95 percent of them had at least some college or skill training, some 40 percent of the survey’s respondents were college graduates, as compared to just 18 percent of the individuals in their respective peer groups.⁶³ The survey compares two other indicators of socioeconomic status, employment and income; and finds returned missionaries to rank relatively high in both: 95 percent of the men and 63 percent

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Bruce Chadwick, *The Shield of Faith: The Power of Religion in the Lives of LDS Youth and Young Adults* (2010, Deseret Books) p 269

⁶³ Ibid, p 269

of the women are gainfully employed, and their family incomes landed above the national average.⁶⁴

The research goes on to assess how returned missionaries are applying spiritual habits in their life:

The relatively high rates of religiosity for returned missionaries is notable. This is especially significant given that our sample included not only recently returned missionaries but also those who have been home for a considerable amount of time (information verified after 17 years following their full-time missionary service). These findings, when added to results from previous research on returned missionaries, provides consistently strong evidence that the vast majority of returned missionaries stay strongly committed to gospel values not only immediately upon their return but also later in their lives.⁶⁵

This research is limited in that it compares the returned missionaries status to the national average, and not to the LDS who did not embark on missions, but nonetheless we see how returned missionaries in the United States are most likely to be well-educated, responsibly employed and involved in positive family and Church activities.

It has taken decades to establish this tradition, but by now Mormons from a young age expect and prepare to go on Missions after graduating from High School. Peggy Fletcher Stack, writing for the Salt Lake Tribune states that “Now approximately 30 percent of all 19-year-old Mormon men in the United States serve, while between 80 percent to 90 percent of those from active LDS families go.”⁶⁶ It has become so ingrained in their tradition that they will often start to save for their missions when they first get an allowance, at 6 or 7 years old. And since missionary service plays such a role in LDS’ culture, the dean of BYU, John Rosenberg (2005-2015) stated that “the BYU College of Humanities teaches more languages at an advanced level

⁶⁴ Ibid, p 271

⁶⁵ Ibid p 274

⁶⁶ Mission Metamorphosis, by Peggy Fletcher Stack, The Salt Lake Tribune, June 2007
<https://archive.slttrib.com/article.php?id=6262037&itype=NGPSID>

than any other university in America.”⁶⁷ Currently BYU offers classes in more than 60 languages.⁶⁸

We have seen how the Mormon movement grew from humble and challenged beginnings into a global movement. Even though there are many keys to their success, we have seen in this chapter how the empowered youth play an essential role in this success. The social historian Harold Bloom in *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* calls the Mormon program "audacious," and said "No other American religious movement is so ambitious. The Mormons fully intend to convert the nation and the world; to go from some 10 million souls to six billion.”⁶⁹ Now, let us look at a much more recent development, also ambitious, the Unification movement, and how they are adapting in terms of preparing their next generation.

⁶⁷ <https://humanities.byu.edu/bilingual-byu/>

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Quoted in *Mission Metamorphosis*, by Peggy Fletcher Stack, The Salt Lake Tribune, June 2007
<https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=6262037&itype=NGPSID>

Chapter 3. The Unification Movement in a time of transition

“In the matter of the worldwide mission work, we need to train the second generation to take the lead. What I mean is the first generation should serve as good fertilizer for them.”⁷⁰ Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

a. Historical Background: the wilderness era

In its early days the members of the Unification movement walked a similar path to that of the Puritans and the Latter-Day Saints: persecuted for their beliefs, they persevered and pushed through, inspired by a divine calling and fighting for a higher purpose. The Unification Church was formally established in 1954 in Korea. In this thesis we are focusing on the United States, we can say that the American movement was really born around 1971 when the Rev. Moon came to stir up the country. In *40 Years in America: An Intimate History of the Unification Movement, 1959-1999*, Michael Mickler, UC Church historian, describes the emergence of the movement during those pivotal years:

During the years 1972–1974, the Unification church emerged as a national movement in America. Not only did all the missionary groups merge by the end of this period, but national membership multiplied ten times, evangelistic crusades were held in all fifty states, substantial properties were purchased, international conferences held, and a controversial “Answer to Watergate” statement circulated in full-page advertisements bought in most of the nation’s major newspapers. By the end of this period, the church’s rapid growth had provoked controversy and confrontation.⁷¹

A vast number of members joined during this decade, “favorable conditions in American national life, particularly a ready supply of youth disillusioned both with American society and

⁷⁰ Anthology 1, Global Unity through True Parents, 2013.05.08, Cheon Jeong Gung, p 300

⁷¹ Michael Mickler, *40 Years in America: An Intimate History of the Unification Movement, 1959-1999*, p

with the countercultural alternatives of the 1960s also contributed to the church's development."⁷² As much as the early years in America were a time of great excitement, energy, and anticipation, they were also a time of severe challenges and trials. When Rev. Moon initially carried out a whirlwind Day of Hope tours across the country the climate was one of receptivity. However, as the membership grew rapidly in numbers, controversy and persecution arose. But for Rev. Moon there would be no slowing down. He actually turned the opposition into fuel for greater achievements. Mickler describes how Rev. Moon saw America as the gateway to the world: "Before coming to America, Rev. Moon made strong efforts to solidify the church's national foundations in Korea and Japan. In the same way, having solidified the American movement, he launched the church's world mission during 1975-76. This involved some sacrifices for the American movement."⁷³

As he was launching the worldwide mission, the pressure on the American members to multiply in membership and grow the movement, as well as to raise funds for projects and events was immense. Mickler describes these goals: "According to Rev. Moon, the minimum number of members necessary to influence the United States in a positive direction was 30,000, a goal that he hoped to attain by 1978. He also needed substantially more members to successfully undertake ambitious evangelistic campaigns at Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument."⁷⁴ At the same time, ungrounded fears and negativity were becoming organized persecution in the form of media attacks, legal cases and deprogramming. These culminated in 1976 which was remembered as the year in which opposition reached its peak.

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Ibid p141

⁷⁴ Ibid p145

The evangelical efforts and total mobilization campaigns continued but this goal of 30,000 core members was never met. A number of factors came into play: negativity towards the Unification Church was one major influence, as well the social climate was changing and young people in the early eighties were becoming less idealistic and spiritually oriented. But mostly the movement was constantly in an emergency providential mode, which caused a lack of consistency in the witnessing method: “There was constant rotation of leadership and changes in direction. Emergency ‘mobilizations’ disrupted local efforts and in many instances, the church went in all directions at once.”⁷⁵

In 1982 an event took place that forever changed the dynamic of the American movement: a large percent of the membership, 4150 people, took part in the Madison Square mass wedding. “With this event, the church went from being a movement of primarily single people to one of married people, virtually overnight. The Madison Square Garden Blessing introduced new complexities into members’ lives which had not been there before. These included the matter of spousal relationships, the presence of children, and issues of financial support.”⁷⁶ All of the sudden, the majority of the American membership, who had been “all in” were faced with dealing with realities and challenges of married life, children, and financial issues. Despite this, the push and pressure for evangelism continued. New members joined and enrolled in the Mobile Fundraising Teams (MFT), sometimes for years. Persecution against the movement was continual, and there were other major setbacks and blows that affected the Founders, their family and the American movement.

⁷⁵ Ibid p 205

⁷⁶ Ibid p 222

By the 1990s another major shift took place as the Soviet Union crumbled and global Communism was won over. This had been one of God's major headaches, and much energy and resources had been invested into that battle. David Balise, a Unificationist, writing a testimony for *40 Years in America*, describes how once there is no longer a common external enemy, the more internal issues and struggles tend to come up to the surface:

The "cold war" was won! The world was transformed within a few years, in ways that almost no one but Father had believed possible.

Our movement began to decentralize and demobilize after that. In this more relaxed, de-pressurized atmosphere issues, and problems that had been hidden before began to emerge. We struggled to find ways to financially support our growing families. Suppressed disagreements cried out for attention. Feelings about the shortcomings of leadership, which had been forgiven when there were more pressing issues to attend to, now came to the surface. For some, unresolved issues of faith and belief appeared.

After years of stressful living on the "front line," most of us had at least some degree of battle fatigue. For some, this victory was enough. God's other two headaches didn't seem so urgent or threatening. So they returned to "civilian life," remaining friendly towards the movement but no longer involved in its daily activities. Others left the movement altogether, sometimes with bitter feelings.⁷⁷

Despite their shortcomings, those early American members were a unique breed of people. Much like those Puritans who crossed the Atlantic or the Latter-Day Saints who migrated westwards, they were people of grit. They had to undergo trials of fire to hold onto their faith, and countless fell by the wayside. As we will see those who remained were the most resilient, or stubborn. In her Memoir, the *Mother of Peace*, Hak Ja Han Moon tearfully depicts the sacrifices of those early members:

In the early stages of our movement, members were the most pitiful of people: chased and cornered, thrown out of their houses on snowy nights, praying in tears against the outer walls of their own home. Deported from unfamiliar lands, jailed, shot at and even killed while out fundraising, they had to find their way in the desert with nothing but starlight in the night sky to guide them; these faithful souls pushed their way through

⁷⁷ David Balise. "Parents and Children." Pg. 548 in Michael Mickler, *40 Years in America*.

dark forests alone to share God's word. Holding our sorrows deep inside, we kept our faith and disseminated our beliefs.⁷⁸

Based on this, one can imagine that the road for those born and raised in the movement was not easy or smooth. Especially for the early ones. They were born in the midst of a providential storm, as the movement was going through its wilderness era. Heartbreaking sacrifices on the family level had to be made, especially in the years following the '82 Blessing: recently blessed members were sent out to go on missions for up to 3 years leaving their little children behind. A 24 hour nursery was quickly put together to take care of these infants and small children, but that was no substitute for having their parents around. The scars from those wounds will never go away and many of those blessed children and their parents still carry them deep inside. Besides being neglected, those children did not have great role models or peers to look up to, and did not benefit from a supportive environment to raise them up. Many parents assumed that their children, born through the Blessing⁷⁹ of the True Parents,⁸⁰ were free from original sin and therefore would automatically grow up perfectly.

Yes, if the proper environment had been created, their children would have grown up quite differently, embraced and supported by good families and communities. However, the reality was that these children had to grow up influenced by a secular environment. America and the western world were engulfed in a cultural war which brought about great confusion in values and morality. Instead of that ideal environment which was hoped for, these "blessed children"⁸¹ grew up conflicted, influenced by the secular world's values. They grew up under high

⁷⁸ Hak Ja Han Moon, Mother of Peace, (The Washington Times Global Media Group, 2020) p124

⁷⁹ Blessing: marriage ceremony officiated by Rev. and Mrs. Moon, which allegedly connects to the original lineage of God..

⁸⁰ True Parents: originally Adam and Eve were meant to become the True Parents of humankind. According to UC theology Rev. and Mrs. Moon, having resolved the failures of history, now stand in that position.

⁸¹ Blessed children: children who were born from couples who received the Blessing of marriage, and born free from original sin.

expectations of their parents and church, as if miraculously they would embrace their parents' faith and rise up to become great leaders themselves.

Another blow to the blessed children, especially in America, has been witnessing directly the challenges faced by the True Children⁸². Ideally, the Rev. and Mrs. Moon's family, would be the model of the ideal family, like standard bearers to look up to and lead the way. But that was not the case. To gain some perspective on what has contributed to that, let us dive into some historical and theological background. According to the Unificationist view of providential history, there is always an original course, or plan A, which God has prepared, and which provides the ideal, or best possible chances for success. God has prepared all the circumstances but the dispensation ultimately hinges upon the fulfillment of the one thing that God cannot control: the human portion of responsibility. Oftentimes throughout history God's providence has been delayed due to the failures of key people to play their part. Had this original course unfolded, Rev Moon and his revelation, explained in the Divine Principle⁸³, would have been accepted by Christianity shortly after World War II. Rev. Moon spoke of this original plan:

What would have happened if Christianity and Korea had welcomed me? I could have absorbed Protestant America over the course of seven years. And if I had begun working on the world level after the seven-year course finished in 1952, I would have mobilized all the world's statesmen by the time I was forty years old, leading them in one direction, toward the goal of making the kingdom of heaven on earth. That was the original providential plan. Christianity has made a unified, global territory after four thousand years of Judeo-Christian history. If Christianity had followed me, a unified physical and spiritual world would have come about.⁸⁴

Just as God had prepared an original course for Moses to lead the Israelites smoothly and swiftly out of slavery in Egypt and into the promised land, there were people in key roles who

⁸² True Children: the children of the Rev. and Mrs. Moon.

⁸³ Divine Principle: backbone of the teachings of the Rev Moon, written based on his revelation and study of the Bible.

⁸⁴ <http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Books/SunMyungMoon-Life/SunMyungMoon-Life-09.htm>

were prepared to make the path easier for Rev. Moon to accomplish his mission. Moses was raised in the Pharaoh's palace. He had all the connections; one can speculate that if conditions had been more favorable, he could have diplomatically secured a safe passage for the Israelites out of Egypt. The Exodus would have been a safe 21 days journey straight to Canaan. Instead, it was delayed and then prolonged to become a drawn-out course which lasted over 40 years, with many trials along the way. Moses himself died overlooking the promised land, but unable to enter it. The Divine Principle calls this the "dispensation to start a providence," revealing how God does everything in his power to prepare the best possible environment and provide the best chance of success to His chosen person.

Right after WWII Korea gained its independence. Rev. Moon had family members who could have been involved in the government of the first President of South Korea, Syngman Rhee. Rev. Moon spoke about this opportunity:

It would have been good if my great-uncle had worked in politics, but he was a simple Christian minister. My grandfather was a much-needed person when Dr. Rhee was trying to establish a new country. He excelled in classical learning and in modern studies as well. When he was in Jeongseon, a helicopter was sent to pick him up three times. But he said, "I don't want to get involved in politics. A religious figure getting involved in politics is so..." he didn't join hands with Dr. Rhee. If he had, how good it would have been for my mission! Centering on providence, if I had just persuaded my great-uncle to accept the Principle, it wouldn't have been a problem to absorb Dr. Rhee's clan and all the Christian leaders.⁸⁵

There were many levels of preparation, another key figure for his success was a "John the Baptist"⁸⁶ figure: Rev. Baek Moon Kim. Rev Kim was a charismatic minister who had founded the Israel Monastery. According to Rev. Moon, "when it came to being spiritually attuned, he

⁸⁵ <http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Books/SunMyungMoon-Life/SunMyungMoon-Life-09.htm>

⁸⁶ John the Baptist figure: according to Unification understanding John the Baptist had a providential role to make straight the way of the Lord and testify to Jesus. A John the Baptist figure is a person who has a foundation and is prepared to support the providential figure by testifying and connecting his foundation to him.

was on the highest level of faith among the Christians of the time. Because Kim Baek-moon had connections with Dr. Syngman Rhee, Kim was a John the Baptist figure. God's will could have been realized at that time. But it didn't work out.”⁸⁷ Rev. Moon spent six months serving in the Israel Monastery and wrote many letters to Kim. Kim even received revelations about who Rev. Moon was. Unfortunately, human beings have their own pride and concepts, and he was not able to publicly uplift Rev. Moon and become his chief disciple. Rev. Moon continues, “If Kim's group had united with me, it would have immediately become a perfection-level group. Then I should have sought out other Christian groups. Together with those groups, I should then have connected with ministers from other established Christian churches. Next, I should have connected with the government.”⁸⁸ As a result of all these tragic failures, Rev. Moon and the entire movement had to embark upon a wilderness course, much like the Israelites who wandered in the desert on their way to Canaan. From that point, 1946, Rev. Moon had to go to North Korea, which led him to have to endure two years and eight months in a communist forced labor camp.

Another outcome of this lost foundation was that his followers were not the people who were originally prepared, and who had a basis of influence in society. This contingency is explained in the Exposition of Divine Principle:

God may well reveal the news of the return of Christ first to lay people, to marginal spiritual groups and churches which the mainstream treats with disdain, or to conscientious non-believers. Only later may the news reach the mainstream Christian clergy who are unthinkingly keeping to their conventional ways of faith. In Jesus' day, those who sincerely received the Gospel were not the Jewish leaders, but simple common folk and Gentiles. Likewise, at Christ's return, simple Christians and non-Christians will

⁸⁷ <http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Books/SunMyungMoon-Life/SunMyungMoon-Life-09.htm>

⁸⁸ Ibid

accept the Lord's words before the Christian leadership, which regards itself as God's elect.⁸⁹

In Matthew Chapter 22 we read about the parable of the wedding banquet. What is the meaning of this parable? Jesus speaks of a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son, inviting all the leading men of the community to attend. When they made excuses and declined to come, the king, angry, sent out his servant to find people to fill the hall: “Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.”⁹⁰ Jesus’ followers, and the majority of Rev. Moon’s followers, were people who were met on the street corners, they included the good and the bad. This is the core reason why there has been inner strife, turmoil and division within early Christianity and the Unification movement. Imagine for a moment how different Jesus’ life, ministry and influence during his lifetime could have been had his disciples been the educated high priests of Israel. Instead, Jesus had to raise up and work with a little group of fishermen and tax collectors. Likewise, Rev. Moon’s disciples and followers were not the highly educated or affluent influencers of society. What kind of people were they? The Divine Principle expounds on that:

Among the disciples of Jesus, there was not one who was overly attached to the Old Testament Scriptures. Rather, they all responded to the spiritual experiences which they could sense through their inner minds. In the Last Days, people who lead an ardent life of prayer or who live by their conscience will feel intense anxiety in their hearts. This is because in their hearts they vaguely sense a spiritual calling and want to follow the providence of the new age, yet they have not come in contact with the new truth which can guide them to act accordingly. These are the chosen ones who, once they hear the new truth, will be awakened simultaneously in their spirits and intellects by spirit and truth.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Exposition of Divine Principle, p 323

⁹⁰ Matt 22:9-10 (NIV)

⁹¹ Exposition of Divine Principle, p100

This is a central issue pertaining to this thesis: the transference of faith from one generation to the next. The first generation of Unificationists tended to be a select type of people, who sensed a spiritual calling and responded to the call, choosing to break ties with their own family members, give up their careers, possessions, and dreams. Many were approached and introduced to the Divine Principle, but for various reasons chose not to join the UC. And many of those who joined found themselves unable to continue. Those who did remain were a resilient breed of people, perhaps more tenacious, more convicted, or more spiritually inclined than the average person. Their conviction in Rev. and Mrs. Moon as the True Parents, in the Divine Principle as the new truth, is what carried them through years of intense trials and persecution. Many of them also had experiences of being personally touched by Rev. Moon's charismatic and powerful love, whether it be sitting at his feet for hours while he spoke or out fishing together on the ocean waves. They also experienced bonds of heart as brothers and sisters, fighting together on the frontlines while fundraising, witnessing or engaged in mobilization activities.

The second generation, third generation, are generally a different type of people, growing up in a very different environment, with different perspectives and life experiences. Instead of having struggled in the world seeking for truth, the Divine Principle was freely given to them, or even imposed on them, from a young age. They saw first-hand the contradictions between the idealistic teaching and vision of the Divine Principle, and the realities of the struggles of their own parents, families and UC community.

These are the internal reasons why the True Children walked a difficult course: the prepared foundation had been lost, their parents were engaged in rebuilding a foundation from scratch and leading a worldwide movement. In their place they were raised by imperfect members, who were composed of "the good as well as the bad". As a result, the majority of the Founders' own

children have either strayed, are waiting on the sidelines of the movement, or are even opposing it. This sad and tragic situation is described by Balise,

One of the most painful aspects of the restoration providence is that Father wasn't able to spend more time with his own children. We can only imagine how things might be different if Father had been able to personally take care of his own family. As painful as this must be for Father and his children, it is also a great loss for humanity. How much more smoothly would restoration go if we all had a living, breathing example of what a true family can be? Instead, we see the situation where no one wants to experience what Father's family experienced.⁹²

b) Initiatives pre-2012

The Israelites, liberated from slavery in Egypt, followed Moses for decades in the wilderness, before finally settling Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and Caleb. Habits die hard. Even though they became free people, they did not easily give up their mindset of slaves while wandering the wilderness, and oftentimes relapsed and grumbled at Moses their liberator. Likewise, it must not have been easy for the Israelites, born and raised in the wilderness, to eventually settle and live regular lives in their new land. Most Unificationists joined a movement that was in a constant state of providential intensity, whether it was battling Communism, supporting massive speaking tours, dealing with persecution and setbacks, it was always urgent and "life or death". In such an atmosphere it was not easy to focus on sustainable practices of raising the next generation. However, by the 1990s the focus started to shift, and as Mickler wrote in *Forty Years in America*, "Transmitting its identity to the next generation was an exceedingly live issue for most Unificationists at the end of the century. It also was an area in which the American movement seemed poised to make distinctive contributions."⁹³

⁹² Michael Mickler, *40 Years in America*, p 549

⁹³ *Ibid* p 579

From early on, Sunday school, even a national Sunday school curriculum was created to provide education and support for blessed children and help them assimilate the faith and teachings of the movement. Summer workshops, such as the one held annually at Camp Sunrise (in Harriman State Park, NY), were also a place of gathering and education. An essential element of the transference of faith that is unique and central to Unificationists is the Blessing. Whether they will be matched by True Parents, their parents, or anyone else, choosing to go this path, taking the vows, embracing the values that go along with it, is a sign and act of faith and commitment that every Unificationist hopes for their children. Explicitly for this purpose, in 1998 the Il Shim program was implemented as a ‘rite of passage’ for adolescents. Il Shim, meaning “one heart” in Korean, was inspired by a ceremony carried out in 1985 by Rev. Moon, where he declared the beginning period of responsibility for second-generation Unificationists. Even though a key objective of the program is for participants to endorse a purity-based lifestyle while preparing for the marriage blessing, its broader goal is to encourage blessed children to embrace and inherit the tradition of their faith.

As the second generation were growing up some of the older ones ventured into programs that had been designed for new first generation members. One of those was Religious Youth Service (RYS). RYS was founded by Rev. Moon in 1986, with the mission to “to provide an environment wherein youth can rise above doctrinal differences, unite in activities of service and learning, and develop leadership abilities that enable them to help create a culture of peace.”⁹⁴ Through the RYS experiences, young people from a Unificationist background would get to serve in developing countries side by side with peers from different religious backgrounds. Even though it was not created as a vehicle to impact the blessed children, it became so as throughout

⁹⁴ <http://www.religiousyouthservice.org/about/introduction.htm>

the 90s' more and more second generation became engaged in RYS. John Gehring who has been working for RYS since 1985 and served as its director (1988-90), said "as first-generation members, the biggest challenge is whether we can create a path for the second generation to walk on through which they can contribute. RYS is helping to do this, as are other projects. We have to really invest much, much more in the next decade to help create the second and third generations' path for them."⁹⁵

Another national level initiative was the Special Task Force (STF). Launched in 1994, STF was created to provide a one or two-year training in life of faith. Here again, this program was created primarily for young Unificationists from America or overseas, but blessed children searching for a more experiential way to discover their identity began joining it. Mickler describes the program:

Essentially, those who joined STF replicated the intense regime that first-generation members had experienced during the earlier period. They lived in centers, fundraised, witnessed, studied and lectured the Principle, adhered to public schedules, were encouraged to adhere to "public attitudes," joined demonstrations, canvassed for Rev. and Mrs. Moon's speaking tours, attended workshops and attempted to break through personal barriers. For second generation members who had done none of this before and whose faith was largely conceptual, this was difficult.⁹⁶

Despite the difficulty of the course, more and more second generation joined as it gradually morphed into a program for blessed children. Michael Balcomb, who was a key leader of the STF program in the '90s, said that "every person needs to have his or her direct conversion experience with God...For our children as it was for us, that experience is to be found on the front line."⁹⁷ In the late '90s the program was doubling in size each year as the Blessed children

⁹⁵ Cited in Michael Mickler, *40 Years in America* p 581

⁹⁶ Ibid p 583

⁹⁷ Cited in Michal Mickler, *40 Years in America* p 584

of the 1982 Blessing were coming of age. In 2001 Hyun Jin Moon who was the Vice President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (1998-2008), took it into his own hands to revamp the STF program and committed to raising leaders for the movement from amongst the second generation. He expressed his heart that he felt “a clear obligation to revive the second generation of our movement as well as offer a fresh new vision for the world’s youth.”⁹⁸ In the same speech he outlined the issue:

Up until now...a systematic course of education and development was not laid out to prepare these youth to rightfully inherit their birthright as heirs of our movement. As a result, many have become disillusioned and have fallen astray. I pledge to alter this current state by reinvigorating them to recognize their value as historical figures in bringing about a world of peace and love. By raising these young people to represent God’s ideal, they will offer an alternative standard of life to the young people of the world.⁹⁹

Hyun Jin Moon invested tremendous energy into the youth and besides STF, quite some momentum was created through CARP¹⁰⁰ conventions and Service for Peace¹⁰¹ rallies. However, STF was the only full-time transformational program, and it was primarily for an elite core of second generation members, those who were willing to commit themselves to a full year or more of intense training, primarily through fundraising and witnessing activities. From 2006 the program began to diversify itself to include a wider range of experiences such as overseas service to developing countries, outdoor adventure training, blessing workshops and more. In 2010 the program was rebranded as Generation Peace Academy (GPA), which reflects the shift

⁹⁸ Ibid p 549

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ CARP: Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, organization founded by Rev. Moon to promote universal principles on campus

¹⁰¹ Service for Peace: a non-profit organization created by Hyun Jin nim focused on involving volunteers in ongoing development programs throughout the world.

from an intense, almost military type of unit, to a broader public awareness: the focus is not only how to transform our young people, but also how to create a positive impact on society.

From the early 2000s' more and more second generation in America were coming of age to go the path of blessing, and a network of support was put in place to guide them through the process: the blessed family department, matching advisors, blessing workshops...The sanctification of the marriage through the blessing ceremony is the very core of what it means to be a Unificationists. For the first generation, converted to the movement, the blessing is the way to remove original sin and be engrafted onto a new lineage, God's lineage. For blessed children being blessed to one another is the way to preserve that lineage that their parents fought so hard to attain. Thus, a new humanity is born, becoming more and more purified through each generation. Therefore, it is not an understatement to say that the blessing is central and essential to being a Unificationist, and it is every parent's hope for their child to have a successful, happy and lasting blessing. For second and third generation and beyond to embrace the blessing is the culmination and ultimate purpose of all the various trainings and programs discussed above.

However, when it comes to the choice of one's spouse and commitment to marriage, there is no single straight path that works for all. Untangling the complex history of love, lineage and relationships cannot be accomplished in one generation. Different routes emerged as some had the faith, standard and confidence to be matched directly by Rev. and Mrs. Moon, while others relied on their parents and mentors, and others strayed off the path and went their own way. Even though we do not have the data to back it up, it would be safe to say that those who successfully went through the "narrow gate" of being blessed to another blessed child a minority. A number have found alternative paths, or opened a wider gate by being blessed to one who is

not a blessed child. And unfortunately, the great majority have strayed off the path altogether and chosen not to associate with the Unification movement.

c) Initiatives post 2012

Hak Ja Han Moon, known as the "Mother of Peace," or even more intimately as "True Mother," is greatly concerned with the important questions of settlement, of sustainability. Her late husband the Rev Moon was blazing a trail through the wilderness, undergoing life and death battles, all the while intent on defeating global communism in the face of worldwide persecution. She is left with the task to ensure that the generations to come continue and complete the work that has been started. Just a few weeks after his passing she acknowledged the reality of our shortcomings as a movement, and stepped up to take responsibility for them: "Unfortunately, however, when it comes to those who should lead the Unification Church in the future, we have failed to fulfill our responsibility. We have allowed many second-generation members to drift away. I am in a position where I must take full responsibility for the present reality."¹⁰²

In the same address, as she was formulating her strategy to lead this worldwide movement, she clearly stated that one of her top three priorities was to raise up leaders from amongst the youth: "I have said that, henceforth, I will place more importance on the second generation. To make sure that the results of your past efforts were not in vain, we need to train talented people who can take responsibility for the future."¹⁰³

¹⁰² 2012.10.18, CheongHae Garden, Anthology 1, Global Unity through True Parents p 198

¹⁰³ 2012.10.18, Garden, Anthology 1, Global Unity through True Parents p 300

As we have seen, despite the setbacks and adversity the movement faces, a huge foundation had been built and much sacrifice had already been made. She could not afford to have the investment made by the first generation be lost. Therefore the next generation has to quickly be prepared to assume the mantle of leadership, hence the sense of urgency in her tone. She clearly outlined her priority: “Now I am trying to appoint young people for the sake of our future generations. From now the age group will continue to become younger. This is necessary for the sake of our future. You have to raise your successor.”¹⁰⁴

Speaking to the second generation members she has often referred to them as “pure water” that heaven has been waiting for since thousands of years. She carries the analogy forward and says that for the water to not become stagnant, for it to remain fresh and alive, it has to flow, and especially it has to flow outwards. Speaking to the blessed children, she has instructed them:

You need to light up the world. You are the pure water born for the first time in 6,000 years. Pure water must not become muddy water. In order not to become muddy water, you need to keep on flowing. By flowing, I mean that you need to keep on developing. In this way, you need to not only stay healthy, but also grow in every aspect, including in your heart and in your faith.¹⁰⁵

One of her first initiatives, just a few months after Father’s passing was to create a leadership training academy, Universal Peace Academy (UPA), a school where the finest and most public minded young people can be prepared to become leaders for our movement. She describes her vision for UPA:

Universal Peace Academy will teach every subject that is teachable and necessary in all aspects centered on the Principle. It will also educate in substantial leadership practice and activities. The cadets who graduate from this course must do a 1-year internship activity. I will train them hard and make it a famous academy that offers all kinds of

¹⁰⁴ 2014/10/27 Cheon Jeon Gun

¹⁰⁵ (2015.05.10, Hilton Hotel, Vienna, Austria) Anthology 1, Global Unity through True Parents p 302)

cultural arts. It will be a graduate school for leader education. I am going to give them such tough training and make many future leaders. Have hope, everyone. (October 1, 2012)

Through UPA she intended to create a core group of highly trained young people who would later be sent out to support the world-wide movement in leadership roles. When we study history, we see that in 1558 John Calvin, sometimes referred to as the most important figure in the second generation of the Protestant Reformation, created the Geneva Academy. Students came from all over Europe, helping to spread the fire of the Reformation. Supposedly one of the school's mottos was "send us your wood, and we will send you back arrows."¹⁰⁶ As a result, Geneva became a dynamic center from which the vital missionary energy which it generated radiated out into the world beyond. As we recall the Puritans also founded Harvard after a few years on the new continent, and as we saw in 1875 Brigham Young also founded an Academy, which would become BYU.

It is important to note here, that the bar to enter UPA is high as it is a specialized leadership academy, thus it only appeals to a small percentage of the Unification movement's next generation. Here True Mother outlines her vision for the academy as a model:

In particular, we failed to educate the successors, second generations and leaders. That resulted from our failing to witness to everyone. That is why the second point I emphasized was the training of leaders, including the management of the second generation. I said I will concentrate on that. To set an example, I established a training academy in Korea. It is not a military school like West Point; it is an educational institute for training leaders, where they will study for a master's degree.¹⁰⁷

The educational expectations are high. Cadets at the academy already have graduated with degrees in fields of business, finance, engineering, linguistics, technology... Whatever

¹⁰⁶ <https://history.familyfed.org/tm-sermons/universal-peace-academy-attending-true-parents-in-its-second-year>

¹⁰⁷ 2012.10.27, M Hotel, Las Vegas, Anthology 1, p 308

subject they study they are expected to use the best possible secular source material as well as studying the subject from a Unificationist perspective. They undergo an intensive training in self-discipline and leadership, and they research intently Rev. and Mrs. Moon's teachings in the original language to understand the core of the message. Upon graduating they are assigned missions around the world, as youth envoys.

A few years later in 2014 she launched the CIG Youth Missionary program. With a motherly heart she called back the original missionaries who had been sent out in 1975, many of whom were in their 70s. In their stead she deployed the young people of Korea, Japan and America to serve on rotations of a year as missionaries, partly for their own training, but also for the benefit of the countries served. Their mission was to inherit the legacy and foundation of the 1975 missionaries, and reignite the spirit of the early church in all corners of the world.

America's CIG missionary program, which is a branch of GPA, is now in its seventh year, and strives to carry out the mission to *"raise youth to invest unconditionally as missionaries by testifying to the heart of God and shaping providential history."*¹⁰⁸ Although it is young and small in scale compared to the LDS Missionary program, it has been growing steadily each year. In 2016, the first 7 volunteers set off to the Philippines, by now each year over 30 participants serve in countries in Europe, South America, Caribbean and Africa. Unlike the Mormon missionaries they are not in pairs, but in teams of 4 or 5, with one amongst them trained to be the team leader. Interpersonal skills and teamwork are a must. They also differ from the LDS missionaries in that they are visited at least once every 40 days by a staff. As someone who oversees this program (CIG Mission director) I can attest that those young people who are choosing to dedicate a year or two to engage in witnessing activities are having life changing

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.cigmission.org/>

experiences. Many amongst them would testify that it is based on this experience that they were able to finally grasp what it means to be born as a Unificationist. A common testimony is that they felt that God and True parents were witnessing to them, while they were out witnessing to people. Going to school they were often shy, uncomfortable or embarrassed about their parents' faith. But during their year they gain the confidence and the resources to share their faith with others. By engaging with hundreds of other young people from all walks of life, many of whom are not as fortunate as they are, they will witness the power of Divine Principle to give life and hope to people. Most significantly, those who graduate from the CIG mission, tend to have a high retention rate when it comes to their long-term engagement in public activities.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile the Generation Peace Academy “gap year” program has been developing and improving itself consistently. It went through some turbulent times, including some dramatic changes of leadership of the American movement and the challenges of the recent Covid years, but it maintained its course as a program designed to create a conducive environment for participants to come to own their faith. This can be called a one or two year “formula course,” much like Rev. Moon had advocated decades earlier for the 1st generation to go through a training period of 7 years, which he called a formula course:

As I had to indemnify all the failures of the 7,000-year history within my seven-year course, and show you the way through which you can personally indemnify 7,000 years within seven years of your life, it is like a super highway is built for anyone to follow the seven-year course -- within a short 7 years, you can achieve the position of going through 7,000 years of restoration history victoriously. The only thing that you have to do is run through this seven-year course.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Based on research carried out by CIG mission staff on the situation of alumni who have graduated in the last 7 years, 9 out of 10 are engaged in CARP or some local ministry.

¹¹⁰ Sun Myung Moon, September 22, 1978, God's Will and the World, A Day When We Welcome the Blessing

Rev. Moon himself went through an intensive time period of his life and based on this he promoted the 7 years formula course for 1st generation, as a way for them to inherit his foundation. This would typically include 3.5 years of fundraising training, and 3.5 years of witnessing training, all a foundation to receive the blessing. However, just going through the time period is not enough, Rev. Moon explains the attitude required:

Since you will complete the formula course, which I walked during 40 years, within seven years, the time will pass rapidly while trying to go through this compressed seven years. You must be resolute to go this path with an absolute standard, while paying attention not to make any mistakes. You should have many intense experiences that are filled with pain in your heart, and with this have tears you shed not only for your sake alone, but for your family, clan, nation and the world. In order to accumulate such experiences, you should not desire to go an easy path, but live your life with passion burning inside you, even forgetting sleeping.¹¹¹

The year on GPA is a condensed experience where spiritual growth is intensified, however, it is not limited to fundraising and witnessing training. It also includes overseas service in developing countries, thorough Divine Principle education, and activities such as wilderness training where participants spend time in nature. One of the objectives of the program is to get participants inspired and ready for the path of the blessing, by strengthening their personal relationship with God, with True Parents, and helping them to understand and value what their parents did and what the movement is offering for the world. The GPA program has been raising future family builders and good contributors to the world.

In 2015, Youngsoon Quinn, a graduate of GPA, wrote her thesis on “The Effectiveness of Spiritual and Identity Formation found on Generation Peace Academy.” Based on her interviews with a pool of alumni, this was the outcome of her research:

From giving the second generation members of the Unification Movement that chance to experience and be exposed to what their parents were so much inspired of the Unification

¹¹¹ Ibid

Movement when they joined, in a yearlong program along with other second generation members, may give the second generation members a conversion experience of their own. An experience to claim their own faith.¹¹²

There is no guarantee of success, and each participant will only gain as much as he or she invested, but her research concludes:

Whether or not the participants of Generation Peace Academy will actively involve themselves with the Unification Movement, or consider themselves as a member, is their decision. Generation Peace Academy has provided for the participants a setting where Unification morals, ideals and teachings are present. From the research, it shows that as long as there are interactions with people, and activities with people for people, then the participants will gain something worthwhile and be impacted in ways that allows the participants to create themselves and develop their identity, way of thinking, life of faith and their spirituality.

She continues:

Generation Peace Academy is a program that does its best to create a positive environment, by putting the focus on developing relationships and thus a place where camaraderie-love is formed with other participants. It has been shown from testimonies that Generation Peace Academy gives its participants an energy and vigor for life and love.¹¹³

A myriad of other opportunities and programs do exist for Unificationists youth to be challenged and to grow in their faith: in America there are a wide variety of Summer camp experiences to choose from, which could range from a few days to a couple weeks long. They all provide a combination of Divine Principle education, and bonding activities where hearts are opened and connected. Then there is the three-week National Ocean Challenge Program¹¹⁴ (NOCP) operating in Kodiak Alaska. Rev. Moon himself was known to spend an extensive time fishing out in the ocean in any kind of weather. This is where he connected to God, taking time away from the busyness of life to cast long term goals and visions. In his autobiography, he writes “the ocean has been such a wonderful teacher for me in my life that I created the Ocean

¹¹² Youngsoon Quinn, The Effectiveness of Spiritual and Identity Formation found on Generation Peace Academy, UTS Thesis 2015.

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ <https://www.kodiakoceantribe.org>

Challenge program to give young people the leadership training the ocean provides.”¹¹⁵ Starting back in the 80s’ Rev. Moon would bring young people and leaders to join him in ocean fishing challenges, often for 40 days at a time. Out of that tradition the NOCP has emerged, and over the course of 21 days young people will be trained and challenged out on the waves. Here is an invitation and description of the program:

NOCP offers a unique hands-on immersion experience of God's Creation for young adults in remote Kodiak, Alaska. With the ocean as the training ground, come develop character and confidence through seamanship, experience the heart of stewardship, and cultivate faith through experiencing God’s love through nature. NOCP seeks to continue Father and Mother Moon’s tradition and legacy of growing the character and faith of young people through leadership training on the sea. Through internal guidance and connecting to their words and experience, participants have the opportunity to walk in Father and Mother Moon's shoes and experience all the lessons that the ocean has to teach.¹¹⁶

This ocean challenge program has provided powerful faith building experiences for young people. The only limitation is that the season is short, and the capacity is limited. In her Memoire True Mother writes about the benefits of going out onto the seas for young people: “if young people want to think big, they should go out to sea. It’s easy to follow a set path on land, but not at sea. In just a few hours a sea that has been like a calm lake can turn into a roller coast ride on ferocious waves. Young people who train themselves on top of these waves can achieve great dreams.”¹¹⁷

Another venue for education and support is CARP, the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles¹¹⁸, which supports students while in college or university. CARP’s history dates back to its founding by Rev. Moon in 1966. Nowadays its goals are no longer about

¹¹⁵ Peace Loving Global Citizen, Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.kodiakoceantribe.org>

¹¹⁷ Moon, Hak Ja Han *Mother of Peace*, p 226

¹¹⁸ <https://www.carplife.org/who-we-are>

fighting against the forces of communism on campus, but rather on sustaining the spiritual education of young Unificationists, and providing a vehicle for outreach and witnessing. Back in 2012, CARP had virtually no presence or activity in America, but now has grown to having 35 chapters where CARP is active, and it continues to expand. Even though CARP is not an immersion program and may not provide extreme transformation, it certainly provides support and growth in a spiritually difficult environment of college campus where students could easily be absorbed by the secular culture.

With the heart of a mother, Hak Ja Han Moon has been leading the way by further opening the path of the blessing. There has been a major emphasis on blessing education and preparation, as well as the establishment of a global network for matching beyond continents. Starting with her own family she has blessed her own grandchildren in a very traditional way, emphasizing her respect for the narrow gate model. At the same time she expanded the reach of the blessing, by blessing a true child to a 1st generation, and even blessing two of them to non Unificationists.

To a gathering of blessed children she expresses her sincere love and heart, which extends to humanity: “Please grow up well and in good health. As your Queen-Mom, I want to eternally love and bless all of you - you who are of the second, third, fourth, and fifth generations.”¹¹⁹

d) Conclusion and the Path Forward.

¹¹⁹ Hak Ja Han Moon, May 8 2022, <https://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/HakJaHan-22/HakJaHan-220508.pdf>

So, what can we as a Unification Movement learn from this history, what lessons can we apply in this critical time of transition, and how can we create the environment and opportunities for the next generation to own their faith?

Clearly, generations are different. One lesson that we learned from the early Puritans who settled in America, is that their life experience was unique. It was not realistic or sustainable to expect the subsequent generations to all have the experience of being touched by God's grace in order to be counted among the Saints. Having that spiritual experience is not something that one can control, or make happen. However, it is possible to ask, or require of them to confirm to a certain lifestyle or set of values. Fortunately, the Puritans were able to make that shift and opened a wider gate to include a greater demographic.

No intergenerational research would be complete without including a note on generational differences. Each generation is a product of its particular circumstances and the historical or societal events that shaped it. One can only imagine how events such as the Babylonian exile, or the black plague, or the Thirty Years War would have impacted a generation. The majority of the 1st generation Unificationists were considered Baby Boomers. These boomers had grown up during the Cold War, they tended to reject their parents' traditional values and get swept away by the counter-revolution. As mentioned earlier, many were disillusioned with what society and established religions had to offer and were actively seeking for alternate spiritual paths. Many of those who joined the movement were backpackers in search of meaning for their lives when they encountered the Divine Principle.

In contrast, the majority of the second generation in America are what one calls Millennials or Gen Z. They are not found traveling the world with backpacks in search of the truth. They grew up in relative comfort, with the internet and social media, and tend to be more

concerned with social issues than spiritual ones. It is unrealistic to expect a Millennial blessed child to have a conversion experience while reading the Divine Principle, just as it was unrealistic to expect all Puritan youngsters growing up in New England to be transformed by the grace of God. However, there must be a way to reach the hearts of every generation.

The American socialist of religion, Rodney Stark, author of *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, provides valuable input on the way and the role of “secondary converts.” He explains:

It will be helpful here to distinguish between primary and secondary conversions. In primary conversion, the convert takes an active role in his or her own conversion, becoming a committed adherent based on positive evaluations of the particular faith, albeit that attachments to members play a major role in the formation of a positive evaluation. Secondary conversion is more passive and involves somewhat reluctant acceptance of a faith on the basis of attachments to a primary convert.¹²⁰

This relates to blessed children who become part of the movement as a result of their parents’ faith. Stark’s research emphasizes how crucial the role of these secondary converts was in quickly spreading the Jesus movement into the mainstream. And based on his research this is true for the majority of religious movements. Stark describes conversion as “a network phenomenon based on interpersonal attachments.”¹²¹ He does not belittle the quality of faith of those secondary converts, many of whom have strong conviction. This is in line with what we observe with the blessed children.

Many factors played a part in the rapid rise of Christianity, including a large number of exogamous marriages: in the majority of cases, it was Christian women marrying pagan

¹²⁰ Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, p 3 of chap. 5.

¹²¹ *Ibid* p 10

husbands and leading them to Christianity. But also, in the declining population of the Roman Empire of that time, Christians benefited from a higher-than-average rate and quality of marriages, which produced more children and also contributed to the growth of the early church. Stark writes that “If a major factor in lower fertility among pagans was a male-oriented culture that held marriage in low esteem, a major factor in higher fertility of Christians was a culture that sanctified the marital bond.”¹²² Christian families took to heart the biblical direction to “be fruitful and multiply”. Stark concludes that “superior fertility played a significant role in the rise of Christianity”¹²³. Therefore, Christian children, or their ‘second generation’, were crucial to Christianity’s unprecedented growth and success. It is interesting to note that just as the early Christian movement had a surplus of marriageable women, the Unificationist community faces the same situation, on every continent, whether it be amongst the 1st or second generation.

As we come to the conclusion of this thesis, I here offer some of my observations and insights, as someone who has been involved in the life of faith education and training of the second generation for over 20 years as staff of STF and GPA, and since 2006 as the director. GPA’s mission statement is to “raise the upcoming generation to inherit and embody the Unificationist faith, and step up to take their place in providential history”. This is very much aligned with the theme of this thesis, and GPA provides a good model of how this transition can be facilitated. Even the staff of the program has morphed over the last 7 years from being an almost exclusively first-generation staff, to a mixed staff which now includes a majority of second generation, or young Unificationists. Two of those young staff are graduates of UPA, the model leadership training course which True Mother has implemented in the last 10 years. The

¹²² Ibid p 15.

¹²³ Ibid p 9.

elder staff provide the tradition and vertical core, while the younger staff bring tremendous energy and creativity. Blessed children are truly gifted in many areas: on the foundation of having inherited the faith of their parent's generation, they have the potential to bring this program, and the entire movement to a whole new level. This is what we can be hopeful about and excited to see over the next decades, provided we learn the lessons of history.

Certainly, there are some second generation who have thrived and even taken on leadership roles without going through a formula course program like GPA, but they are rare. In most instances they benefited from some exceptional support from their families, community, or even some spiritual experience of grace. The vast majority of blessed children coming out of high school are not adequately prepared or spiritually equipped to deal with the onslaught of secular humanism which they will face in college or university. Unfortunately, most will face the same fate as the boiled frog in the anecdotal parable: without even noticing it they will slip further and further into the murky waters of secular culture until they are fully submerged.

Another important factor affecting our youth is that fewer and fewer of the 1st generation have gone through the formula course training which Rev. Moon had advocated. When the time came around for the children of the '82 Blessing to join STF, the great majority of parents had themselves gone through, and valued that formula course. However, this is no longer true for the '92, '95, '97, '98 blessings and onwards. Whereas in the earlier years of the movement the focus of witnessing was to generate new members, in the more recent years the emphasis moved to bring people to the blessing. The blessing became globalized and requirements were loosened as the goal became to spread the blessing to millions. The fact that parents did not go through a formula course training themselves is a serious issue, as parents have a huge influence on their children. They cannot be expected to understand or value something that they did not go through

themselves. As one outcome, many Unificationist parents are prioritizing academics and career over their children's spiritual lives. If this trend is to continue, and the percentage of blessed children who choose to take a year to invest into their faith continues to decrease, the Unification movement will face a critical situation. If the majority of the second generation are lost, there is not much hope for the third, fourth, fifth, or tenth generation. The providence centering on the Unification movement will take much longer.

Hak Ja Han Moon highlights the serious issue of the lost second generation: "Our history dates back 60 years, and yet we do not have a welcoming environment for our second generation. That is why many of them drifted away. They have gone astray because their parents failed to create an environment where they could grow up within the providence, and we cannot just let them remain distant from us any longer."¹²⁴

As Unificationists we would do well to learn from successful religion movements who have been around for longer than us. We have learned about the development of the Mormon youth missionary program. We recall how in 1974 LDS President Kimball gave a landmark address that forever changed the way the LDS view the missionary service of young men. From that point onwards every subsequent President re-emphasized the same message: young people should choose to take two years after graduating high school to be a missionary and experience first-hand what it means to be a Latter-Day Saint. This consistent message from the top, along with the implementation of the LDS missionary training and support systems, is what cemented a tradition: now Mormon youth are from a young age expecting or anticipating to go off on a mission after graduating high school.

¹²⁴ Anthology 1, Global Unity through True Parents, 2013.05.08, Cheon Jeong Gung, p 300

The GPA program, in order to become the mainstream traditional path upon which most Unificationist youth embark, would have to be upgraded. As it is there are limitations: the challenges of fundraising and witnessing are powerful and transformative, but they not for everyone. This is the fast-track course, and it is like a catalyst for change: great pressure is applied and transformation takes place. This is how diamonds are formed, and for most young people it is a good method. One week of fundraising can sometimes feel like an entire month, and GPA participants will often claim that they experienced years and years of growth in a few short months.

However, for some, due to their character type, upbringing, or life experience, being in such an environment where they are being continuously confronted is not beneficial or healthy. Fundraising and witnessing are called the ‘frontline,’ as there is no escape from challenges. Some people would better benefit from a more peaceful and supportive environment, where they are nurtured and gently challenged. For GPA to really become a program that can receive and impact all second, third generation and beyond, it would need to develop a wider range of training programs. For example, a stewardship component: learning to take care of land or animals, and build cabins or trails in the woods. One could also create a service branch of GPA, which focuses on serving people in need or on disaster relief. There are many ways to grow spiritually.

As we come to the conclusion of this thesis, one lesson is timelessly clear: we saw that the Puritans upheld a very high standard for their membership. They were faced with the decision to adopt a controversial “innovation” which was designed to deal with the increasing number of second-generation colonists who desired that their children be baptized, even though they had not themselves experienced saving grace. Ultimately, they saw themselves as agents of

reformation of the wider Church. In order to effectively carry that out, they had to appeal to a larger percentage of the population, not just to a select elite. Therefore, they chose to “compromise” their standard, or widened the gate, thus prioritizing their evangelical mission.

We learned how the Latter-Day Saints always had a missionary spirit. However, after about 100 years their strategy became to encourage younger and younger people to go out. Even though their youth missionary program may not yield that much result in numbers of new members, it has proven extremely valuable when it comes to the next generation owning their faith.

Finally, when we look at the Unification movement, we see how Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has been focusing on preparing the next generation, and creating a sustainable movement. The covenant of the blessing needs to be shared with others, yet it cannot be watered down to the point that it has no value or is unrecognizable. Our movement will have to continue to pioneer strategies to widen the gate, and perhaps build upon early Christianity’s success of exogamous marriages. In his article *The Providential Necessity of “Open” Blessings*, Mickler writes: “New religious movements need to retain their distinctive character during their formative years. However, beyond a certain point, rigid boundaries foster an excessively inwardly-looking culture that is antithetical to growth and unattractive even to those who remain within the faith.”¹²⁵

Two of Hak Ja Han’s initiatives for youth, UPA and the CIG Missionary program emphasize outreach and witnessing. The STF and GPA program has been in existence for a couple decades with widely varied results. The reality is that many alumni were not able to “plug in” or engage in a mission after they graduated. Partly this was due to the fact the communities

¹²⁵ <https://appliedunificationism.com/2014/01/27/the-providential-necessity-of-open-blessings/>

and CARP were not prepared to receive them and involve them. The other big factor was that the STF and GPA training was primarily focused on fundraising training, and not easily transferable to life after. However, the CIG missionary program that is now in its 7th years has an over 90% retention rate amongst its graduates,¹²⁶ which points to outreach and witnessing as the path of salvation for the blessed children. It is the heart of the witnesser that is revived. It is by focusing outside of ourselves, beyond our church and movement, that we find fulfillment and purpose. That is when we recognize how much we have been given: that we were born to be “a light onto the world and the salt of the earth.” A recently returned CIG missionary to Albania, Toshio Barber, summarizes it very well:

Especially as Second Gen, we don't realize we're being spoon fed gold day after day through the Divine Principle. It's not until we witness the transformation of others that we can fully witness to ourselves. This experience to me was deeply God-given. I couldn't have just stumbled upon it, but God was expressing the value of what I have my life revolving around. And it only makes sense to share it with the world.¹²⁷

We see this principle at work in our own lives and in those of great people. Whenever we seek to preserve ourselves, or are focused on our own issues, we decrease, but the more we strive altruistically for a higher purpose, the more energy and power are given to us. As we get to the conclusion of this thesis, we come to reflect on the key factor of the research that Stark has carried out over years on the growth and sustainability of religious movements:

The basis for successful conversionist movements is growth through social networks, through a structure of direct and intimate interpersonal attachments. Most new religious movements fail because they quickly become closed, or semi closed networks. That is, they fail to keep forming and sustaining attachments to outsiders and thereby lose the capacity to grow. Successful movements discover techniques for remaining open networks, able to reach out and into new adjacent social networks. And herein lies the

¹²⁶ Based on research made by CIG Staff in 2021, finding that 90% alumni of past 6 years are engaged in CARP or some local ministry.

¹²⁷ Toshio Barber, 20, served as a missionary in Shkodra Albania from November 2021 to March 2022.

capacity of movements to sustain exponential rates of growth over a long period of time.¹²⁸

As True Mother has been urging us, the Unification movement in this delicate time of transition needs to pay a lot of attention to the transference of faith to the next generation. The water needs to keep flowing and giving life. If this does not happen much sacrifice and investment will go to waste. She uses the analogy of spinning a top, if we can generate enough momentum now, this will propel the movement forward, and at some point, it will become self-propelling and unstoppable.

If we cannot help our future generations take firm root on a solid foundation, when could this world possibly become one united world centered on God? You need to make it so that such a world indeed comes to be. When spinning a top, you have seen that if you apply enough force, it spins for a long time even when you don't whip it again, haven't you?¹²⁹

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¹²⁸ Stark, the Rise of Christianity, p 9 of chap. 1.

¹²⁹ 2012.10.18, Garden, Anthology 1, Global Unity through True Parents p 300

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