

Golden Age Newsletter August 2024

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
August 3, 2024



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Hello Goldies, Welcome to the new look! It's all the same content with a simpler format. We hope you enjoy!

This monthly issue contains an Intergenerational Family Unit, a view of God's story, a Forward for a new Book (Taking God Seriously), testimony by Bob Beebe and a Health Episode!

This Month's Message

by Alexa Ward

A Three Generational House

by Marie Ang



In 2003, when my husband and I were in our late 60s and 70s, we moved from Kingston, New York to central New Jersey to live with our son Dohi, his wife Jin Hee, and their two young children at the time. I had been working as secretary to the principal at a Vo-tec high school long enough to retire with a small pension, but it was hardly enough to buy groceries. So we had an important decision to make. We, like most grandparents, desired to be closer to our grandchildren. Knowing how eager Jin Hee was to continue her college education, we wanted to be close enough to their family to be able to help them with the children.

After finding a four-bedroom ranch style house that seemed suitable, Dohi and Jin Hee invited Edwin and me to move in with them. This felt like the right direction to take, as this is what our True Parents had been teaching and promoting: three generations living together. So we made the move.

To read more, [*please click here!*](#)

Unification Thoughts

A View of God's Story

by Gerry Servito



If I think about how I developed my view of “God’s story,” I have to remember my early days of listening to lectures in Barrytown, in 1974. Back then, we went to 3-, 7-, 21-, 40- and 120-day workshops. DP was taught completely, every chapter, three sessions a day, three hours per lecture. No questions, no discussions, just intensive listening and note-taking. My notebooks were filled with tiny handwriting and versions of every diagram I could manage to copy from the board. And during each workshop, I’d refine the diagrams, catching what I’d missed last time.

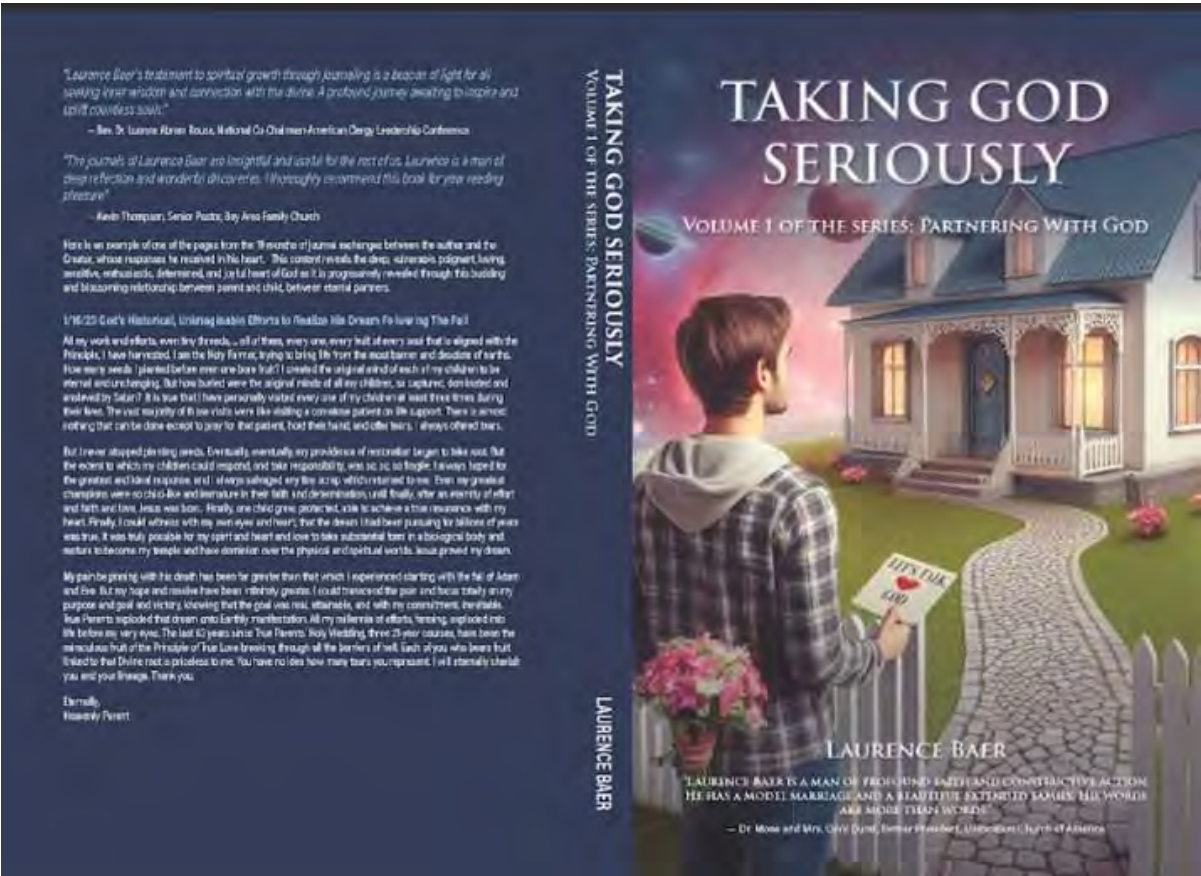
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Spiritual Reality

A Forward of A New Book, Taking God Seriously by Laurence Baer

by Dr. Achille Acolatse, Senior Pastor

FFWPU, SR2, USA



When Laurence approached me and asked me to write the Forward for this book, my immediate response was, “Sure, I’ll do anything for you.” It was spontaneous and heartfelt, based on my relationship with Laurence. I am a religious leader. I serve as the Senior Pastor for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification of America’s Southeast Region, which consists of nine states including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

To read more, [*please click here!*](#)

Testimonies

To Glimpse the Sublime

by Robert Beebe



Norwich, Connecticut, ca. 1960

I stood atop my seat in the sturdy mahogany pew amidst the multitudinous congregation of the United Congregational Church as it sang *The Lord, Our Father* in thunderous unison. At my left was my mother, dressed in a long velvet skirt with matching vest over a fluffy yellow blouse and capped by a yellow dress hat. Her eyes fixed intently on the hymn book in her hands, she joined in the singing with her low shy voice. On my right, my older sister's clear confident soprano nearly drowned her out.

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Health

A Life Health Episode

by James Howell



Like so many who read this, I joined our faith a long time ago...in the 70's when I was in my 20's. Now it's the 20's and I'm in my 70's. My journey took me fundraising for several years, then on to being matched, Blessed and on to a mission. Along the way, Linda and I raised 4 children. Now they are all married and have children of their own. With 9 grandkids I'm in grandpa heaven, and I want to continue to enjoy this as long as I possibly can.

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A Three Generational House

By Marie Ang

In 2003, when my husband and I were in our late 60s and 70s, we moved from Kingston, New York to central New Jersey to live with our son Dohi, his wife Jin Hee, and their two young children at the time. I had been working as secretary to the principal at a Vo-tec high school long enough to retire with a small pension, but it was hardly enough to buy groceries. So we had an important decision to make. We, like most grandparents, desired to be closer to our grandchildren. Knowing how eager Jin Hee was to continue her college education, we wanted to be close enough to their family to be able to help them with the children.

After finding a four-bedroom ranch style house that seemed suitable, Dohi and Jin Hee invited the move.

We have learned a lot during these past 21 years of the "Do's and Don'ts" of living together as a three-generational family. It is surely not always easy to make things go smoothly. There was a time when we wondered if we could make it work. But somehow we have survived, thanks in large part to honest communication, some adjustments along the way, and big doses of compromise and patience.

I have often thought that the ideal situation for three-generation family living would be similar to what the Amish do. In their tradition, they have something called a Dawdy Haus (Dutch for "Grandparents' House"), which is a small house with its own little kitchen, built next to the main house.

Eight years ago, after we had already been living together for some time, Dohi and Jin Hee were able to build an addition onto their house, which gave Edwin and me our own separate outdoor entrance to a large room that serves as both a bedroom and living room. We now had a walk-in closet and our own small bathroom. Edwin had his own little office elsewhere in the house, which was important to him. The separate entrance to our bedroom really gave us the feeling of having our own little home, our own "Dawdy Haus"!

In many cultures, multiple generations living together is the norm. It's interesting to note that according to the Pew Research Center, the number of three-generational families here in the United States has quadrupled from 1971 to 2021. The number one reason for this is for the financial benefit. But according to research on multigenerational living, there are other

financial benefit. But according to research on multigenerational living, there are other important advantages for three generations living together. And yet, in order to make it work, there are some important conditions that need to be present.

What are some things to be aware of when living as a three-generation family? As a matter of fact, there are some key attitudes that are essential, whether you are living together or not. But they become especially important when seeing each other on a day-to-day basis, and they become crucial to maintain healthy relationships and a happy home.

For instance:

☒ *Respecting and being sensitive to the privacy of others.* Everyone needs their space and that needs to be respected.

For example, knocking when doors are closed; letting the grandparents and parents occupy different sides of the home; etc. I read in an article that the two bedrooms -- of the grandparents and the parents -- should not be next to each other, but instead be in separate parts of the house. This helps to give everyone a little bit of "breathing space" and privacy.

☒ *Respecting parenting differences.* Sometimes there are cultural differences or different styles in how to raise children. For example, we can hear about tiger parenting or free-range parenting, etc. But ultimately this is the parents' role and we as grandparents have already had that experience. Now it's their turn.

☒ *Responsibilities.* Whose responsibility is it to mow the lawn, to take care of the recycling, for the cooking schedule, etc.? For me, it was quite an adjustment not to have my own kitchen, but we managed to work out schedules in the kitchen that seemed to work.

☒ *Financial responsibilities.* It is important to put this on the table from the very beginning, so that everyone is on the same page. Will the grandparents contribute rent or not? How about utilities that one party uses but the other does not?

The most important part here is not the details, but the general attitude of appreciation and contribution. For example, in our family, sometimes our couple would do little things here and there to support our children. I believe that these little gestures showed that we didn't take everything for granted and that we expressed our appreciation to them.

☒ This leads to the final and most important point: *The importance of good communication.* Keeping open communication, in a respectful and kind manner, is the key to living together well.

The 'respectful and kind manner' is also important. My son's couple has always regularly expressed appreciation for the little things we did around the house. It just helps to add to a positive atmosphere and relationship over time.

What are the benefits? How have our grandchildren benefitted from having grandparents around on a daily basis?

You would really have to ask them. But from our -- the grandparents' --point of view, I believe

we have been a **source of stability** for them. We were almost always there while they were growing up, when their parents were busy working long hours or busy studying.

When they were young, most of the time I drove them to preschool and picked them up. During the elementary school years, Edwin and I enjoyed walking them to school and back every day, which gave us one-on-one time with them (and a little exercise, too). Many times, when their parents were working (Dohi and Jin Hee at times were working long hours), I enjoyed making afterschool snacks for them, or picking them up from afterschool activities. Through all of these experiences, we developed a close relationship with them that has left us with such precious memories.

We have tried to stimulate their interests, encouraging and supporting them in a variety of ways, whether it is supporting their musical interests, attending their concerts, or helping them study for tests, learn multiplication facts, or study spelling words. We were always around to help them.

In a natural way, they learned something of our history -- through conversations around the dinner table or photos/stories of our childhood and of our ancestors that were easily shared.

And we were always there to listen when they were upset about something. Or if they had a nightmare or couldn't sleep, sometimes they would come to our room. We were always there to comfort and listen. They also said that they have learned to understand elderly people more -- such as what they're going through as they grow older -- which gives them greater empathy for elder people.

How do grandparents benefit from living with their grandchildren?

It has been such a joy being around them and seeing them grow up, as they're learning new skills and maturing as their understanding of life broadens. A deep bond of love is there that is something special. And as the years go by, Edwin and I have been able to see the issues they have to deal with, on a daily basis, especially through the teen years. It helps us have a deeper understanding of their actions and how they are learning to cope in preparing for the future. But most of all, what we have gained is the deep bond of love that we have established with them.

Living with three generations together takes sacrifice on everyone's part. Many families feel the need to be more independent from the grandparents. And there are, of course, all kinds of aspects of shared living that might discourage living together. But there is value for both the parents and grandchildren if the grandparents can at least live close enough so that a deep bond of love is felt. And that is our heart's desire.

What is the tradition that grandparents should hand down to their grandchildren?

In our faith community, I would say most, if not all grandparents would like to see their grandchildren carry on the faith traditions that have meant so much to them. We leave this responsibility primarily with their parents: our role as grandparents now is to support our children's efforts. Our indirect influence comes through how we live our own lives, showing

what is important to us, and relating stories of our own experiences in our life of faith, in a very natural way.

For us, living together with Dohi and Jin Hee and their family has been a real blessing for Edwin and me, and now, especially for me since Edwin's passing. They have seen us deal with aging and offer suggestions and comments that make us really feel cared for.

How does a couple benefit from living with both their parents & children?

Answered by Dohi Ang:

For us, a big benefit has come in terms of faith. Our kids are able to see their grandparents living their faith in a consistent and natural way, and in a way that is slightly different from how our couple practices our faith. I think this gives them a sense of confidence that faith is not just something from their parents and that it's not this weird thing, but that it's something meaningful that can be practiced in slightly different forms.

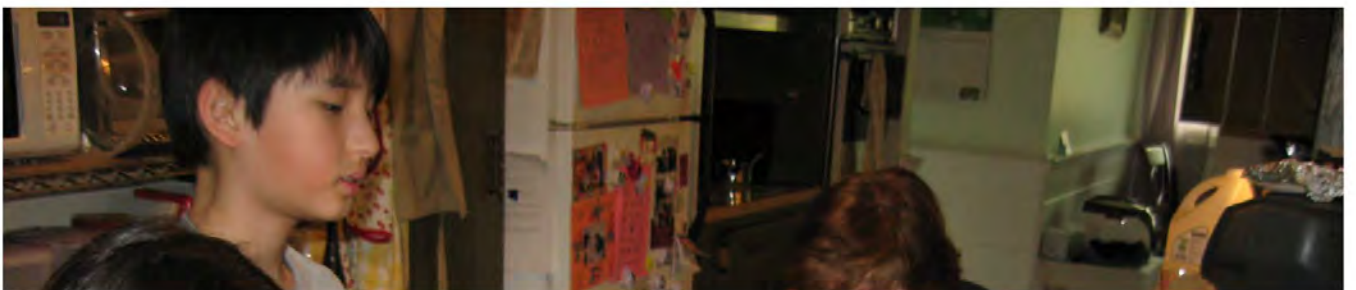
My parents always engaged in Hoondokhae and prayer and were committed to attending church every Sunday. This was especially important during the very busy phase of our family life, when it wasn't easy for us to have consistency, especially since the church is far away from our home.

More practically speaking, it was helpful to have grandparents' assistance especially when the kids were younger.

But, as the parents, living together also meant that my couple became a lot closer with my parents. It's very different from occasional visits, so the relationship tends to be a bit closer and more intimate than it would be otherwise.

Living together also lets me take care of my parents when needs arise, and it lets me know that I'm playing my role as a filial son, which is a value I was raised with and a value I do actually care about.









◀ A View of God's Story A Forward of Taking God Seriously, A New Book ▶

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A View of God's Story

by Gerry Servito (2016.03.27)

If I think about how I developed my view of "God's story," I have to remember my early days of listening to lectures in Barrytown, in 1974. Back then, we went to 3-, 7-, 21-, 40- and 120-day workshops. DP was taught completely, every chapter, three sessions a day, three hours per lecture. No questions, no discussions, just intensive listening and note-taking. My notebooks were filled with tiny handwriting and versions of every diagram I could manage to copy from the board. And during each workshop, I'd refine the diagrams, catching what I'd missed last time.

Then, in the 120-day workshop, we were trained to lecture the Divine Principle by Rev. Ken Bui'tneñ we'naa 'tō p'raçtice giv'ing o'ur o'wn 'l'ec'ture's. I ðōh t remémber g'etting' n'āñaduts, and certainly there was nothing digital — no PDFs, Word files, slides, or screenshows. We all just worked from our handwritten notes. One of the methods we learned was the "napkin lecture". Basically, Rev. Sudo taught us that we'd likely find ourselves with a new person in a coffee shop or some other casual meeting place, and they'd ask us to explain our teaching. In that situation, you'd have to grab whatever piece of white paper was at hand. In a restaurant, that would naturally be a white table napkin. And there, you'd draw your circles and arrows as you explained the basics.

I think what really jump-started my lecturing was the 21-day "pioneering" condition. For that, each of the 120-day trainees were dropped off in a city with our clothes, cassette tapes of Rev. Sudo's lectures, and a standing easel that the Barrytown carpenters had made for each of us. I was less than a year in the movement. A caravan of vans left Barrytown one morning, each with perhaps 6-8 members, and in the back were our suitcases and easels. The vans drove from location to location, dropping us off one-by-one until, at dusk, we arrived in my city, the southern-most on my route. So, I was the last one and my bags and easel were unloaded onto the sidewalk and the now emptied van drove off.

I began teaching the Divine Principle on the boardwalk (my city was a summer beach town). Even though our Barrytown lecturers had taught us very passionately, I didn't clearly have a sense of the Divine Principle as God's "story". Rather, I saw it as an amazing revelation of a large number of spiritual principles and laws that explained exactly what was happening in well-known bible stories and — in the later chapters — what had been happening in the world

in the ages after the bible. I remember that I had to commit to memory an enormous number of facts about the bible, science, Jewish/Christian/European history, some philosophies, government, and the world wars. I had to know enough to sound knowledgeable and credible, so that I could be a convincing presenter. And so I practiced and practiced, listened to many lecturers, gathered more and more material from them, and developed and polished my own presentations until I also could teach a one-day, two-day, or even a seven-day lecture. And each lecture would be filled with enough material to last the standard three hours. When I eventually was assigned to workshop staffs, I learned to participate in teaching 21-day workshops.

But as far as my teaching the Principle, the amount of material I'd accumulated was overwhelming, and by constant repetition, it sometimes became dry. Combined with the very long days we worked, falling asleep was common in the three-hour lectures. I even sometimes felt that my material was so dry that I wished the time could end soon, so that I could finish talking! After some years, I stopped teaching altogether.

Initially, I was relieved, but as time passed, I felt a growing sense of unease and unfulfillment: the Divine Principle and Unification Thought were so elevating that to not be sharing them — especially after all the training I'd been given — felt like I was just half-alive. Also, I'd been a New York member for some years, so I'd had the chance to see Abonim speak every Sunday, for that entire time. And his urgency was a weight that became so heavy that I had to begin teaching again. At one point, I was able to attend the Seminary at Barrytown. And there, I determined to learn to teach Unification Thought, which was instrumental in my acceptance of Abonim six years earlier. In my two years at UTS, I created a study guide for Unification Thought, and could more deeply understand Abonim's vision of the original world and the original way of God-centered life. I also managed to win 1st place one year in the Divine Principle lecturing contest.

After I graduated from the Seminary, I joined CARP and Dr. Joon Ho Seuk appreciated and supported my interest in Unification Thought. He arranged for me to meet Dr. Sang Hun Lee, and I had the chance to support some Unification Thought seminars that Dr. Lee led, and was eventually certified by him to teach Unification Thought. One of the most important things I learned was how much Dr. Lee loved and honored the Divine Principle itself. So my own appreciation of the Principle was elevated by Dr. Lee's education. I have to say that that was a very important experience and realization for me. It was a kind of turning point in my appreciation of the Principle.

I also learned from the Unification Thought **Theory of Education** that the most important form of a person's education is the education of heart and that this happens when one can grasp the *three hearts of God* — these are the heart of hope (or expectation), the heart of sorrow (or grief) and the heart of pain (or suffering). I realized that these three correspond to the *Principle of Creation*, the *Human Fall*, and the *History of Restoration*. This new awareness grew and grew within me and transformed my understanding of the Divine Principle from an intellectual one to an emotional ("heartistic") one. My teaching of the Principle began to change accordingly, as I understood God's heart within the Divine Principle. I can't forget that I once was called to Hyo

Jin Nim's office in the Manhattan Center, because of the teaching I'd been doing. He sat me alone in his office and asked me what I thought of Abonim, himself, and the Divine Principle. And I explained that, to me, the Divine Principle is the greatest epic saga in the universe — that it is the explanation of one person's hopes, dreams and everything they lived and longed for; and then the account of the calamitous tragedy that devastated it all; and finally the story of that person's whole life afterwards, trying repeatedly to pick up the broken pieces of their dreams, hopes, and heart. Perhaps that was the first time anyone had asked me to verbalize what I had come to feel about the Principle. In any case, it was the most important time. It had been building up until I finally could understand "God's story".

Sometime during my study, I remember that one lecturer wrote the word "history" on the blackboard as "His-story", and that stuck with me. It resonated with what my own feeling about the Divine Principle was becoming. And through Unification Thought, I could grab on to that and reflect on the entire Principle itself; I began to see that beneath the translation, beneath all the principles, laws, biblical and historical examples was the story that had gripped Abonim's heart, and Jesus' heart before him, and made it impossible for them to not do and not give anything necessary to come to the aid of their God, their Divine Parent. Their hearts were shaken, taken so hard that there's nothing they would hold back from God in order to fix this and restore the beauty of life as it was intended to be.

I remember that one presenter likened a Divine Principle lecture to "God's prayer to man", and that also penetrated my awakened heart. He meant that, even as we kneel to God in desperate supplication, God's heart mirrors that very feeling when a Divine Principle lecture is given to us...

Years later, as I was guiding students to give their own "napkin" lectures, we were reading the Divine Principle textbook together and I found this sentence that I'd overlooked for decades:

"Can we ever grasp the Heart of God? The new expression of truth should be able to reveal the Heart of God: His heart of joy at the time of creation; the broken heart He felt when humankind, His children whom He could not abandon, rebelled against Him; and His heart of striving to save them throughout the long course of history."

And then I realized where the Unification Thought idea of the "three hearts of God" comes from.

Just as Dr. Lee had explained, everything starts with the Divine Principle.

Through the Principle of Creation we are given a brief look at the original vision of how beautiful life was conceived to be, not only in this world, but even in the world after it. It is a snapshot of an exquisite dream that Heavenly Parent had for us.

The Human Fall is a look at the disastrous catastrophe that brought God's dream to sudden and utter destruction and desolation.

And the largest portion of the Divine Principle — the history of restoration — has become a recounting of HP's entire life of trying to pull things back together, time-after-time, following

the disaster that shattered it. For this reason, it is called the heart of pain. For a starter, it explains the heart of God in Adam's family, Noah's family, Abraham's family, and in Moses' and Jesus' lives. All these accounts are stripped of symbols and interpretations, and the focus is solely on **how God felt** during the hardships of these figures' lives. In only a few pages, a narrative of emotional experience is painted for us, that tries to help us feel what God was feeling throughout the lives of these heroic figures. It is an impassioned appeal, meant to strip things down to the very basics of God's emotional experience. And it transformed my entire understanding of hundreds of pages about the topic of "restoration" in the Divine Principle. Though I had understood that the entire 2nd part of the DP has enormous emotional implications, the sheer number of insights into the meanings, implications and historical consequences of things usually obscured the emotional narrative underlying it all. But Unification Thought stripped that all away so that the course of one person's life could be laid bare. And it finally had the impact on me that surely was intended all along: my heart could break for God.

Unification Thought then goes on to suggest that it's not just the Bible that opens the door to this understanding, but — if we at least understand this perspective that the Divine Principle provides — *any* of the world's great scriptures, myths, or legends can be read with new eyes that see, and a new heart that feels more deeply.

For years, then, my heart towards the Divine Principle has been transformed: where it once was a book that contained the doctrine of the church — an utterly remarkable compilation of innumerable revelations and insights into the mysteries of the Bible — it also became the most dramatic and epic of all historic sagas. It encompasses all the drama extending from the beginning of time, through all the eras of pre-human existence, through the entire account of the human race, into the vision of the end of this world and the beginning of the new, that so many scriptures herald.

Which led me — as *Unification Thought* so often does — to notice a small passage in one of the newest of our scriptures (*Cheon Seong Gyeong*) that I might otherwise have overlooked:

"...to be a son or daughter of filial piety, you have to know your father and mother's heart. ...the heart of God *before creation*, His heart *during the process* of creation, and His grieving heart *after the Fall*. ...the sorrowful heart with which He has been leading human history *toward restoration*, and His heart of **hope for a new world** *after restoration is completed*. "(14-174, 1964.10.03)

There is one last thing: although Unification Thought explains the three hearts of God, and the importance of knowing them in order to understand God and fulfill the first Great Blessing, there is an emphasis on bringing a child to understand one of these hearts. My natural expectation was that a child should be led to understand the heart of joy/hope/expectation. But *no* says the Unification Thought text:

"Through an education of heart, children should come to understand the three kinds of God's heart as described above, especially the heart of God in the course of the providence of restoration."

That was a disturbing surprise, so I had to reflect on this and it soon became apparent. The deepest knowledge we can have of a dear friend is not only what gives them the greatest joy, but it's knowledge of the most painful, long-borne secrets of their life. Only when we come to that level of intimate knowledge do we understand the depth of another person's soul. And so it is with God: knowing the joyful heart of God is to know God only partially.

My hope is that — as the memory of restoration fades in our human memory some generations into the future — the need for this knowledge of God's pain will recede in importance. But for now, and for the near future, it is this knowledge that moves us to want to come to the aid — we even call it the *defense* — of our HP's heart. It's an important motivator for us: when we love someone and we know what hurts them, we become adamant about protecting them from anything that touches or aggravates that open wound.

Unification Thought asserts that it's the heart that must be the center of mind-body unity. And that's true: after stretches in life where I've tried to unite mind and body by intellect or will, in the end, it's what's in my heart that brings my mind and body to act in concert. And this is a key thing that Abonim and Omonim have been striving for: to bring God to becoming the very center of our hearts. 🤍

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A Life Health Episode

A Three Generational House

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Blessed Family photos by [@Fukuya.Sano](#)

A Forward of Taking God Seriously, A New Book

by Dr. Achille Acolatse, Senior Pastor

Family Federation For World Peace and Unification, SR2, USA

When Laurence approached me and asked me to write the Forward for this book, my immediate response was, "Sure, I'll do anything for you." It was spontaneous and heartfelt, based on my relationship with Laurence. I am a religious leader. I serve as the Senior Pastor for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification of America's Southeast Region. Having taken the time to immerse myself in the writing of this Forward, which, for me is a great honor, I have come to recognize that it is no simple task. "Taking God Seriously" is a groundbreaking and, I believe, historic work – a profound and deeply moving extended dialogue between our Heavenly Parent and an individual. Each entry has two sides. First Laurence writes a message from his heart to God. And then, God responds. Based on this Forward, it is my sincere hope and wish that you will be able to give your sincere consideration and attention to Laurence's message and that it will inspire you to do the same.

Laurence, in his Introduction, shares his reasons for launching this dialogue, which took seven years from when the idea was first set before him, until he united with that idea and wrote his first entry on July 13, 2022. He was seeking to deepen his personal relationship and communication with God, and through this, to grow spiritually. Our Movement's Founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, have both shared deeply about God from their own personal and intimate communications with Him. And based on those communications, Rev. Moon wrote the Divine Principle and numerous related texts that explain deeply and penetratingly about God's nature and the history of God's providence. Also, in many of Rev. Moon's speeches, he shares intimately about God's heart and hopes and dreams, such as in his wonderful book *Twelve Talks*, published in 1973.

I know Laurence to be a man of highest integrity, deep faith, and a very broad, inquisitive, and penetrating intellect. I first got to know Laurence in 2019, when I was serving as the Senior Pastor for our Washington, DC church. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon had announced that each couple in our movement should endeavor to share the Marriage Blessing with 420 additional couples

in our movement should endeavor to share the marriage blessing with 450 additional couples, expanding the scope of the grace that could be brought to the world.

Laurence's response was unique. Based on the work he had initiated 21 years earlier, Laurence returned to BWI Airport, and established a Marriage Blessing table there, quickly completing his goal and helping many other couples to fulfill theirs. But he didn't stop there. Realizing that just offering the Blessing was only the start, Laurence organized a monthly educational program at the Washington Times Building, which he funded himself. Laurence and his wife Muriel were among the very first Cheon Bo Victor couples in America.

Only later did I come to learn more about Laurence's background and history within our movement.

He joined 50 years ago at the age of 21 in Oakland, California, and spent much of his career in the movement working very closely with Dr. and Mrs. Durst on special missions of one kind or another. He did not have a high public profile. For seven years he developed and managed businesses for the Oakland Church, launching building service companies in Los Angeles, Houston, and New York. Many who worked under him went on to take significant responsibilities in the Movement.

Laurence worked for two years on President Durst's senior staff, and then in 1983, he was assigned by Dr. Durst to organize a global conference in Geneva, Switzerland under the chairmanship of Hon. Robert B. Anderson, President Eisenhower's former Treasury Secretary and Eisenhower's first choice to run for President in 1960, rather than Nixon. The weeklong conference included 70 top global political and financial leaders and concluded with a decision to launch the Global Economic Action Institute under the leadership of Dr. Durst and Secretary Anderson. Laurence was selected as the sole staff member working directly with Robert Anderson to create and develop that organization, where he served for 10 years as Executive Assistant to the three Chairmen.

In 1997, Laurence was serving as the Laurel, Maryland Community leader when the providence authorizing members to share the Marriage Blessing first began. At that time, following a deep prayer, he was inspired to meet with the Manager of BWI Airport who assigned to him the only table in the airport designated for outside organizations. Laurence trained and assisted 40 families to fulfill their Blessing goals. Among those families were the Salonens and the Leones. Shortly after that, Neil Salonen hired Laurence to serve as his personal Executive Assistant for Blessing 97 at RFK Stadium and continuing on for 4 years.

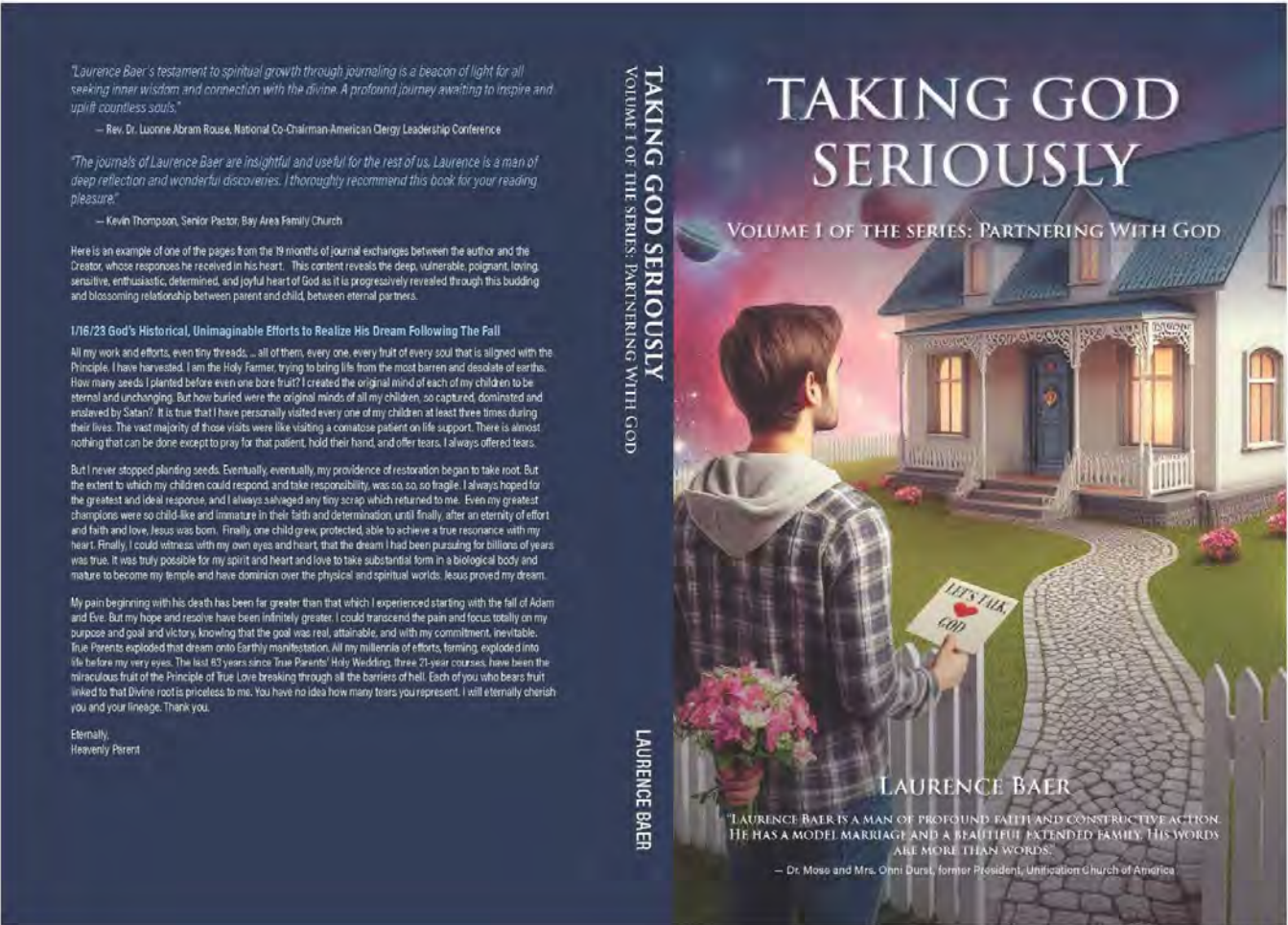
Also, during that time, the conditions were set for our members to begin Ancestral Liberations and Blessings centering on the activities of our training center in Cheongpyeong, South Korea. Laurence and Muriel took seriously Rev. Moon's guidance that we must educate and direct our ancestors in the spiritual world following their Blessing.

In late 2020, Dr. Chung Sik Yong was appointed as the Family Federation Continental Leader for North America, and almost immediately began a daily national Zoom call for prayer and study, which he dubbed "Morning Devotion". In addition to doing his extended prayers every morning, Laurence also set a condition to faithfully attend Morning Devotion every day from its

beginnings in 2020 until 2027 to support Dr. Yong. He pledged to invest his utmost each morning. He regularly shared his inspirations in the chat and also began offering his music videos. Those became very popular and, for the first time, many in our Movement got to know Laurence.

Laurence is a dedicated man for God’s Providence. He has a sincere heart to comfort God’s heart by enthusiastically sharing his knowledge of the Divine Principle with the world. Laurence is spiritual and has spent lot of time meditating and seeking insights from God. I encourage you to read this book to learn more about him and his relationship with God.

May God bless and guide each of you, your families, and your endeavors.



< **A Three Generational House** > **A TEASER FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF TAKING GOD SERIOUSLY**

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To Glimpse the Sublime

By Robert Beebe

Rbeebe52@yahoo.com

Norwich, Connecticut, ca. 1960

I stood atop my seat in the sturdy mahogany pew amidst the multitudinous congregation of the United Congregational Church as it sang *The Lord, Our Father* in thunderous unison. At my left was my mother, dressed in a long velvet skirt with matching vest over a fluffy yellow blouse and capped by a yellow dress hat. Her eyes fixed intently on the hymn book in her hands, she of people to the pulpit. There stood an old man in a long black robe, hand waving in air, leading the congregation in the singing. Flanking him were various other men similarly dressed. Beyond them, along ascending steps, stood the throng of men and women who formed the choir. And behind them all, its smooth chords flowing in and around the voice of the congregation, rose the gleaming copper pipes of the huge organ.

Suddenly the singing stopped, and people all around the spacious chamber settled back into their seats. I felt my mother's large firm hands grasp me on either side, picking me up and setting me gently down on my seat. I looked up at her softly smiling face as she brushed my rumpled little suit. A hush had fallen over the congregation, broken only by an incessant string of muffled coughs. I became aware again of that permeating odor of mahogany so peculiar to that church. Then, with the first words from the pulpit, the people of the congregation lowered their heads as one. And so they remained as he alone spoke from his elevated position at the front of the church. The tone of his voice flowed from a low drone to a high-pitched tone and back again with incredible ease, charged with far more passion and energy than I had heard from anyone else. My eyes wandered about the chamber, from the mysterious dark recesses far in the front to the tall narrow arch-shaped stained glass windows to the intricately carved white wooden balcony overlooking the congregation and straight up to the rafters of the vaulted ceiling. I could feel the eternally cold pew against my craning neck as I gazed skyward in wonder.

With my eyes fixed on the ceiling, the minister fell silent. The eyes of the congregation rose as mine fell. As I was turning my head towards my mother, a chorus of angelic voices descended

time ten. As I was turning my head towards my mother, a chorus of angelic voices descended from above. Following my mother's uplifted gaze, I raised my eyes to the balcony where a heretofore unnoticed cluster of children, their heads and white-draped shoulders just visible above the railing, were singing *Carry Me to Heaven, O Jesus!*

* * *

Norwich, 6 years later

"Hey, you guys! Let's go up there! You've got ten minutes to get down here for breakfast," my mother hollered from below.

"Oh boy," grumbled my brother, rolling over in the adjacent bed.

In utter warmth and comfort, I lay still in my bed, knees near my chest, blankets drawn up under my chin. Another Sunday! And with it came the obligation to drag myself out of bed and dress for Sunday school. On some Sundays my brother and sister and I were excused from this painful exercise. The presence of visitors, work that needed to be done around the house or in the yard, or some other contingency could provide the relief. But this week it had been made clear to us that we'd have to go. Only bad weather could have saved us. I looked out the window above my brother's bed. The sky was a perfect baby blue.

"You boys are being awfully quiet up there. Don't let me have to come up there after you." My father's husky voice this time.

Not one to take my father's threats lightly, I threw off the covers and set my feet on the cold floor. Before stepping out into the cold hallway, I turned to look at my still recumbent brother. Cocooned in his blankets with his back to me, all I could see of him were brown tufts of his hair upon the pillow.

"You'd better get up!" I warned.

A dull groan emanated from the bed. "In a couple of minutes," was the muffled reply.

I shrugged and turned left into the bathroom. With toothpaste in one hand and toothbrush in the other, my thoughts dwelled on the next two hours—being with people whom I saw only at church and knew hardly at all, feeling guilty about my irregular attendance, and the numbing ritual of lesson and prayer. Paste on brush, I scrubbed my teeth roughly until they bled. Oooh, how I hated Sunday school! It was during these minutes of preparation that my desire not to go reached intense levels. What I would have given at those moments to avoid being thrust into that alien world and remain in the familiar surroundings of home. How I would have rather lounged around reading the newspapers or spent time with my friends!

I spit the toothpaste out into the sink and washed out my mouth with water. After wiping my hands, I returned to my room. The lump in my brother's bed hadn't budged.

"Hey Gary, you better get ready for Sunday school," I admonished him, "or you'll be in trouble."

No response.

Feeling playfully aggressive, I walked softly over to my brother's bed, leaned over him and jostled his body.

"Hey c'mon, whaddya think ya doin'?" he whined as his arms and legs flayed in vain attempts to push me away, in the process rumpling the blankets into total disarray.

"Well, get up then," I smirked, easing up and walking away, satisfied at having disrupted his little heaven.

"I'll get up. Don't worry," he retorted curtly as I shuffled into the closet. I rummaged about in search of my blue tie with the gold anchor imprinted on the front.

I soon heard my mother's irritated voice from the doorway. "Gary, will you get up and get dressed? It's almost ten-thirty!"

My brother moaned. Peering out from the closet, I watched him turn over slowly to look at my mother. In a pitiful nasal voice, he responded, "I don't feel very well, Ma. Can I stay home today?"

What! Not feeling well? Why, that little faker!

A look of skepticism crossed my mother's face.

"Not feeling well, huh?" She strode over to his bed. Sitting down on it, she placed the back of her hand on his forehead. "You don't seem to have a fever."

"But I feel really awful, Ma. I can har'ly breathe an' my throat's pretty sore." His face took on a sickly expression with his eyes half-closed and his mouth half-opened. He wheezed slightly through his nose. My mother scrutinized him as my brother played his act to the hilt. Finally, she pulled herself up off the bed.

"All right, but you're staying in bed all day. I'll bring you up some orange juice after I get Bobby squared away downstairs. Let's go, Bob. It's getting late."

My dressing had been brought to a standstill by the little scene. I stood in the closet's entrance in my underwear.

"Your father and I have to go to New London this morning, so Mrs. Johnson will be taking you and Deborah to church. She'll be here at ten-to, so let's go," said my mother as she hurried out of the room.

Picking my pants up off the bed, I glared at my brother as his face broke into a grin.

Princeton University, 6 years later

The lamplight reflected off the wet road in ever changing patterns as Jane and I walked along. A cold, moist early spring breeze battered our reddened faces. We walked in silence. My hands dug deep into my coat pockets while my chin pressed against my collar in a protracted attempt to fend off the chill. Jane walked more freely, Bible in hand, her straight brown hair

hanging uncovered over her loosely fitting white raincoat, seemingly unaffected by the weather. We'd just finished a long conversation/lecture/sales pitch on the message of Jesus Christ, and its wake found me lost in thought.

Jane lived in my dorm one floor below my roommates and me. Frail, timid, but surprisingly strong-willed about her beliefs, she "witnessed" frequently for her Lord like any good Christian. Although turning off most people in the dorm, including my roommates, a few like myself were receptive to her. Ironically, although repulsed by religion since childhood, I found myself intrigued by what she had to say. Perhaps, having gotten away from the dry routine of attending church during my childhood, I now felt confident enough to approach the subject in my own way. My thoughts dwelled often on spiritual matters and, when Jane came in my direction, I jumped at the chance to talk to her.

I was amazed. Through countless conversations, her enthusiasm never waned. Answering an endless series of questions, she guided me through the passages of the Bible. My mind easily grasped the contents, or so I thought. Yet, her unbounded delight and unquestioning faith in God suggested something more, something I was missing. I had received Christ's message. Why was I not rejoicing and giving myself up to Him as Jane had years before? Why did I not feel the irrepressible urge to go out and spread the "good news" to the world, or at least to my roommates?

Jane's explanation: I had to start associating myself with other Christians. See how they lived their lives of faith. Then I would understand. After an unrelenting stream of invitations from Jane, I finally consented to give it a try and go to a Bible study meeting.

We approached the building where upstairs the weekly meeting was to be held, its dark Gothic shape set against the moonlit sky. My already smoldering apprehension began to flare. Jane, sensing my anxiety, smiled gently at me.

"Don't worry, Bob. Everybody's real friendly," she reassured me in her soft, shy voice.

I nodded knowingly. Observed from afar, those in the "God Squad," a name colloquially applied to the group, seemed to radiate an unceasing confident happiness, almost to the point of snobbery. It was this apparently unfettered happiness and my inability to comprehend it which lay at the root of my feelings of apprehension.

We reached the outside entrance at the end of an arched passage and stepped inside. The large downstairs room, replete with stuffed chairs and sofas and a plush purple carpet, was quiet. As we ascended the wide stairway, I could hear voices filtering down from above. Turning on the intermediate landing, I could see several people standing in an open hallway, evidently just outside the room where the Bible study was to be held. Three guys and two girls—all quite well-dressed. The guys wore slacks or corduroys, the girls knee-length dresses. Colorful, but simple. As we reached the top of the stairway, they broke their conversation to greet us.

"Ah, Jane," hailed the tallest boy. He had black bushy hair and a rather gaunt face. "I see you brought a friend."

He smiled at me warmly.

I shifted my feet uneasily as Jane looked at me brightly, then back at the group.

"Yes, this is Bob. He'd like to participate in our study tonight," she said proudly. I looked into their smiling faces, shaking hands all around.

"We're happy to have you, Bob," said the tall one. Bill was his name, dropping a hint of a drawl this time.

"Where are you from, Bob?" inquired one of the girls sweetly.

I looked into her inquiring eyes, staring out at me from behind the brown horned-rimmed glasses set on her plain pale face.

"Uh, Connecticut," I responded hesitantly.

"Oh, we have someone else from Connecticut. Wayne Gordon," she informed me, casting a searching glance into the meeting room.

I followed her glance and met a host of faces staring out at me through the doorway. I had very quickly become the center of attention, it seemed. Promptly, I swung my head back to face my next questioner. My discomfort heightened. In the subsequent minutes I caught small snatches of conversation floating in from the other room. Their contents suggested that Jane had mentioned me to them previously. Irritated at this realization, I glanced sidelong at Jane, who was engrossed in a discussion about a biblical passage with the pale-faced girl. Finally, upon a call from within, we entered the long rectangular room. Uneasily, I took my place with the group.

Princeton, one year later

Out through the large wooden doors floated the undulating choral sounds of a hymn. The open doors invited me in. Two young men stood watching the service through the left entrance into the nave from the dark and dank vestibule. They took no notice of me as I paused for a few moments to unbundle myself from my winter garments. Through the right entrance, scores of pews marched in impeccable formation to the chancel at the opposite end of the church.

It was not my first visit to the Princeton University Chapel. Its neo-Gothic structure and immense inner chamber were familiar to me. However, none of my previous visits were made with the design for which this one was intended.

My association with the Christian group over the past year had not filled me with the love of Jesus Christ. Indeed, my relationship with most members had become strained as the evidence of this fact grew with my invidious questioning of their beliefs. My refusals to eat my dinners with them instead of with my secular friends or to attend Sunday afternoon Bible studies and Sunday evening services only sustained my status as a spiritual outsider. The group had come

to be what Sunday school had been to me as a child. Whether it was the group's fault or mine, I felt stifled rather than liberated with its members. Its spiritual message was being choked by the pressure I felt to conform to its rituals. I had concluded that my search had to be made alone so I would not be distracted by the beliefs and experiences of others. Recalling the awe and wonder I had felt as a young boy sitting in church services with my mother, I had come to the chapel seeking to recapture those feelings.

I walked quietly into the nave. The scattered congregation, perhaps filling half of the church's capacity, was standing and singing *Glory to the Highest*. I slipped into an empty pew near the back among other sparsely-populated pews. Peering down the center aisle, the density of the people increased as my gaze approached the front. The hall was long, narrow, and steeply-vaulted, its framework constructed entirely in a grey concrete. It was dimly lit by two rows of chandeliers running the length of the church and by several small floodlights shining earthward from the apex of the ceiling. Thick columns reaching to the sloping ceiling lined the outer edges of the pews on both sides. Behind them, untouched by direct light, stood more rows of pews where a few isolated individuals sat.

There were two podiums. The higher one, the pulpit, faced the congregation from the left. The other looked across the chancel from the right. The choir stood in the recess between them. Behind the choir stood a modest altar over which loomed a huge stained glass window. A cold draft pervaded the expansive structure.

The hymn having been sung, the congregation seated itself noisily and awaited the commencement of the sermon. The chaplain, a tiny figure with white hair and wearing a scarlet robe, had ascended to the pulpit and was turning some pages, presumably of the Bible. Presently, he cleared his throat and spoke, his voice amplified by a microphone, welcoming the congregation and visitors to "God's house of worship." There I sat, listening not so much to his words but to the tone of his voice. I tried to feel the ambience of the church, searching for those elements which had so impressed me thirteen years before, trying to infuse them again with that mysticism they had once possessed.

But the aura and wonder did not return. Although physically larger, the interior of the chapel would not become the literal embodiment of "God's house" as the nave of the United Congregational Church of Norwich had been to me. The vaulted ceiling obviously reached only a hundred-odd feet above the floor, not to the heavens. The darker recesses of the building contained only people, if anyone at all, not saints or devils. And the voice bellowing forth from the pulpit was not God's, but merely the chaplain's, assisted by a sound system. Everything which formerly had radiated a lustrous spirituality now revealed nothing but human vulgarity.

Browns Mills, New Jersey, two years later (1975)

"Do-be-do-be-doo-bee-doo-bee, do-be-do-be-doo-bee-do," I chanted melodiously as I bounced my brother Gene's two-year-old daughter on my knee. She laughed in her high-pitched voice, displaying her recently acquired set of off-white teeth. Her big round eyes gleamed.

"A-gain!" she insisted, rocking back and forth. She pushed me playfully on the chest.

"Oh, no," I begged off. "Uncle Bob's tired." I put on an easily mustered expression of fatigue.

Not to be denied, she bounced herself emphatically on my knee. "A-gain! A-gain, Unca Bob!"

"All right, Kelly. One last time."

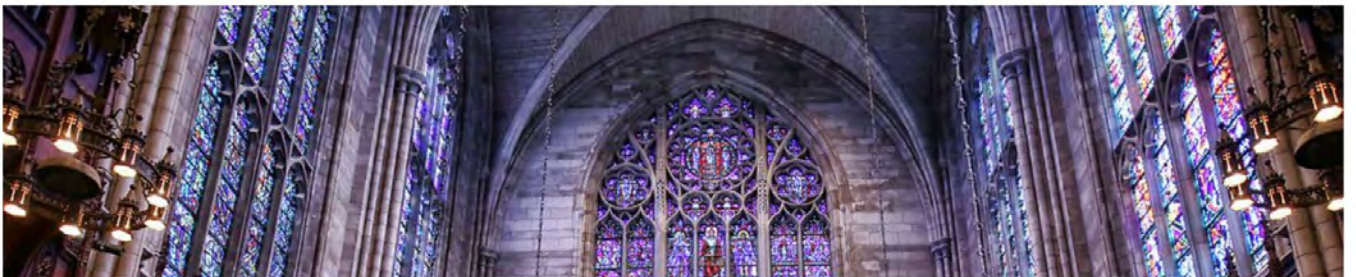
With that, I "do-be-dooheed" several more times, finishing with a flourishing toss high into the air and setting her down gently on the hardwood floor. She gurgled happily as I pushed myself out of the chair to go into the kitchen.

The clock over the sink read four o'clock. My brother and his wife ought to be back fairly soon, I thought. We were to have dinner before I was to accompany my brother to evening church service. After a period of several months during which he suffered from long spells of depression and turned to drinking, he had "found Christ." His conversion both interested and disturbed me. Although glad to see him in good spirits, I recognized his vulnerability and feared his being attracted to more fanatical religious elements. As for myself, the circumstances had brought me back to those old familiar arguments that address themselves to one's fears rather than to one's hopes. Feeling once again the social pressure to join—to conform—I was convinced more than ever that his road should not be mine.

Kelly's giggles tore me from my thoughts. I stepped to the doorway and smiled. Sitting in the middle of the floor, she was clapping her hands joyfully and staring at the far wall. There, a newly hung silver cross, gleaming in the sunlight that was flooding in through the picture window, had entranced the little girl. I remained leaning against the doorway, marveling at her unaffected enjoyment and appreciation of beauty. My mind contrasted this to the sometimes confoundedness of adults, and their habitual ignorance of nature's—God's—simple gifts. That delighted child, like my younger self, sat closer to the Divine Spirit than others older than she. Unencumbered by an awareness of the meanness of the world into which she had been born, she was capable of seeing clearly the beauty of the things that touched her senses. Witnessing such rapture, I regained the hope of one day transcending this world and glimpsing the sublime.

To be continued...







Princeton University Chapel



With my brother, Gary, and our mom

A Life Health Episode >

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A Life Health Episode

by James Howell

Like so many who read this, I joined our faith a long time ago...in the 70's when I was in my 20's. Now it's the 20's and I'm in my 70's. My journey took me fundraising for several years, then on to being matched, Blessed and on to a mission. Along the way, Linda and I raised 4 children. Now they are all married and have children of their own. With 9 grandkids I'm in grandpa heaven, and I want to continue to enjoy this as long as I possibly can.

Why am I writing this? Because when I look around at folks our age, it's not always a pretty sight. I see the results of people who've ignored their own health and ignored the warning signs. "Hey, it's just part of aging."

"It's about being vital and happy and continuing to be able to do the things you love for decades to come."

A synopsis of my own journey: in 2018, pretty much out of the blue, I experienced an 'episode' that lasted maybe a few minutes. Later the same day I felt it come back again. It was a feeling of uncontrollable mind drift - like falling down a mental rabbit hole. I felt extremely emotional and somewhat anxious. I had to stop whatever I was doing, doubled over with fatigue.

But I blew it off.

Then maybe 3 months later, one day, same 'episode' occurred. Then a couple months later, same thing happened. Only THEN did I feel concerned that something 'chronic?' was happening.

They continued. I would have 2 or 3 of these episodes during the day I experienced them and then nothing for maybe a month. But I could tell by my journal entries they were occurring with greater frequency. And they began to be followed for several days by the same symptoms, albeit to a lesser degree, almost as if they were tapering off in intensity until I felt normal once more. Linda began to notice I was also having short term memory loss as well.

So, in 2020, I took action and began to seek answers. I first went to a neurologist who did an EEG (electroencephalogram) and found nothing untoward and referred me to a psychologist. She just felt it 'was all in my head.' That soured me to seeing another neurologist. I spent a year seeing an integrative doctor and doing monthly neuro feedback exercises. At the end he

said, "Let's just hope they don't happen again."

But I didn't give up on my search.

I went to a cardiologist since I was told it might have something to do with not getting sufficient blood to my brain. Made sense. Hey, I'm no doctor. Long story short, turns out I had developed atrial fibrillation. I'm now dealing with A-fib.

This year I also began using a CPAP. For the uninitiated, it simply helps you get sound, restorative sleep. Let me tell you, it's made a world of difference. I cannot describe how transformative it's been. Science shows people our age need 7-8 hours of sound sleep each night.

All of this aside, the 'episodes' continued and I was advised to see another neurologist. Really? After my first experience? Really?

Well, this one spent over an hour and a half with me, listening and making notes. At the end of the appointment, she looked up and asked me, "you know what you're telling me, don't you?" My wife and I practically blurted out "No! We've been looking for answers for nearly 5 years. What is it?"

She said it was a textbook description of temporal lobe epilepsy. She admitted she was a cognitive neurologist and that this was only her theory but wanted me to see an epileptologist...a neurologist specializing in epilepsy to confirm her diagnosis.

I did so and spent 3 uncomfortable days and nights hooked up to an EEG. They actually induced a brain seizure (a professional description of what I had been calling 'episodes') and were able to confirm the diagnosis as left temporal lobe epilepsy. Left ignored or untreated, these seizures can spread throughout the brain and can increase in frequency. By the way, I have no family history of this, no previous head injury, nothing to predict this. I've learned that 25% of cases know no source. I've also learned that statistically, 1 in 26 people will have some form of epilepsy in their life (Epilepsy Foundation). I'm now working closely with the epileptologist to deal with this.

For me, there are 5 important components of good health:

1. Diet - preferably a Mediterranean diet. But I try to stay away from sugar, processed foods and alcohol.
2. Exercise - walking a couple miles a day at the very least but better to integrate daily workouts or cardio and light weights. I swim 1,000 yards 2-3 times a week and workout with weights and cardio on alternative days. I also love to ski but with A-fib, I now stick to gentler slopes.
3. Sound, Restorative sleep each night.
4. A strong, positive, uplifting social / family circle.
5. Keep my mind active and engaged. For me it's music, reading and writing. I meditate each

morning and shy away from cynical, argumentative stuff. I try and reduce stress.

Epilepsy is a “risk factor” for Alzheimer’s and dementia. So, I’m under no illusions of where this could lead. That said, I’ve learned that in the same way it trains itself to having more frequent seizures, the brain - that amazing gift from God - can actually retrain itself to grow used to having no seizures.

The message? While these ailments, A-fib & epilepsy, are serious, point is I’m not ignoring them. I’m addressing them. Don’t be among those who give up and say ‘Oh, it’s just goes with growing old.’ LISTEN to what your body is telling you and then, TAKE ACTION. There are so many resources from which you can learn.

You are your own best advocate.



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