

My Search for the Highest Truth Led Me to the Rev. Moon's Unification Church

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I had been studying yoga for 11 years when one day I stopped by the Ginseng Tea House in Washington, D.C. and first came in contact with the family and Divine Principle. I don't think it was the tea that attracted me as much as the friendly family atmosphere which I encountered there. This initial feeling, plus finding my ideal of the highest truth, is what brought me to, and has kept me with the Unification Church.

I was born in Bogota, Colombia, and received strong Catholic training from my parents. I consider myself very fortunate to have been born into such a loving Christian family, and the relationship that I have with both my parents and my seven brothers and sisters is one of unity and love. I have believed in God ever since I can remember. At the age of sixteen I spent long hours discussing with my friends the purpose of life, who I was and where I was going. I was very influenced by the life of Saint Paul and desired to have a conversion such as his, but was very disappointed not to have an equal experience. In 1968, my wife Vicki and I went to Mexico to complete the second semester of my junior year in college. There I studied yoga and self-hypnosis, and the more I studied the more I felt that self-realization was the ultimate truth.

Eventually I realized that practicing yoga alone in my house from books was not enough. So it was off to New York City to search for a guru. I looked in the Yellow Pages under yoga, and finally encountered a center for Transcendental Meditation. I went to talk with them, but being a student I couldn't afford the \$35 fee that they were charging to be initiated. Instinctively I felt that something was wrong; I didn't believe that God-realization had a price tag on it.

My family is very influential in Colombia, and I had the desire to return to my country and be of service in the field of education. I firmly believed in St. Francis' prayer and wanted to serve as an instrument of peace and love to my developing country. My wish came true when in 1971 I returned to Colombia with my wife and my five-month-old daughter Cristina. I began working in La Universidad Pedagogica with a program sponsored by UNESCO. I was very happy in the university but was dismayed by the riots and strikes caused by the Communist infiltration of the students. It was in 1971, in Colombia, that I met my guru, Rajarshi Krishna Yogananda. I followed him faithfully for over four years, although there were many theories that I could not accept completely.

He always taught us that "you never see outside that which is not inside," so any time I had doubts I tried to look first inside myself. We practiced kriya yoga, which meant to perform actions being aware that it was God that was doing the action. Oneness with God, seeing God everywhere and in everything was the ultimate goal... God-realization.

Krishna's guru was Swami Hariharananda Giri from Puri, India. We were blessed with a visit from him in July of last year. He had a regal appearance, and his words of God-realization were of the purest nature. Just before Swamiji came to the United States and stayed in our home, I began my frequent visits to the Ginseng Tea House. It was there that I met Genie Ennis, who taught me the beginning of Divine Principle and tried to get a commitment from me to go to a weekend workshop.

I gave children's classes in hatha yoga on Saturdays so for a while it provided me with the perfect excuse not to attend the workshop. I was convinced that I had already found the highest truth, so while she was trying to convince me to learn more about Principle I was trying to get her initiated into kriya yoga. She was always giving time, conversation and tea, and I was only taking. The time arrived when she asked me to give her something -- a little of my time to learn more about Principle. I went just to please her, and since I believed strongly in reincarnation, initially I couldn't accept the Divine Principle, although to my mind it was logical.

The struggle of ideas that went on inside of me was terrible. I was put in a very difficult position. For one

thing, if I believed what they had to say then all my Oriental philosophy was not compatible, and two, if they were not compatible I had to evaluate my present situation. I was in charge of a large meditation group totaling 93 people. My home was open to them, and every night there was meditation at 8 o'clock. My life was completely dedicated to yoga, and it was the most difficult decision that I have ever had to make.



The easy way out was to stay in my comfortable meditation group where I was admired and respected, but unfortunately this was impossible. I prayed to God to let me know if this were the highest truth. I went through a real soul-search during this period, and through intuition and dreams, my heart revealed to me that Divine Principle was the highest truth.

The points I had to consider were these: Krishna teaches that God exists, but has no desires and no plans. Since God has no plans there was never any such thing as the fall of man. Neither is there such an entity as Satan because God is both good and evil. Since God has no plan, and there was no fall of man that separated good from evil, then there is no need for restoration or for a Messiah. He believes that the second coming of Christ is an internal, personal one which is achieved when you reach the Christ-conscious state or God-realization. God is omniscient,

omnipotent, the Supreme Reality that just IS. He does not have a heart to experience emotions, because that would limit Him to our human finite characteristics. Man's suffering is due to his karma: you reap what you sow, and any action good or bad will always come back to you. In other words, you get what you deserve. There is no possibility of an ideal world in which all people will have reached enlightenment or perfection. These ideas are directly contrary to the Divine Principle revealed to Sun Myung Moon.

Reverend Moon teaches us that God is our loving Father, that He created the world and man in order to experience the joy of having His love returned to Him. This ideal was destroyed when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's words and became separated from Him, and the thousands of years of human suffering ever since have been due to man's separation from God.

But God never lost the hope of restoring man to his original state and has been working throughout history to re-establish that oneness that existed between man and God before the fall. Because He is total goodness and cannot have give and take with imperfect man, He must send a sinless man through whom He can work to redeem mankind. Until the kingdom of God is established on earth, as He originally intended, God will continue to suffer and grieve. He can only be happy when man is happy. Whereas Krishna taught me that it is impossible to reach perfection in one lifetime, through the Principle I realized that this was God's original intention for man. This doesn't mean that you become a perfect musician or a perfect speaker, but it means you reach perfection of love. Once you have achieved that, then you have eternity to become a painter or a musician or a poet.

According to the Principle, God gave man three blessings: to be fruitful, multiply, and establish dominion over the creation. Through meditation, you can reach self-realization, but that is only the first blessing, unity between your mind and body. What comes after that? According to yoga, that is the highest goal. But to develop parental, unselfish love is a still higher goal, one that cannot be achieved only by meditation. Yoga teaches that you cannot help the world until you become perfected. All desire is bad, even the desire to do good. But Rev. Moon stresses that we only reach perfection through serving and loving others.

My wife heard and accepted the Principle about a month after I did. Our five-year-old daughter is happy, too, going to Sunday School, and making new friends. Through the self-discipline and relationship with a guru that we learned in meditating, I know that God was preparing us for a new life and a closer relationship with Christ and with Him. Yoga was a means not an end.