

SOCIETY, COMMUNITY AND THE UNIFICATION TRADITION

PRESENTATION TO UTS ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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Premise: Unificationists have failed to make a significant impact on communities and society because, by and large, we are schizophrenic. In order to be effective, members must first overcome this predicament.

The Schizophrenic Nature of Unificationists

- Our teaching, culture and tradition are both inclusive and exclusive.
- We are driven by an ideal, but constrained by the reality of the dysfunctional nature of our movement.
- We run high-minded idealistic projects, but deep down both “outside people” who participate and often we ourselves sense that there is some hidden agenda.
- We are exhorted to go and witness, but have some misgivings that instead of liberating those we meet and bringing them eternal happiness, we might end up shackling them and damaging their spiritual lives.
- Ultimately, this schizophrenia is manifested in our own spiritual lives – there is a disconnection between what we profess and the way we act or fail to act. As a result, we are often uninspired and find ourselves in a spiritual rut.

Inclusive Aspects

- We profess that all people are one family under God. The projects of the GPF captured many people’s hearts and imaginations.
- We (used to) teach that Reverend Moon did not come to build a new religion but to end religion by first unifying Christianity and on that foundation bringing all people of the world into harmony in accordance with divine principles.
- People don’t have to give up their religion to become Unificationists.
- Ambassadors for Peace come from all backgrounds and faiths and are recognized for their contribution to building a better world – work that is unquestionably aligned with God’s greater providence.

Exclusive

- The TP are the starting point of a new spiritual lineage. All true Unificationists must be grafted into this lineage through the blessing.
- TP are the horizontal representation of God and the form that God will take from now on in the spirit world – and by extension, one assumes, when people on earth have spiritual experiences of God (c.f. Christians seeing Jesus)
- We believe that we are in the process of purifying the lineage over successive generations with the removal of original sin through the blessing. First generation

members want their children to be blessed with other second generation. Might this not be a formula for the creation of a spiritual aristocracy?

- Hyung Jin Nim is in the process of building a new religion.

The Nub of the Problem - Our Dis-ease

- Many feel that they have been co-opted into building a movement whose goals, methods and even teachings they can no longer embrace unreservedly.
- Some feel a deep-seated dis-ease about a number of issues, which tend to get glossed over with spiritual or ideological spin:
 - The failure of the Korean leaders, who have set themselves up as spiritual overlords, to act in accordance with universal principles more readily adopted by members elsewhere. International marriage, proper use of public funds... (“Ah, but Koreans are special, such deep hearts...”)
 - The long-running financial exploitation of the Japanese members. (“Yes, what a blessing. The Japanese are being given the chance to atone for their historical sin.”)
 - The import of faithful Philippine and Japanese brides for uneducated Korean farmers with little understanding of Unification Tradition. (“Even an uneducated Korean intuitively understands more about heavenly tradition than most foreigners.”)
 - The shift from a world built on democratic principles to a projected ideal of a theocracy; with God’s will interpreted through a central line of command. (“Clearly democracy has failed. Just look at the western societies with their immorality and greed. But please note, we are not talking about benevolent dictatorship or even the Roman Catholic papal structure here, but something far loftier.”)
 - The failure to set up proper institutions to protect the accumulated assets of our movement. (“Relationships of heart among true men and women supersede the need for institutions designed to hold in check the self-centred nature of fallen man.”)
 - The internal squabbling of the True Family and Korean power-seekers looking to divide the spoils as the founder’s grip loosens with the advance of age. (“That’s an internal affair for True Family alone to sort out. It has nothing to do with the rest of the movement.”)
- We want to spread the Principle or some version of it with which we feel comfortable. We want to build the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, but do we really want to build a new religion?
- And for those who answer “yes” and see a new religion as necessary step on the way, what form should the organisation and institutions at the heart of this new religion take?

A Possible Route out of the Rut and back into Society

- Each of us needs to redefine our faith. We need to step back and honestly separate what we know from what we believe.
- We need to be prepared to let go of beliefs that are not borne out by experience, regardless of how much spiritual and personal capital we have invested in them in the past.
- We need to encourage our second generation to discover their faith for themselves, to question everything and not take things as gospel just because their parents hold a certain viewpoint.
- We need to get involved in society, make friends, have fun, participate in charitable, social and political projects, while adhering to principles that we know to be true. (In this respect, the two people who have inspired me most in the Unification movement in the UK in recent years are David Earle and Sarang LaRocca.)
- We need to rid ourselves of the illusion that we have a unique handle on the truth and a God-given mission to save peoples' spiritual lives by educating them and leading them to True Parents. This just gives rise to angst and guilt about "not doing enough for God" and prevents us from actually relating to people in a natural way.
- We need to understand that God's Providence has been going on since the beginning of mankind and will continue long after we depart for the spirit world.

Conclusion

The Unification tradition is ultimately about having a parental heart to all mankind.

The more we can demonstrate love, compassion and kindness to our fellow man while discarding our ideological baggage, the happier we will be and the more effectively we will become agents of God's Providence in our communities and societies.