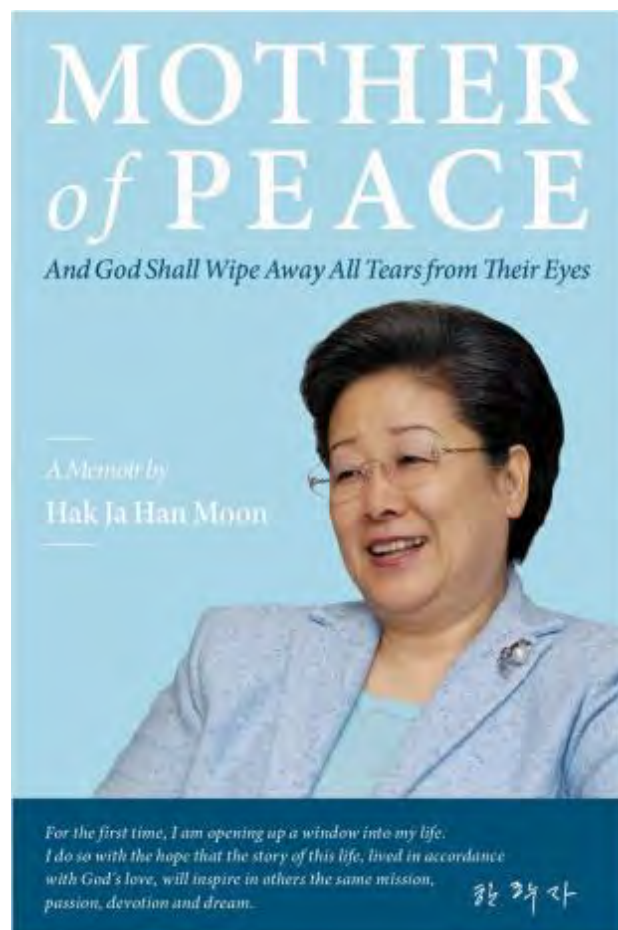


Reflections on Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's Memoir, "Mother of Peace"

Eileen Williams
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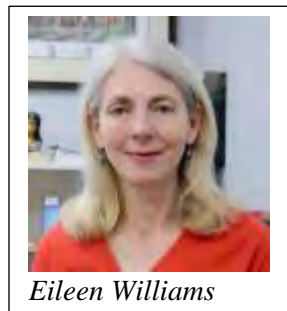
Reading the memoir, *Mother of Peace* by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, became for me a contemplative personal reflection of the labyrinth-like journey of the Unification Church and its metamorphosis into Heavenly Parent's Holy Community.

I was late to reading True Mother's memoir. It was daunting. I put it off. When I finally dove in, a few themes struck a reverberant chord: True Mother's understanding of herself as a historical person, God's healing power of love and forgiveness, and the singular purpose of the messianic mission.

I was moved by True Mother's anecdotal retelling of her early life in the first four chapters. Middle chapters lose some of their intimate narrative as they veer towards grandiloquence when describing some of the philosophical underpinnings of the various church organizations; however, there are some powerful testimonies regarding foreign missionary work and True Parents' visits to countries, unthinkable to visit at the time.

The last third of the book, a head-spinning account of travels to Africa and island nations, highlights behind the scenes activities and their interplay within the international scope of the work of True Parents. Therefore, if the reader perseveres to the

end (not a particularly easy task at 359 pages) then he or she could certainly be rewarded -- as I was -- with an amazing glimpse into a vast global vision whose purpose is to shine a spiritual light onto one's own personal realm of influence.



Eileen Williams

When we speak of language that crosses the cultural divide between East and West, past and present, there can be obstacles to understanding. And that first obstacle could be the moniker True Mother adopts as Only Begotten Daughter (chapter 2). However, this is a claim she backs up with primary source evidence and a heartistic rendering of her life as a young missionary, leader, and founder of the Unification Church.

In fact, the first three chapters give testimony to several revelations that prepare the stage, including the dreams and prophecies of others. Her identity seems to blossom along with her faith throughout her childhood. And three conditions --

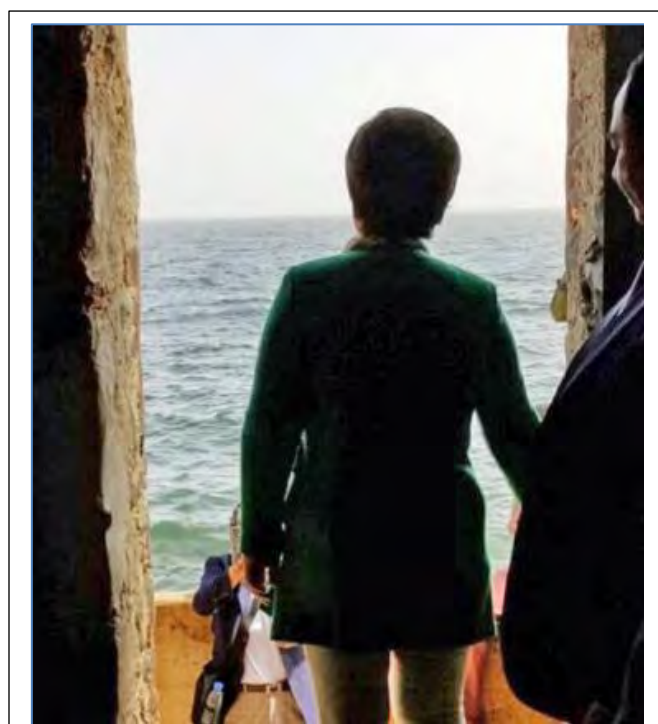
Mother's inter-generational family, the confusion surrounding the Korean War, and the humble, impoverished beginnings of our church -- are intertwined. Anyone who has read *Sun Myung Moon: The Early Years* has gained the insight that the Korean War was the environment that produced the harrowing birth pangs for the Unification Church's inception (HSA-UWC) in 1954.

From an early age, Mother Moon relates her experiences of faith and puts them in the context of those who came before her and laid the foundation for belief during impossible (and riveting) circumstances such as courageously crossing the 38th parallel border between North and South Korea before it was closed. In heart-wrenching description she recounts how some relatives chose one side over another unsure as to what path to follow.

What I really drank in the most deeply was Mother's sharing about her own personal relationship with God, and how she has experienced Heavenly Parent's grace in the face of so many difficulties -- and controversies. Again the seed was germinating at a young age. Speaking of the time when she and her mother were called to the church to receive the news that she was chosen to be "the bride of heaven," she states: "Bathed in that presence, I heard the words: 'Mother of the Universe, the time has come.' It was like the sound of a gong reverberating in the air." Apparently this was not a quiet voice but rather one that rang out loud and clear for her. If you study the picture of her as a young wife -- she may be about 17 years of age -- behind her youthful expression one can observe a steely resolve. (p. 103)

Ultimately, what is so impressive is Mother's knowledge of herself as a historical figure (that we could all have similar insights about who we are and our place in history). One of her experiences as a young congregant demonstrates so well her clarity as she comes to realize her providential role. She recounts the first time meeting Teacher Moon at the age of 13 when he told her, "You will need to make sacrifices in the future." In her memoir she says that as she pondered this remark over the years she realized that sacrifice "became a name I could call myself." (p. 78)

Regarding her marriage -- the Marriage of the Lamb -- conducted under extreme persecution and controversy from outside forces, she confidently asserts: "That Jesus could not become the True Parent was the sorrow of all people, but the day of our engagement ceremony was the blessed day that finally relieved that sorrow." (p. 94) Other insights she expresses helped me to realize that she had full ownership of her choices throughout her arduous course -- her decision to have many children, for example. (p. 104)



Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, standing at the "Door of No Return" at Gorée Island, Senegal

I, myself, sometimes regarded Mother's role through an outdated lens: perhaps as a subservient albeit doting wife trying to keep up with her husband's punishing schedule (poor Mother!), or as a busy mother who would simply hand over the reins to her sons and retire to a quiet life (at last!). However, as she weaves together the pieces of her childhood story, the image of a young woman emerges who understood her mission very well since at least her Holy Wedding in 1960, if not before then.

Revealing details I have not heard before about her relationship with her husband, she unveils the reality that she was, indeed, a partner 100% with True Father, demonstrating how uniquely qualified she is to carry on "his" (their) work. Whether she is referring to talks with Father in Danbury about the future of the movement, or she is sharing discussions with him in Hawaii concerning the danger of visiting North Korea, these conversations validate that she was truly standing next to Father in all situations and not

metaphorically behind him. "My husband and I always conversed intensely on various matters. We could do so out of our infinite trust in each other." (p. 107)

Understood within its historical context, the Only Begotten Daughter narrative could someday shatter every stereotype society has adhered to regarding a woman's role in a marriage, in a church or in society. While in the business world they have coined the term for women's advancement as breaking the "glass ceiling," this Completed Testament understanding of a woman's self-actualization sets a new precedent (as well as raising the bar). I can only speculate how such wisdom will bode well in the future by helping young women regard their unique identities with the confidence that they too are meant to be God's daughters.

To me, this was the most uplifting aspect of the memoir. Many years ago a friend remarked to me: "Mother must have a deep understanding of who Father is." Well, through this writing the reader can see that she also has a deep understanding of who she is. "I sensed that I would one day represent all women - - God's daughters and the world's mothers. ... By God's hand, this Mother, who prays and longs for God's Blessing for all 7.7 billion people on earth, can now advance peace widely." (p. 112)

Conversely, the most painful part for me to read about was True Father's imprisonment in Danbury, Connecticut. For an entire day, I was lost in nostalgia thinking about 1984, a year filled with tumult: the birth of my own son, Heung Jin Moon's fatal car accident, Father going to prison, not to mention his translator and aide, Bo Hi Pak's kidnapping in a horrifying cloak and dagger scenario. Regretfully, I, more spectator than participant, was not fully aware (till now) of what True Mother was enduring and how difficult that must have been for her and for their children. Father going to prison for more than a year on trumped-up tax charges that could easily have been resolved -- really America?!

As I read, I pondered ruefully that Father was the same age as I am now when he entered Danbury federal prison. I look back in time reliving my own sense of helplessness in the face of these events that made their indelible, painful, and still unresolved stain on American history. However, True Mother emphasizes the positive when she speaks of making decisions with Father at the prison (and driving away hiding her tears): "I had long pondered if and when women would fulfill their role as perfected human beings, as fully co-creative and significant members of society, and especially as daughters of God. My husband and

I together concluded that it was time for the liberation of all women...." (p. 159).

Here in prison the spark was ignited for the founding of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in 1991 in which Mother embarked on her own speaking tour highlighted in later chapters. I'm sure many wives or mothers can relate to how she describes Father's imprisonment as her own imprisonment. "One with his bones and flesh, with his thoughts mine and my thoughts his, I give my entire mind and body to practice love for the sake of God's dream. I have walked this exhausting life course silently as one called to bring the human family together as the Mother of peace, to heal our suffering planet as the Mother of the universe, and to bring joy to our Heavenly Parent as His Only Begotten Daughter." (p. 158)



In 2018, Dr. Moon visited The House of Slaves on Gorée Island in Dakar, Senegal's memorial to the Atlantic slave trade

Personal letters and communications with foreign missionaries and even her own children are found in the middle third of the book. These are perhaps the most poignant exchanges. As a young member I was aware of foreign missionaries, many whom I knew, returning to America and their challenges of reintegrating into society, after having neglected family, health, and finances due to putting the mission first and foremost. In particular, I did not fully realize how dangerous their work behind the Iron Curtain, code-named "Mission Butterfly," was, especially in Czechoslovakia. (p. 122)

True Mother recounts the martyrdom of two of these saints: Marie Zivna and Masaki Sasamoto. These sacrificial emissaries of True Parents hold a special place in their hearts; consequently, the book with that same name has now moved to the top of my reading list. It's undoubtedly true that the foundation European missionaries laid set the stage for what was to be the boldest part of True Parent's efforts and plans to bring the ideal of Unification to the world.

As a young church member, I remember a palpable fear rising in my chest when True Father would repeat the motto "March to Moscow." Now we encounter many Russian people in America, but during the Cold War, Americans regarded Russia as a place to avoid as an adversary. The idea of visiting the country in any way at all seemed impossible.

North Korea was even more so. It was a frightening place that had imprisoned True Father and was responsible for the deaths or imprisonment of many compatriots, and most likely relatives, of both Father and Mother Moon. Regardless, True Parents' sole reason for going to these "enemy nations" was to foster peace and plant the seeds of freedom of religion and re-unification. They prepared in secret in Hawaii, not just physically (packing winter clothes!), but in heart especially. "Only after we had dissolved all the buried pain did my husband and I inform those who needed to know that we were on our way to North Korea." (p. 203) They kept their plans close to the vest so as not to be dissuaded. This is not the first time that True Mother attests to God's healing power of parental love giving her the strength to continue, even to this day.

Honestly, there were countless times when I struggled to relate to our international work over the decades given what I could or could not participate in. Oftentimes, rallies and celebrations seemed far from my own absorption with the practical realities of working and raising a family. Regardless, the last third of the memoir is an interesting and informative way to learn about the behind-the-scenes activities: blessing ceremonies, speeches, joy and heartache, disappointment and victory connecting the dots with nearly every continent.

Seeds were scattered far and wide, on fallow and fertile fields alike from Jardim to Cambodia. Whirlwind testimonies included one anecdote that was particularly moving: Mother's recounting of the blessing ceremony in South Africa with Prophet Radebe battling it out in the rain reminiscent of Yankee Stadium 40 years prior. (p. 342) I was fortunate enough to visit Gambia and off the coast there is an island similar to Gorée Island in Senegal. Both places in West Africa are positioned near the vertex of the triangular slave trade where unwitting Africans awaited embarkment to their unjust and brutal fates as slaves.

Nowadays, it seems that the spirits of the departed hover nearby at such memorial sites. True Mother's

reaction as she stood at the Door of No Return on Gorée was a visceral feeling of grief, "As I stood at that door, I could hear the cries of countless Africans taken against their will." (see photo p. 295) I can think of no continent more deserving of True Mother's love than Africa. Indeed, the blessing ceremonies in Niger and South Africa seemed to be the *pièce de résistance* of the now aptly-named Heavenly Parent's Holy Community's work in the last part of 2019.

In conclusion, whether we were leading events, or acting as mere participants, we have all had a role to play with this singular messianic mission. The Unification Church has been on a trajectory towards one goal: spread the word. We have the map, the itinerary, the outline. Now it seems it's up to the membership to color in the picture. Fittingly, the memoir ends where it all began -- in South Korea. The Foundation Day anniversary is marked by the Vision 2020 Global Summit where True Mother proclaims that the path of restoration history is completed and a new beacon of hope is on the horizon of a global transformation. (p. 355)

As the world is caught up in a pandemic, True Mother's words provide comfort: "I stay awake at night with the heart to cover all the world's children with blankets while they sleep." (p. 346) Her story's greatest impartment to me is that I wish to face the world in a more loving manner, whether the world is the world of nature, of family, of friends and neighbors, or of far-off lands that I can only hold in my prayers.

Eileen Williams joined the Unification Church in Wilmington, Delaware in 1973. Members may be more familiar with her husband, Doug, who was a New Hope Singer and worked at the Manhattan Center for many years. As a teenager, she remembers riding in the car with her mother by the local church center and wondering what that big word "Unification" meant. She's still pondering. Eileen taught high school for several years including at the Bridgeport International Academy. She has retired to a state of grace called Vermont.