

September 2025 Golden Age Newsletter

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
September 4, 2025



Golden Age Newsletter

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Hello Goldies, Welcome! We hope you enjoy!

This month features a Message from Jennifer Yashiro regarding the value of senior life, 2 articles on Unification Thought, a link to an earlier video of True Father, testimony from Robert Beebe and a continuation of the Korean History from Mr. Downey, 3 Book Reviews and a simple recipe with Pickles!

This Month's Message

Reflections on Yes to Life and Embracing Life by Viktor Frankl

by Jennifer Yashiro



The following are comments from Jennifer Yashiro, who has felt the need to enrich her life with valuable reading on topics pertinent to seniors. These readings come from two books by Viktor Frankl, *Yes to Life* and *Embracing Life*.

Briefly about the author:

Victor Frankl was an Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist and philosopher who was imprisoned in several Nazi concentration camps during WWII, but survived to continue teaching and writing.

The content of Frankl's books is especially valuable for seniors who may feel a lack of value as they face situations where they are no longer able to accomplish things externally. The author has a very firm belief that every single life has value, no matter how limiting the circumstances or situation.

Sometimes things may become extremely difficult; in some cases, seniors may experience much suffering. But such situations offer a new way of experiencing meaning. The author states, "Don't go looking for suffering ... and we should try to fix things, if there's a suffering situation. However, if there comes a point when you have no power to change a situation, no control, you still have your dignity and you still have the ability and the freedom to choose your attitude toward that suffering." The author gives so many really beautiful examples of people in horrible situations who just chose to justify their value and recognize the significance and value of the situation even in the very last breath of their life.

The author stands so firmly on this point: "People have the freedom and the responsibility to engage with life." We often ask life to give to us, but life also requires things from us. It seems that the worst thing, in Mr. Frankl's opinion, is when somebody gives up – because, to him, you can always do something! You can always be grateful! Your attitude matters.

This point really struck me because our members, who may be experiencing illness or poverty or many different kinds of suffering situations, may feel, "I can't do [whatever], so I'm useless. I'm useless, therefore my life has no meaning!" But, no one's life is useless. The author gives striking examples of people facing extreme challenges. Still, life is precious!

We hope you will read his books, or perhaps listen to an audiobook of Viktor Frankl’s writings and that from these you will gain inspirational insights, hope, wisdom and strength.

Unification Thoughts

Mathematics of Natural Law Two Continually Became One

By Richard Lewis



Victorian science saw the world as bits of matter moved by forces like gravity and electromagnetism. Natural law was described with simple formulas using real numbers—for example, $F = ma$. These numbers measured size, mass, or position.

But this view had limits. For instance, Newton could not explain why glass partially reflects light. Quantum physics solved this mystery by introducing the wavefunction—an invisible but essential property of matter

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

Unification Thoughts, September 2025

Reading last month’s lead article for this newsletter (Fifth Realm of Heart...) was very encouraging. It pointed out an important teaching about Blessed Families that deserves more consideration. It reminded us of an idea that True Parents stressed largely in the 90s, three decades after the Divine Principle was

published. By that time, Their grandchildren had grown, the 40-year course of the church had been completed and the Holy Community was at the doorstep of the post-Foundation Day, Chung Il Guk, Settlement Era

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

History Bytes

1972 Interview of Rev. Sun Myung Moon

submitted by Carol Pobanz

While looking through historical materials this month, I came across a video that always moves me deeply. It reminds me of how our True Parents—our Holy Father and Holy Mother—have devoted themselves in countless ways to share the hope of God, our Heavenly Parent.

The video, “*1972 Interview of Rev. Sun Myung Moon by Al Capp*,” is a powerful example of how boldly and creatively they worked to convey God’s message to the world.

May this inspire us to follow their example with the same courage and creativity as we share God’s hope today.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNyCNSynrUs&list=PL7ILKTFM6DT1p4dB00pV6sN1D_Z0556Gs&index=3

Testimonies, Tributes and Tributes



Photo credit: Robert Beebe

God's Day 1982

by Robert Beebe

After coming to the seminary from MFT in the fall of 1981, this was my first chance to attend God's Day at the New Yorker's Grand Ballroom. I was assigned along with 13 other seminarian brothers to help with security during that time. Following are some reflections on that experience from my journal:

Father's endurance is simply amazing.

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



A History of Korea, Part 5

By Michael Downey



Japan and Korea are close neighbors. From Incheon International Airport to Narita near Tokyo, it is just a two-hour flight. Korean golfers, seeking to avoid exorbitant domestic prices, often book a tee time and hop over to Japan—returning to Seoul

in time for dinner and drinks. The two countries share many cultural similarities, and even their languages have some common ground. . . .

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

Health and Recipes



Pickle Juice for Health

Helps relieve heartburn

Unless you are [lacto-fermenting pickles at home](#), and not pressure canning them, the benefits of the good bacteria in pickle juice is negligible ([source](#)). However, if it works for you – use it! Don’t be dependent on it, but a once in a while relief may just work for you!

Get started [lacto-fermenting at home](#) — it’s a great way to add probiotics to your family’s diet!

Helps relieve leg cramps

The electrolytes from pickle juice have been shown to [reduce the duration of cramping from exercise](#).

Relief from Hiccups

Although our family swears by a teaspoon or two of sugar to help the diaphragm settle down, others say that pickle juice helps relieve them, too!

25+ Ways to Use Pickle Juice

<https://www.thepurposefulpantry.com/use-pickle-juice/>

New Books

My Reflections on Life and Other Important Matters Now in ebook Format

By Jennifer Tanabe

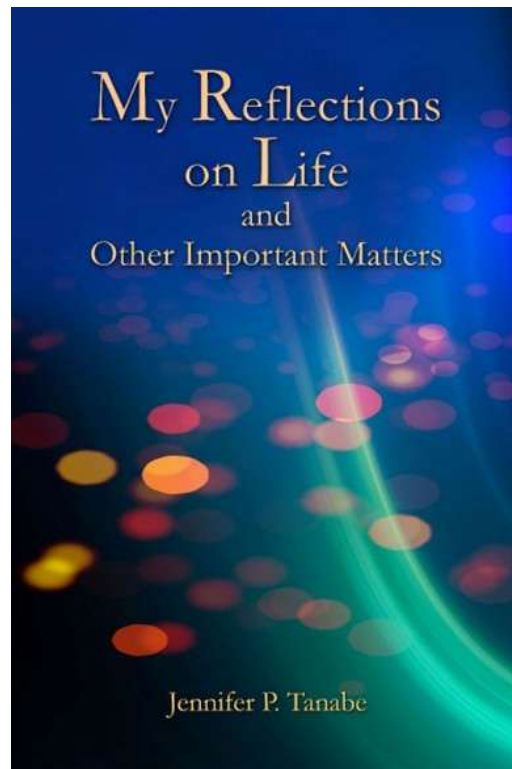


My new publication, a collection of essays on various topics, is now available for purchase in ebook format.

The essays cover a range of topics from issues of ultimate concern, about God, the meaning of life, and so on, to what could be considered rather mundane, like drinking tea, with a variety of topics in between.

These reflections are on important issues, but they are not deep philosophical or theological treatises. The reader can enjoy them without having to resort to dictionaries or maybe an AI assistant to explain the concepts. There is even an element of fun contained in many of the pieces.

The purpose of publishing this book is to stimulate the reader to reflect on these topics and the ideas presented here. Without any claim to solve the world's problems, this collection nonetheless contains ideas and thoughts that hopefully will advance people's thinking in a positive direction.

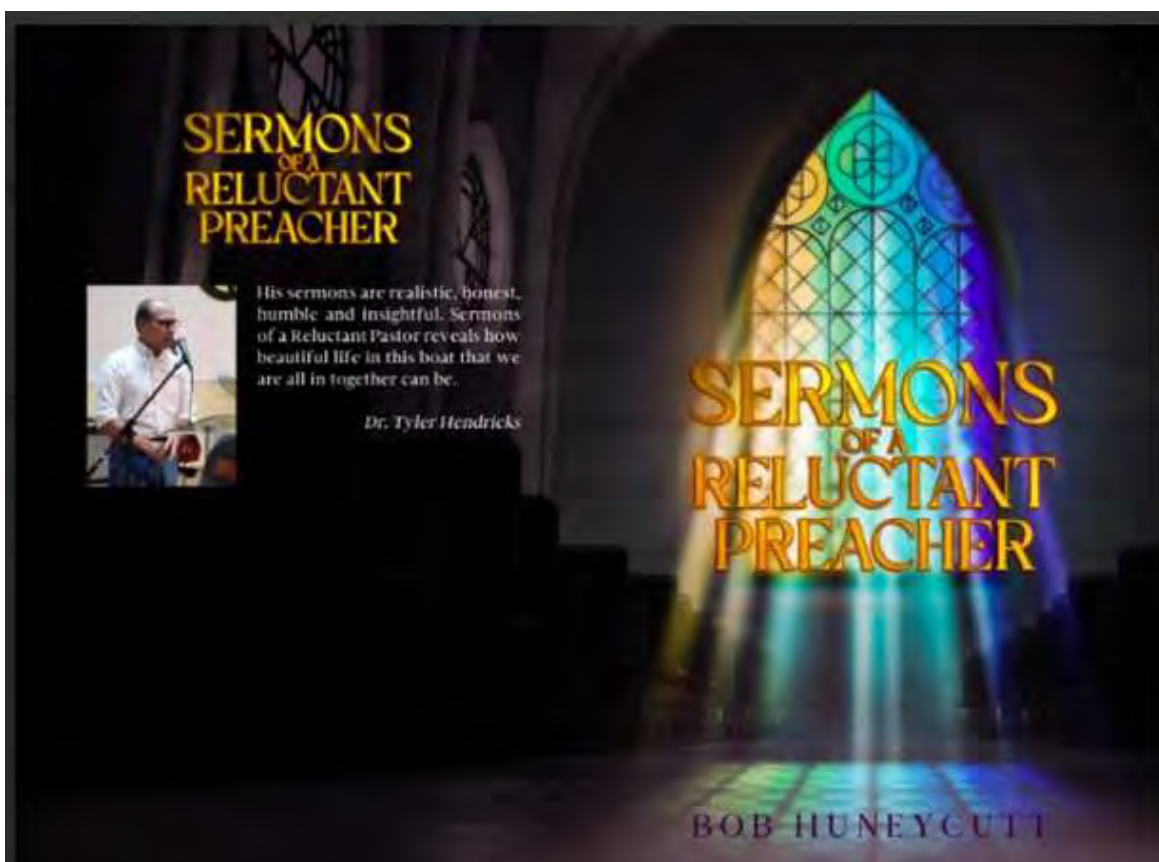


Ebooks can be purchased in both [ePub version](#) from Lulu, and on [Amazon for Kindle](#)

[Print copies](#) of this book are also available to purchase from Lulu.

Jennifer P. Tanabe, Ph.D.

<https://jenniferptanabe.com/>



Sermons of A Reluctant Preacher

By Bob Huneycutt



I enjoyed this book from beginning to end. Pastor Huneycutt's sermons are brief and to the point. They are realistic, honest, humble and insightful. It takes strength to confess weakness, faith to confess doubt, success to confess mistakes. Bob's range of resources includes *True Parents'* words and the Bible, plus a delightful helping of books, movies, songs and social research. Through it he shares his path from that of a wandering hippie to a successful restaurateur, husband, father and grandfather. I recommend this book to Unificationists of all ages and perspectives, to sociologists of religion, and to the open-hearted of all faiths and no faith. *Sermons of a Reluctant Pastor* reveals how beautiful life in this boat that we are all in together can be.

Dr. Tyler Hendricks

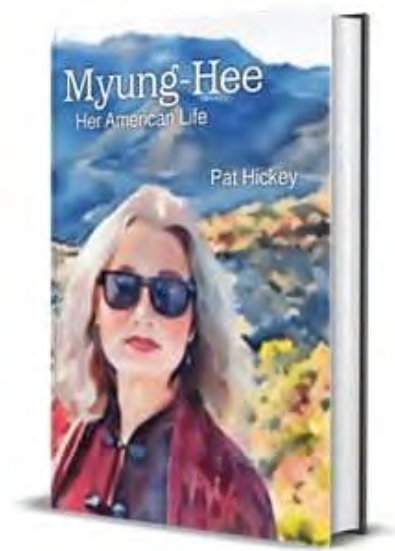
- When I was growing up, I wanted to be a writer, but God had other plans. I started working in Japanese restaurants, as a dishwasher, and eventually I learned to make sushi. Later my wife Ryoko and I opened our own sushi bar. When my daughter took over management of the restaurant, I had more time to pursue my childhood dream. I self-published two memoirs. My third book, *Sermons of A Reluctant Preacher* is a compilation of sermons I have given at Triangle Family Church in Durham, North Carolina. "Hearing Luka" is an honest and vulnerable message about growing up disconnected from love and God.

Here is the link to buy my book:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FDGQJ8DQ>

“Myung-Hee: Her American Life”

By Pat Hickey



About the Book

Part memoir, part love letter, [Myung-Hee: Her American Life](#) tells the tale of a Korean woman who immigrated to the United States to build a life with her American politician husband. Everything was set against the relationship: family skepticism, an ocean of distance, even an overzealous housekeeping staff at a Boston hotel. It's nearly impossible to imagine forming a lifelong bond under such circumstances.

Their partnership prevailed through a two-year courtship of correspondence before they ever met face-to-face. Through love, patience and the intervention of dreams and otherworldly experiences, Myung-Hee and Pat were able to give of themselves and their cultures to weave a Korean-American tapestry of devotion to one another.

Told with warmth, humor and openness, the author of *Tahoe Boy: A Journey Back Home* and [Here and Hereafter: Nevada Voices on Life and the Great Beyond](#) delivers his most heartfelt, personal work yet, a story about the love of his life and a romance that spans decades and continents. Their international love story is told with the tender skill of a seasoned writer, challenging readers to consider how love, especially love that bridges cultural differences, transforms and deepens us.



[Order Now](#)

Psst... Want a signed copy from the author? [Just say the word!](#)

Praise for Myung-Hee: Her American Life

As a first-generation Korean American woman with American-born children, my appreciation of this story is deeply personal. The book also reminds me that I owe my ease and comfort of being a Korean American to Myung-Hee and others like her.

SUNG-YEON PARK, Ph. D

Professor, School of Public Health, University of Nevada, Reno

Beautifully written, it is a story of a young Korean woman forging ahead, told from a deep personal perspective, while reminding us all of the ties that resonate: love, family, and what it truly means to call someplace home.

SIG ROGICH

Former White House Senior Assistant to President George H.W. Bush, Former U.S. Ambassador to Iceland

Pat Hickey's *Myung-Hee: Her American Life* is a love story between a wise Korean woman and her idealistic American husband. Through many collisions, their different backgrounds end up being more a complement than a barrier. Their relationship offers a glimpse at the kind of future marriages we are likely to see a lot more of.

MICHAEL BREEN

Author of *The New Koreans*

Told through the eyes of a devoted husband, this portrait of a young Korean woman and her 50-year marriage in a foreign land is a story of sacrifice and reward.

Transplanted into the 'new soil' of America, she grows stronger every year as she learns to 'live, love, and create' her own garden of life.

SALLY DENTON

Member, Nevada Writers Hall of Fame

Bulletin Board

PHOTO REQUEST

from Lloyd Howell

I'm putting together a photobook of fishing experiences – mostly with Father. But I am lacking some photos from the Seminary lagoon fishing time. If you have them in black and white or color, please send them directly to: 1950poet@gmail.com

Grateful for your help,
Lloyd

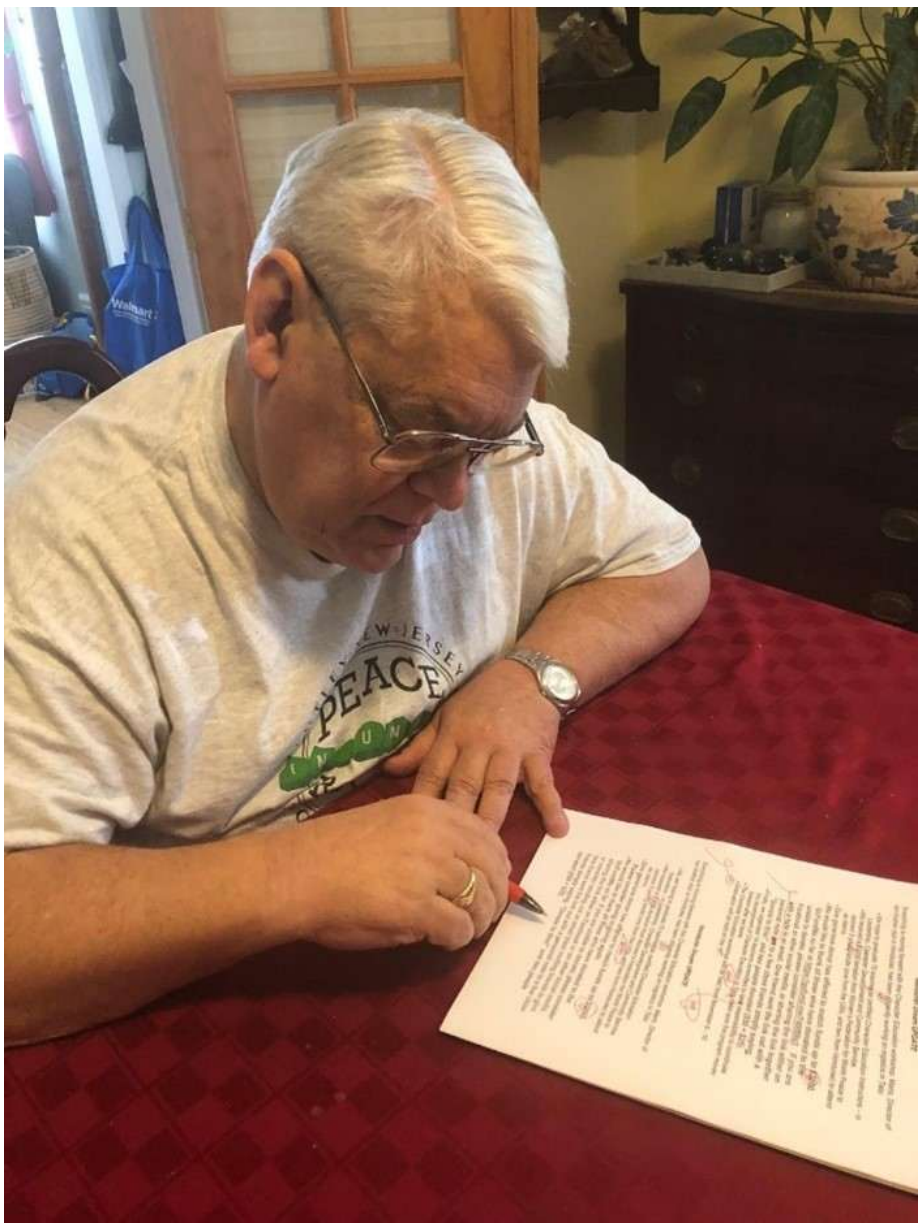


Photo credit: Carol Pobanz

The Golden Age Newsletter began as a small Clifton Senior newsletter about 3 years ago.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Purpose: The Golden Age newsletter has been created as a means to keep our elder community connected to one another. Articles are not in any way meant to proselytize or push a point of view.

It is a place to share God’s Love – what is positive in our life as a result of finding our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Motto: “This is the Dawning of our New Age” – We are always in the process of redefining ourselves as we grow older and as we add experiences to our lives. Therefore, we must consider how God can use us even when we may be decreasing in our physical capabilities.

The e-newsletter is broken down into eight sections:

1. A Featured Message of Inspiration – Helping others to feel hope and inspiration for the establishment of CIG.
2. “Unification Thoughts” – any educational article on the "Fifth Realm of Heart" – Grandparents’ heart
3. History Byte – A short article on a positive memory, a funny or affectionate story about experiences in the church with True Parents or with brothers and sisters or an article about the development/experience of helping to develop one of True Parents’ providential projects or events.
4. Arts and Culture – A sharing about one's talents, hobbies or interests and how this relates to sharing God's love (to family, community, nation or world).
5. Tributes and Testimonies- a personal testimony of one or more life learning experiences or a Tribute to a spouse, friend, or leader
6. Health – An article that relates to health (physical or mental), possibly providing a link to an article you think might be interesting or important to other seniors.
7. I Love being a Grandparent – stories about grandparenting or about things to do with grandchildren
8. Recipe – Preferably a healthy recipe along with 2-3 paragraphs about what makes it a good or memorable recipe.
9. Book Review – report on a book that inspires thoughts toward a world of peace
10. Bulletin board – reports on personal activities, or request help on a project

*Did someone forward this to you? Subscribe to the Golden Age
Newsletter [here!](#)*



Mathematics of Natural Law – Two Continually Became One

By Richard Lewis, PhD

Victorian science saw the world as bits of matter moved by forces like gravity and electromagnetism. Natural law was described with simple formulas using real numbers—for example, **$F = ma$** . These numbers measured size, mass, or position.

But this view had limits. For instance, Newton could not explain why glass partially reflects light. Quantum physics solved this mystery by introducing the **wavefunction**—an invisible but essential property of matter. Describing it required **complex numbers**, which combine two aspects into one.

So, matter now has:

1. A physical particle (local, external, tangible)
2. A wavefunction (spread out, internal, intangible)
3. Natural law guiding how the wavefunction behaves

Later, **quaternions** were introduced—an even richer math system that unites two complementary aspects. This suggests that deeper layers of natural law organize all particle behavior into unity.

Probability: Old vs. Quantum

In Victorian science, probability meant ignorance—like not knowing how a coin toss will land. In quantum physics, **probability is law itself**. For example, stars are prevented from collapsing by the quantum rule that no two electrons can occupy the same state. This is not ignorance—it is reality.

Wavefunctions always fit inside a **unit circle**, where probabilities range from 0% (forbidden) to 100% (certain). But what about the rest of the math plane outside this circle? Could it explain mysteries like **dark energy**, which makes up most of the universe?

Emergent Properties

When wavefunctions overlap, particles can merge into stable structures with new properties. This is called **emergence**—where the whole has qualities the parts don't.

Examples:

- A proton + electron = hydrogen atom (new identity)
- Two hydrogens + oxygen = water, with unique life-giving properties

Step by step, natural law builds complexity:

- Particle law → atoms → molecules → planets → oceans → volcanoes

The Origin of Life

About 4.5 billion years ago, Earth cooled enough for oceans to form. In volcanic “White Smoker” vents, natural chemical flows powered reactions that produced the building blocks of life. From this environment came **LUCA**, the Last Universal Common Ancestor.

LUCA already had the core of modern biology: amino acids, ATP, RNA, DNA, and cell membranes. Natural law made this development not random, but probable—guided by higher mathematical patterns.

Sophisticated Life

For 2 billion years, bacteria shaped the planet, eventually producing oxygen through photosynthesis. In sheltered structures called **stromatolites**, bacteria interacted more closely, giving rise to a new leap: **LECA**, the Last Eukaryotic Common Ancestor.

LECA was formed when one bacterium lived inside another, becoming the ancestor of mitochondria. This merging created the **eukaryote mind**—a new level of organization, leading to fungi, plants, and animals. Later, another merger produced plant chloroplasts.

Higher Minds and Natural Law

Each leap in life reflects a higher level of natural law:

- Bacteria mind (basic life)
- Eukaryote mind (cells with nuclei)
- Multicellular mind (plants and animals)
- Primate mind
- Human mind

These levels correspond to higher forms of mathematics (complex numbers, quaternions, octonions, and beyond), each harmonizing more aspects of reality.

Conclusion

The history of life mirrors the hierarchy of natural law. What began with quantum physics and wavefunctions extends all the way to human consciousness.

In short: **The quantum revolution reshaped not only physics, but the story of biology and life itself.**

*For the complete unabridged article contact Richard directly at: richardlll@mac.com

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



Unification Thoughts, September 2025

Reading last month's lead article for this newsletter (*Fifth Realm of Heart...*) was very encouraging. It pointed out an important teaching about Blessed Families that deserves more consideration. It reminded us of an idea that True Parents stressed largely in the 90s, three decades after the Divine Principle was published. By that time, Their grandchildren had grown, the 40-year course of the church had been completed and the Holy Community was at the doorstep of the post-Foundation Day, *Chung Il Guk*, Settlement Era. Befitting that, True Parents were guiding the Community into shifting its focus from living by the Principle of Restoration Through Indemnity to actualizing the Principle of Creation. And, as the newsletter's *Fifth Realm of Heart...* article mentioned, there's a role of critical importance for the first generation of the Holy Community to now fulfill. It's much too large an idea to explain here, but you can find True Parents' words on it here:

http://truelove.org/csg2/BOOK_3_TRUE_LOVE.html#bookmark03-2.

In addition, this newsletter had delved into this topic for almost three years, beginning at its inception in 2021.

A couple of years later, in June 2023, a remarkable, well-considered and deeply heartfelt article appeared in the final issue of the *Applied Unification* blog. It was entitled *Patient Love is More Important Than Doctrine* (<https://appliedunificationism.com/2023/06/30/patient-love-is-more-important-than-doctrine/>). As the comments following the article indicated, it provoked some soul-searching about the relationships between first generation community members and their children. It also implied some adjustments for future generations as well. It was a poignant reminder that love is greater than truth. The author is speaking as a gifted and expert presenter who, in hindsight, feels that—due to our earnestness but also our inexperience as parents—our generation might sometimes have been a bit heavy-handed with our children. And this idea sat in the back of my mind for a very long time.

I eventually realized that something disturbed me and it slowly distilled in my mind what it was. It's that if—in an effort to focus on loving—we downplay truth too far, we risk the possibility of downplaying the importance of our uniquely valuable scriptures and of accommodating inadequate appreciation, understanding and therefore *practice* of them. And at that point, we can merge with the rest of well-meaning humanity who are easily confused or misled by popular but unprincipled ideas. Godism is very clear about specific values and its teachings about them are

about specific values and its teachings about them are detailed and substantial. Its ideals are outlined in the first 40 or so pages of *Exposition of the Divine Principle*. That might have been adequate for the Wilderness Era, when it was useful to have a bit of vision of what was at stake. But in the present age, we can see that much more is needed in order to proceed successfully and correctly. That is why OSDP was floated and especially why so many of the books in both versions of *Cheon Seong Gyeong's* Table of Contents (2006, 2014) focus on expanding our understanding of the ideals of *Creation*.

If the *Journal of Unification Studies* still existed or was still read, I'd have posted my comment there and strongly supported the sixth *Key to Success* that appeared in the list of recommendations at the article's conclusion. But that 2023 article was the blog's final one. And so I could only think of what my response to the article would have been.

This is one of the things that triggered thoughts about the *importance of The Word* and thus the injunction of True Parents—as well as the founders and leaders of other religions—to cherish and study their *scriptures* and guide their lives by the loving wisdom those provide us.

Regarding appreciation of a movement's scriptures, in our tradition there's a particular Holy Song that comes to mind. It's *The Father's Dwelling Place* and its chorus goes to the heart of the matter:

*May the Word of God, in my heart resound
So eternally, to receive His love | joy | praise
We shall be His pride and delight
Children of the Living God
Into the Garden of Eden regained
Let's go marching | singing | dancing together!*

The chorus celebrates that—with the Word of God alive in our hearts—we first marched, inspired by His love; next we sing, inspired by His praise; and finally we'll dance, inspired by His joy.

So, as the grandparents of our Blessed Families, we can hope, pray and try to not only represent God's *love* to our descendants, but also be the ones who can provide loving guidance based on *truth*, not only *when* it's needed, but with the wisdom and sensitivity of *how* best to do it. In True Parents' explanation of the Realm of Grandparents' Love, They make it clear that God depends on us to be His representative in each and every one of our Four Position Foundations. As last month's newsletter headlined, at this stage of our lives, we can be *Rediscovering Our Calling As Grandparents*.

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God's Day 1982

By Robert Beebe

After coming to the seminary from MFT in the fall of 1981, this was my first chance to attend God's Day at the New Yorker's Grand Ballroom. I was assigned along with 13 other seminarian brothers to help with security during that time. Following are some reflections on that experience from my journal:

Father's endurance is simply amazing. He began at midnight with a prayer and proceeded to speak to members for the next four and a half hours, devoting great attention to home church. The motto for 1982 was "Victory of Home Church." The motto for each of the past four years had concerned home church. Father had been repeating this theme again and again. The fact that he kept speaking about this I took as a reflection of our not taking it seriously enough.

He began again at 8am with Pledge and a speech to Blessed Couples, which lasted until 10am. Then he spoke to the general church until 1pm—again about home church. At 7pm, he and Mother returned for the evening celebration at the Manhattan Center. Immediately afterwards, he conducted a meeting to select personnel for the new newspaper, the *Washington Times*. That lasted until 3am. Then, he was scheduled to address the MFT the next morning at 8am, followed by further *Washington Times* meetings.

Father's conduct of the *Times* meeting was interesting to watch. After everyone sang a holy song, he entered the Grand Ballroom and immediately established his subjectivity and seriousness of purpose by taking the microphone stand from off the stage and walking into the crowd, scattering people before him. He set down the stand in the midst of everyone. This was to be a business meeting, not an entertaining speech.

He began by explaining the Unification Church's task in this godless and chaotic world, how we had to establish God's tradition politically, economically, and culturally, and how important it was, for the movement's own survival, to establish our own network of marketing and distribution. First, we had to become autonomous economically. Then, we would be ready to tackle any task. Finally, he got around to talking about the media and our need to influence it.

As Father spoke, he struck some brothers and sisters on the head while making his points. Soon, one sister was in tears and he sent her away from him. Still, she cried and Father was visibly affected by it. Even as he conducted his business and spoke, his concern for her was so great. Several times he consoled her, saying he didn't mean anything personally by hitting her, but that she had just been strategically sitting in the wrong

spot. He would glance at her many times as he talked, always so sensitive to see how she was feeling.

The leaders present were as children with Father. They were strictly obedient to his command, although playful in their responses as well. Yet, their playfulness did not affect Father. He was absolutely serious and focused on what he was doing. He strolled around choosing this person, rejecting that one, asking for different kinds of qualifications, and consulting with leaders. He chose people from CARP, Ocean Church, state leaders, seminary graduates, and interested members, although UTS President David Kim would not let him touch the seminarians. We came through it all intact.

Earlier in the day, as part of the security team, I was watching Father speak from up in the projection room of the Grand Ballroom. From there, one gets a panoramic view of the entire setting—of a couple thousand well-dressed and colorful members amidst the bright splendor of the crystal chandeliers hanging in the high-ceiling white room. The scene was one of gaiety and love, where Father had imbued the room with his resonating voice and expressive body movement. At one point as he was speaking (with Colonel Bo Hi Pak translating), I took a stroll out of the projection room into another room that looked out onto Eighth Avenue below. The room had not been restored and was as grey and cold as the scene outside. The window was broken and it was raining. As I looked out upon the dreary scene, watching people scurrying to and fro, it dawned on me that here was a world almost totally oblivious to the fact that the Messiah, long hoped for and awaited by millions of people since the time of Jesus, was now speaking to anyone who cared to listen. The world I saw through that window stood in stark contrast to the heavenly atmosphere inside. At that moment, I felt God's longing heart to embrace his lost children with his love and how much He was depending on us to be the vehicle for that to happen.





all photos from Robert Beebe

< 1972 Interview of Rev. Sun Myung Moon

A History of Korea Pt 5 >

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A History of Korea Pt 5



By Michael Downey

Japan and Korea are close neighbors. From Incheon International Airport to Narita near Tokyo, it is just a two-hour flight. Korean golfers, seeking to avoid exorbitant domestic prices, often book a tee time and hop over to Japan—returning to Seoul in time for dinner and drinks. The two countries share many cultural similarities, and even their languages have some common ground. Yet, as with many close neighbors—or even siblings—there is often tension. Throughout their long history, Japan and Korea have clashed many times.

It all began on the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula, closest to the Japanese islands. The Gaya Confederation grew out of the Samhan Confederations, particularly Byeonhan. We know that Gaya was located in the central southern region of the Korean Peninsula between Baekje and Silla, though the exact borders and towns of the confederation are unclear and vary depending on sources.[1]

The founding of Gaya dates to between the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, depending on whether the Byeonhan Confederacy of the Samhan period is included as part of early Gaya history.[2] One myth claims that six golden eggs descended from heaven, and after twelve days, they hatched into the first rulers of the six Gayas.

Due to the scarcity of texts from that time, little is known about daily life in Gaya. Like the other Korean kingdoms, they practiced Buddhism and shamanism. They lived in as many as eight walled cities, each independent and ruled by a king or chieftain. Wedged between two aggressive kingdoms—Baekje and Silla—Gaya struggled to maintain its independence. Though annexed in parts over the centuries, the last of the Gaya Confederation fell to Silla in 562 CE.

The controversies surrounding Gaya involve its relationship with Japan. Gaya's proximity made it accessible by short sea voyages, and it supplied Japan with iron and harness parts. It also acted as a

with iron and harness parts. It also acted as a middleman in cultural exchanges with China. Many Koreans argue that much of Japanese culture originated in Korea. In response, some Japanese nationalists have claimed that early Japanese emperors colonized Korea, calling the region *Mimana*.

The Japanese chronicle *Nihon Shoki*, compiled in 720 CE, is the second-oldest Japanese historical text and is regarded as foundational. It covers Japan's founding myths and imperial reigns but also describes relations with the Korean Peninsula, including with Gaya (referred to as *Mimana* or *Imna*). The text mentions delegations, military movements, and wars, indicating active interaction between Yamato-Wa (early Japan) and Korea.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Japanese scholars claimed that Yamato-Wa actually controlled Gaya, interpreting *Nihon Shoki* passages about colonies to mean that *Mimana* was Gaya itself. Korean historians, however, strongly dispute this, especially since Japan used the claim to justify its 20th-century occupation of Korea, which Koreans remember as brutal.

Alternative theories have emerged. One North Korean scholar argued that *Mimana* was actually a Gaya settlement on the Japanese mainland, which—if true—would raise provocative questions about cultural ownership in Japan. Today, the most widely accepted theory among historians is that *Mimana* was likely a diplomatic outpost or embassy in Gaya, facilitating relations between Gaya and Japan. The debate, however, remains unresolved.

Unified Silla and the Golden Age of Buddhism

The Unified Silla Kingdom (668–935 CE) marked the peak of Buddhist culture in Korea. Buddhism flourished as a dominant force in society, shaping art, philosophy, and government. The state promoted Buddhism by building elaborate temples—often in the form of mandalas—for spiritual protection. Monks traveled to Tang China to study, returning with texts, doctrines, and practices, including new sects such as Pure Land Buddhism and Chan Buddhism (known later as Zen in Japan and Seon in Korea). Buddhism thus became central to Korea's cultural development, inspiring temples, stupas, and sacred writings.

The unification of the Korean Peninsula under Silla came about through alliances and war. With Tang China's aid, Silla defeated Baekje in 660 CE and Goguryeo in 668 CE. Yet inviting Tang forces into the peninsula proved risky: once victorious, Tang attempted to dominate the entire region. From 668 onward, Tang occupied large parts of Korea for nearly a decade.

Revolts broke out, especially in former Goguryeo lands, straining Tang control. In 675 CE, Tang forces defeated Silla in battle, but after Silla's King Munmu offered apologies and tribute, Tang withdrew, distracted by rebellion elsewhere. Seizing the opportunity, Silla consolidated its control over the peninsula.

Still, the north remained outside Silla's grasp. Balhae, a multiethnic kingdom, arose in the northern Korean Peninsula, northeast China, and parts of Mongolia, lasting from 668 to 926 CE. Its origins and identity remain somewhat mysterious, with competing claims

from China, Russia, and Korea. For Koreans, Balhae represented the “Northern Dynasty,” while Silla was the “Southern Dynasty.”

Despite such complexities, Unified Silla fostered a strong sense of shared Korean identity. For many, it was the first time they felt they were truly one people.

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