

What We, the Unification Church, Have to Offer

John Dolen
May 1975



Photo date and location unknown

Reading the newspapers and magazines of the past week, I could not help but feel a temporary sense of discouragement. What discouraged me was not the news-which in itself was not altogether inspiring-but rather the manner in which the news was given. Everything was cast in such a slick, super-secular light. The commentators themselves -- the reporters, the editors, those who are in responsible positions in the media-these were the source of my dismay. I was reminded of a chance meeting I had with a retired reporter in his late sixties: a veteran of thirty years on the staff of the Washington Post. Though our meeting was brief, I was deeply affected by his sincerity, freshness and dignity.

As we jockeyed for positions in line to purchase the Sunday morning edition of the Post, he muttered somewhat acidly, "When are they going to replace that press down there?"

The type was indeed faint. Since he had made such an opening I couldn't resist taking a shot myself.

"Yeah, and they can replace some of those reporters too." He looked at me and smiled warmly. "That's the truth," he said. "You can't read anything in the Post that doesn't have that slant. You can't find an objective article in the paper anymore."

But now that this man had retired, and this type of man is fast disappearing, who would take his position, who could speak from his angle? Why is conscience and wisdom so scarce today? Why do the major dailies and the prominent television and radio stations so often ring so hollowly? Where is understanding?

Something inside me drew me to the Bible. I opened directly to Jeremiah 8 and read what seemed to me an answer:

You shall say to them, These are the words of the Lord: If men fall, can they not also rise? If a man breaks away, can he not return? Then why are this people so wayward, incurable in their waywardness? Why have they clung to their treachery and refused to return their obedience? I have listened to them and heard not one word of truth, not one sinner crying remorsefully, Oh, what have I done? The stork in the sky knows the time to migrate, the dove and the swift and the wryneck know the season of return; but my people do not know the ordinances of the Lord... The wise are put to shame, they are dismayed and have lost their wits. They have spurned the word of the Lord, and what sort of wisdom is theirs?

That's right, I thought. What sort of wisdom is theirs? They don't know the season of return. No one cries, no one repents. The wise are put to shame.

Then I realized again that what they lack, we must provide. We are the heralds of the true season of return, and we must constantly remind ourselves of what we have to offer. Why are we the ones to cringe

at the arrogance of the fallen world, while others nod in assent to its vacuous statements? What do we have to offer that is unique, that would draw us to the Unification Church rather than another church down the street.

Just a few days before, Miss Kim, Rev. Royal Davis and myself had dined with a Methodist friend and professor of theology at Wesley Seminary who had remarked sadly that membership of the laity and clergy is dropping drastically in the major denominations. His note of concern, being a lifelong theologian as well as a very sensitive and compassionate minister, impressed upon me the real crisis in Christianity. Financial difficulties, too, were forcing a reduction in their missionary outreach.

Some churches are gaining in membership, groups not even considered as Christian by mainline denomination: Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals (when these are studied in the theological curriculum they are not taught as part of the courses on Christianity, but rather, as new religious movements).

The reason for their growth is their door-to-door witnessing and constant outreach.

This we have to offer to established churches: A fervent, vital, international missionary force. What do we have to offer the newer followers of Jesus? The next day, I turned on the radio to unexpectedly catch a song entitled "Mathew's Blues" by an obviously talented guitarist named John Fischer. It was a song about Jesus, rebirth and heaven, and the piece itself was very mellow and soothing to me. I listened to the station to find out more about it; it was a Christian radio station that was quite clearly tailored to young people. It certainly appealed to me. There were no crass requests for money or allegiance and there was no preaching. The music was sophisticated and the message was sincere. Their vibrations were probably the best you could pick up on the radio. I listened and listened as the folksy music took me further and further from the cares of this plane.

Then suddenly I realized how otherworldly these new Christians are! My, gosh, I thought, they're not interested in earth at all! They're a million miles away! And in that beautiful place, what interest do they have in solving the problems of ecology, understanding the intricacies of foreign policy, or working for positive change in governmental leadership? They've got Jesus, what need do they have for these other things?

The problems of this world only show them that the time of His coming is all that more near--that the destruction of all evil is that more imminent. Why should they try to change the evil world when Jesus is going to destroy it all?

If only it were that easy, I thought. Once again images of our members became vivid in my mind: in public relations campaigns; in the offices of congressmen, senators, governors, heads of state; learning the ropes of the media; organizing within months or even weeks major campaigns in big cities on every continent; assembling some of the greatest minds in science each year to grind out solutions for earth's ever more pressing problems; researching in philosophy, politics, economics, theology; acquiring and maintaining valuable and well-situated properties. My own experiences in the Iowa Day of Hope campaign returned for a moment. I thought, could these guys playing so wistfully handle a Day of Hope banquet?

Their Sunday School campaign, their two bookstores, radio station, and active schedule of events seemed to be effective and well planned -- but their scope, their goals and their potential were so limited by their own vision of Christianity.

We offer to established Christianity a vigorous missionary force. We offer their younger brothers a down-to-earth program, a realistic, concerned, logical, incisive, inclusive -- yet not unspiritual -- effort to love, serve and protect our neighbors throughout the world, even as Our Heavenly Father loves, serves and protects us. Nowhere is this element more apparent than in our program to educate the religious (as well as nonreligious) to the threat of atheistic Communism. While the established Church is trying to halt its decay and decline and while the newer Christians are making preparations to enter the Kingdom, the Unification Church alone is answering the call of the Richard Wurmbrands of the world to stand up for Christians terrorized so long and so viciously by the Communist regimes.

If it is true that we can offer so much, then we must have another offering to make: we must be able to offer the power and presence of the Spirit of God. In her farewell speech to the foreign missionaries, Miss Kim pointed out that sixteen years ago two lone missionaries were sent out from Korea, one to Japan and one to America, with no money and no printed books.

Today, missionaries are departing by the hundreds from Japan, Europe and America with books, literature, financial assistance. Without God expansion is impossible, she remarked.

Clearly, God's Spirit testifies to our work. We each have some experience to offer, some testimony of

how the power of God brought us to this work—for how many of us would have come on our own? Four years ago I made a request to God after retracing the known journeys of Paul throughout Greece. With a year and a half of prayer, search and study behind me, with a still strong presence of that Apostle within me, and with the deep blues and pure whites of that beautiful peninsula around me, I begged God to show me the highest truth, the Truth of Truths. "Before, You answered my prayers, provided all my material needs, and heeded my requests ' or others. Now I pray for wisdom." This is what happened.

In the midst of prayer I went through a very intense struggle and for the first time realized the depth of what St. John of the Cross described as the "dark night o. the soul." Waves of darkness all but severed consciousness of God for many hours. However, through persevering in prayer, the darkness left as quickly as it had entered. Light flooded in and I very distinctly heard a chorale chanting "Victory! Victory! Victory!" I was sitting in a meadow on the mountain overlooking the small city of Patras (meaning father in Greek), and I was the only person in sight.

I felt an unusual peace and I realized that my mission in the future would be connected with what I could only describe as an international, spiritual NATO alliance! That I knew just as surely as if I had looked at my watch to read the time of day. But I had no idea as to the specifics. Up to that point I had never conceived of God in terms of nations.

Could you think of a better description of the Unification Church than as an in international, spiritual NATO alliance? One year after that experience, I walked into a lecture at Lisner Auditorium in Washington, D.C. Almost from the moment I entered the hall, the same vivid feeling that I had experienced on that afternoon a year earlier returned to me and stayed with me throughout the evening.

As I listened to the message of Reverend Sun Myung Moon and watched and talked to the radiant young members from all over the world, I could only marvel at God's great love and careful testimony.

In the face of all the uncertainty in today's world, we confidently offer the testimony of God; in the face of the wayward and ultra-secular, we offer a realistic and universal compassion; in the face of the extinction of organized Christendom, we offer a newborn enthusiasm and resolve; in the face of purely mystical new groups, we offer an integrated, coordinated response to earth's demand for renovation and regeneration.

Up to this point in this century we have seen what men can do without God; now let's show what men can do with God. This is what we have to offer.