

Who are you following? Reverend Moon, or God?

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Photo date and location unknown

In the mid 80s, I was living at 43rd street and trying to deal with a broken blessing.. I knew that this was where I was supposed to be, but it was getting harder to stay. My heart was bruised, and the waves of negativity made it hard to stay clear. I'd spent 5 years on MFT, hearing accusation about True Father regularly, when I'd only seen him once. The second time I saw Father, he was matching me. And now she had left the church, and I was trying to keep going somehow.

I needed to find out what kind of leader Father was. Were we a cult of personality? Were we a brainwashed bunch who weren't allowed to think or have our own thoughts aside from Father's words?

I needed to know.

Father was speaking one morning, I think it was at Belvedere. In the middle of his talk, he asked us "Who are you following? Reverend Moon, or God?" He nailed us with his eyes. There was a pause, he kept waiting for our answer.

After a pause, several people tried to answer. One brother cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted "We are following God by following you!"

"NO!", Father said. "Following God or Reverend Moon! Which one?" I had never heard a 'no' like this. It

had a huge spiritual force behind it, I think it would have stopped a charging rhinoceros.

"I'm following God", I thought, but I stayed quiet. Then Father gave his answer "You are following God." I don't have the exact words, but this satisfied my soul. If we're following God, and Rev Moon is following God, we are together. Father was being very clear, our relationship with God came first. If someone deviates from God, we are still following God, not that person. We can bring them back to God, but Father was clearly and emphatically saying we are not a cult of personality. We should follow God.

It strikes me that here is the root of many of our movement's difficulties today. It may be unthinkable that a central figure may wobble or deviate, it may shake our faith in the church when it does. We naturally get attached to our experience with Father or Mother, or how we view them. It is easier to get used to following our idea of who someone is.

Every important relationship in my life has changed and evolved. My initial idea of the other - my father, my mother, my brother, God, my wife, has gone from my initial way of seeing them, then getting jolted to see them in a new and hopefully deeper light.

I have experienced countless times when my expectations were unmet. My understanding of how things worked was shattered. I could reject the person or church or seminary or group and stay angry at them. I could slink away in hurt, or I could examine my own expectations. Time and time again, this has saved me from splitting off in anger and resentment.

Just like an engine needs to be taken apart and reassembled regularly if it's not working right, I've examined my life of faith many times, usually after some catastrophic breakdown. I'd like to say I got down to the roots, but I'm very wary of making statements like that. How do I, with my limited point of view, know when I've reached the roots? I think there will always be something more to discover, about God, about others, and about myself.

When I let go of my relationship with God, I'm going to grab onto something else as if it's God. Or when something else becomes my total focus, I can easily lessen my connection to God. My boss, my leader, my favorite politician, my children or my spouse becomes my source of happiness. Whatever they say is The Word. How they're doing, how they treat me makes or breaks my day.