

How I Joined the Unification Church

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Charles Mugabo Kahondah with his son, June Tae Kahondah

My physical parents are Mr. Petero Mugabo and Mrs. Prisca Rufuure Kahuliire Mugabo. In a polygamous family, my mother was the fourth wife. Among their nine children, I was the third born, following two sisters who each died shortly after birth. My father, who in September 1939 was already old enough to be exempt from our graded poll tax due to old age, took on my mother in 1948. I was born on June 4, 1952. They upgraded their marriage to Christian matrimonial status in 1956. I grew up amidst difficulties and suffering but still grew.

My loving old father had wished me to marry when I was still young, so that by the time he died, he would leave me with his legacy of continuity. Yet, because I first had to get through my education, it became hard. He kept waiting in eagerness. When eventually I had completed my education at twenty-six, I tried to comply with my father's desires but was five times appallingly disappointed and rejected in all my marriage proposals in a period of six years. On December 5, 1983, my father died, having lived well over one and a third centuries, leaving me a lonely and disappointed son.

A new life begins

Exactly a month after my father's burial, while still experiencing the pain of the loss of my beloved father, on January 8, 1984, dear Margaret Guderia Ndyazhugwa Busiingye came into my life with a heart of sympathy. Two and a half months later, I met the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, Uganda chapter, which Margaret and I have embraced with one heart since March 1984. When we finished a twenty-one day workshop, many experiences surrounded us, highlighting the many struggles we were going through. For instance, I remember the dream that scared me most, in which I found myself climbing portable ladders leaning on a very high wall on top of which was a smooth, paved landing, leading to a shining house. The house was about twenty meters away.

As I reached the top of the wall, I found myself unable to step on this landing, because ropes bound my hands and ropes connected my legs to a very heavy object, which I was unable to see. I took a penknife from my pocket and tried to cut the ropes, but by the time I cut the last rope, the ones I had cut earlier were again holding me as they had before.

The heavy object was still on the ground, securely fixed to the ropes. I took time struggling, without success, to disconnect myself from this heavy object. I sat in silence in this dream searching for a solution until an idea came to me: I should pull the heavy object up. I did so, only to find the heavy object was my dear Margaret. Reaching the landing atop the wall, we were both tired; we sat watching and marveled at the shiny house.

When we stood to walk toward the house, Margaret walked quickly and disappeared into the house, while I remained behind, gazing only at the building. I then awoke from my dream.

The next evening, I went to the center and told the central figure, Ulf Ingwersen, who listened attentively and then said, simply, Margaret will go to heaven ahead of you. Sincerely, I did not understand what that statement meant at the time. I went home and told Margaret, who only laughed.

Our course toward oneness

Life continued with our difficult course as a married couple. My background faith was from native Anglican, whereas Margaret was from the Roman Catholic faith. Our embracing a new, uniting faith in the Unification Church brought new challenges. Rituals and traditions confronted us.

Soon, as it happened, we had our first child, a daughter, Patricia Agarukire, born to us in July 1984. Our second-born was a boy, Bosco Aineamazima, born in August 1985. He lived only eleven months and died due to measles. At his burial, we confronted the experience of having embraced what our relatives called a different religion. Thank God, Mrs. Irmigad Ingwersen had moved some four hundred and fifty kilometers with us all the way from Kampala City to my home village in Rukungiri District, and had offered to preside over this burial memorial ceremony. When my relatives and the local Anglican clergy saw that we had come with members of our Unification Church and that we were determined to bury even without their involvement, they softened. The joint burial ceremony we held smoothly.

Amidst difficult challenges and hardships of faith and responsibility, separation became intermittent, which nonetheless brought us two daughters, Providence Atubweine in February 1987 and Preparation Aturiheihii in September 1989. With these challenges and hardships from inside and outside our newfound faith, we continually moved on in ways that mere words cannot adequately explain.



Charles Mugabo Kahondah with his wife Margaret, who ascended to the spiritual world in 1998

Becoming a blessed couple

On August 25, 1992, dear Margaret and I received the blessing in the thirty-thousand-couple Blessing Ceremony. Margaret, with a few other representatives from Uganda, attended this ceremony in Seoul at the main venue. Meanwhile, a few others and I participated in Nairobi, Kenya, via the assumed satellite link, which unfortunately the government disallowed perhaps because of poor packaging of the necessary information our church had provided. Nevertheless, we went ahead in a Blessing Ceremony supervised by Rev. and Mrs. Lee and Mr. Nonami.

We, Margaret and I, thereafter officially started our glorious blessed family by going through the final concluding procedures of the blessing on December 24–26, 1992.

Part of Margaret's rush to the shining house in my dream of 1984 was physically seeing and meeting True Parents in Seoul. Yet, still much

more was to come. On December 3, 1993, we met True Mother in Nairobi, Kenya, on her one-hundred-and-twenty nation speaking tour, the theme of which was True Parents and the Completed Testament Age. Margaret and I, as blessed couple number one, sat in the front row, directly in front of True Mother in the Kenyatta International Conference Center. This was significant in our life of faith to a degree that these words are inadequate to describe. In January 1994, Heavenly Parent blessed us with a blessed son, to whom the regional president, Rev. Lee, provided the name, June Tae Kahondah.

Public outreach

From the time of the inauguration, in 1993, of the Uganda chapter of the Women's Federation for World Peace, dear Margaret served as the vice-president. In 1995, we felt good when we actively brought spiritual children into the blessing, the likes of Mrs. Betty Busiingye Byamukama of Kabale and her husband, who received the blessing among the 360,000-couple group. In November 1996, my blessed central family received a second blessed child, a daughter named Ho soon Kahondah.

When Ho soon was just nine months old, we moved from a place we were renting to our own house, where unfortunately after only six months and thirteen days, Madame Margaret died of a stroke on the February 15, 1998. Her ascending to the spiritual world in such a hurry reminded me much of what the dream communicated to me back in 1984. This accorded with the interpretation Rev. Ingwersen had given me.

Moving ahead

One may think that hardships and suffering have continued to follow me, but with constant allowances, through prayers in my life of faith, I am remaining focused and raise my children with one heart. In life, I have realized that a great part of responsibility is often singular and particular in nature. Having served for nine and half years as a vice-national leader in my country, I appeal to my heart to see the way forward. When our church was thrown out of rented centers in Mengo, a neighborhood in Kampala, we had nowhere to go to gather for fellowship. I offered my home, though humble, to provisionally accommodate us shortly after God's Coronation on January 13, 2001. When True Parents' coronation occurred on February 6, 2006, our national-level celebration also took place in our home. This was humbling for my family. Sunday services there were simple and socially warm. God was with us all the way through.

Our movement's purchase of a Peace Embassy elevated us from where we had been worshipping for over sixty weeks. We could feel True Parents' love by reflecting on their humble beginnings and reflecting on True Mother's visit to Uganda in May 1999. There is hope in vision 2020 through conviction and devotional service. My family feels grateful for being present in life at this time when True Parents have been walking on earth, moreover at a time unique in the history of our redemption. As I write, I am happy to have my daughter Ho Soon attending a second-generation Top Gun program and being elevated with all the logistical desires of life including the blessing. I love and thank True Parents, and I pray for True Mother's good health and long life.