

Father's Early Ministry in Pyongyang - Part 8

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Communist infiltration of society

Even in 1948, North Korea was not yet a communist country; religious freedom was granted and public gatherings were permitted. But public opinion was being directed towards the communist way. I would like to explain how the communists worked to destroy Christianity.

There were many groups for people to belong to at that time. Children had to attend the children's group, young people had to attend the Young Pioneers, adults had to attend labor meetings, etc. So according to his age, each person had to belong to a group, and communist education was carried out through these groups.

To undermine the foundations of Christianity, the government decided to hold special events at school on Sundays. Sunday had generally been a day off from school. Parents of elementary school students were often Christians, and they would take their children to church with them on Sundays. Initially, the non-Christian students came to the special events and the Christian students attended church. So the teachers would send the non-Christian students to check on who went to church.

One of the activities during the group meetings was self-criticism. Even elementary school students had to criticize themselves and each other. If one student had not attended the special event on Sunday, the student who led the meeting would criticize him (the teacher was present but acted only as an observer). Based on the reports made by the student informer, the leader of course already knew who had attended church and who had not, but he would pretend not to. Then he would call on the students from Christian families to explain why they had not attended the meeting and ask them to repent for their fault. Even though these students were from Christian families, they were young and their faith was often not so strong. In front of the larger peer group, they would repent, shed tears and pledge not to return to church. They had to promise to attend the special meeting every Sunday. After making such a commitment in front of many people, they could not return to church.

Adult groupings were based on jobs: there were miners' cells, postal clerks' cells, etc., according to the company. There were still people in business for themselves, so special cells were formed for merchants and shopkeepers. In such a society, if people don't work, they cannot eat. So all the beggars were sent to one island and made to work. As a result of that training, the beggars ceased to be beggars. Idle young people were also gathered into one place and made to work. Thus, society eliminated beggars and juvenile delinquents.

Each day, every group or cell had to study communist theory. If people are illiterate, they cannot study communism, so a system for literacy education was devised, in which students were sent to the houses of uneducated people to teach them to read and get them to study communist theory. This campaign was well planned and carried out. If the parents could not read, their children had to bring them to a literacy program. Even though the parents might not want to go, the children had the duty to bring their parents to learn to read and study communist theory.

The communists appropriated the property of the large landowners and divided it equally among those who had no land. Previously, the peasants had labored for the large landowners, but when they were given land by the communists, they were initially very happy. However, although the government allowed them to work their own land, they demanded large taxes, so the farmers had to turn over almost everything they produced. Therefore, their suffering became even greater than it had been previously.

In South Korea, people were free to change their occupation, but that was prohibited in the North. Also, each time North Koreans wanted to go somewhere, they had to get permission.

In such a situation, Father was trying to carry out his work, but you can imagine how difficult it was to witness under such circumstances. Christianity was prepared to receive Father, but instead of uniting with him, they joined forces with the communists, persecuted him and in the end sent him to prison.

After a year and a half of unsuccessfully trying to hinder our church, the ministers denounced Father. They had already tried arguing about the Bible and putting pressure on the families of our members, but to no avail. The Unification Church kept growing.

Christian ministers sent about 80 letters to the communist authorities denouncing Father. You might wonder why they sent letters. Think about the time of Jesus: the Jewish leaders united with the Roman authorities in persecuting Jesus. By themselves, the Christian ministers could do nothing to stop Father's activities. That is why they united with the communists.

Father's second arrest

On February 22, 1948, Father was arrested and thrown into prison. It was a Sunday, about two hours before the Sunday service was to begin. Members had already gathered and were preparing for service; many were in the room praying when the policemen arrived.

Four other members were also arrested with Father, myself among them. On the way to the police station, I was walking alongside Father. We had to pass through the city, and there was a lot of noise, but because I was walking beside him, I was close enough to hear his breathing.

Father was placed in prison, but the rest of us were soon set free. During my two days in prison, I was interrogated by the police. From my experiences in this investigation, I could guess what kind of accusations they were preparing to bring against Father. They asked me two questions:

1. What kind of person is this Sun Myung Moon?
2. Did you give any donation to his church?

They attempted to get a lot of information about me. At that time, I was teaching at a school, so the police went to the school and questioned every student about what I was teaching them.

Those communists knew nothing about Christianity and cared even less, because they denied religion itself. If someone gave a donation to Father, they interpreted it that he was getting money from the members and using it for himself. If people thought Father was the Messiah, they would consider it a ruse to gather as many people as possible and collect much money from them. They were trying to fabricate some story that he was collecting a lot of money from the people.

The trial

Because Father had studied electrical engineering, the communists wanted their leaders to come to court to witness his trial. April 17 was the date for Father's trial; originally, the trial was set for an earlier date, but it was postponed so all the core communist leaders could attend. The court was packed with people, Christians on one side and top communist leaders on the other.

When the trial opened, Father was brought in handcuffs and set before the judge, along with other prisoners. Father's hair had been cut off. The other criminals were also handcuffed, but their heads were hanging down. Father, however, stood up, stretched and sat down again. He acted so calmly and naturally. Until that time, I had thought of Father as just a quiet, calm person. But in that situation, seeing him act so naturally gave me a different perspective on him. I felt that Father was thinking, "Now is the time to

really fight."

The court session opened. Father was asked detailed questions about his major in the university, etc. He replied, "I majored in electrical engineering." The next question was, "Please explain how electricity is produced." In great detail Father explained how electricity worked. The prosecutors brought up this point because electricity is invisible, but still man-made. They wanted to draw a parallel between electricity, being invisible and man-made, and God, whom they wanted to present as invisible and fabricated by man.

The accusations they used against Father included spreading falsehoods, taking money from innocent people and using them to get more money from others. Furthermore, they accused Father of destroying the family and institutions, bringing disorder to society.

When the judge read the sentence Father requested that he delete the part about spreading falsehoods and deceiving people. People had given money to the church, so he did not protest that, but he strongly objected to the charge that he was disseminating lies.

Ordinarily, prisoners kept silence when they were being sentenced, because they did not want to risk incurring longer or heavier sentences. But Father has never been afraid of saying what was right; he disregarded the risks.

So Father was sentenced to five years in prison. When the court was dismissed, Father came out, still wearing handcuffs. At that time, we feared this would be our last opportunity to see Father before he was placed in prison. The thought of not seeing him for five years left us disconsolate; we felt like children whose parents were taken away from them.

We were allowed to bring food to Father, but after lunch, he had to go. As he was being taken away, he smiled, lifted up his chains and waved them. "Don't worry," he told us, "please keep healthy [a typical oriental greeting] and work hard until I come back and see you again. Please take care of yourselves." These words really removed our worries and made us feel relieved.

Before being taken to prison, Father had received a revelation that there was a young man waiting for him there. Therefore, Father went to prison filled with hope, eager to meet the people God had prepared for him there.

Rev. Won Pil Kim followed Father from 1946 -- when, as an 18-year-old, he met True Father in Pyongyang -- until 2010 when he ascended to the spirit world.