

A New Age - The Age Of Second Generation - Officially Begins

Sang-il Bang
November 6, 2022



Recently, Church Leader Kazuki Watanabe of Matsudo Family Church in the North Chiba District, was inaugurated as District Leader of the South Tokyo District. On November 6, his inauguration ceremony was held at Shoto Headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo, where Mr. and Mrs. Bang Sang-il, Regional Group President of the Heavenly Japan for the Heavenly Parent's Holy Community, were welcomed. In his speech, Bang testified about True Mother's constant concern for the second generation, and he hopes for the first and second generations to be united and enter God's kingdom.

A new age - the age of second generation - officially begins

Good morning, everyone.

Today is November 6th. I wanted to know what True Parents spoke on this day, so I looked up the Cheon Seong Gyeong: The Holy Scripture of Cheon Il Guk. I will read two passages from speeches he gave on November 6. The first was spoken in 1960 and the second in 1966.

"You must connect to God in heart and experience His heart. Unless you experience His heart, you can never come before God. At the time of Jesus, what did the people of Israel do? God had shed tears, blood and sweat for them, to prepare them as the chosen people, and all His heartfelt tears, blood and sweat still remained with them. Yet they utterly forgot all of it."
pp. 340-341

"To share my history with you, I would have to tell so many stories. There were times of despair, but I never succumbed to despair. I was put in places of servitude, but I was never without backbone. I still remember vividly my experience in Pyongyang. As I walked into prison wearing handcuffs, I waved to the members who had come to say goodbye to me and bid them farewell. I will never forget that moment. Other people go to prison in disappointment and despair, but I went with a heart of hope. God had told me what sorts of people I would meet in prison. When I was hungry, God mobilized people to bring me food. Even though I was unable to speak about the truth, I was always confident, because God showed me living evidence that He was with me by making many people come to me and follow me."
p. 351

Kazuki Watanabe, congratulations on your appointment as District Leader. A few years ago, Masaichi Hori, Regional Group President of the Asia Pacific 2, and Katsumichi Motoyama, Director of the Future Human Resources Department, were the first second-generations to serve as district leaders. At that time, there were no other second generation ministers, and I am sure they must have felt lonely. I am sure they must have worried about how to receive and support the members.

We have now entered a new age, the age of second generation, in earnest. Therefore, unlike in the past, we have decided to have his father give words of encouragement. As you all know, Kazuki's father is Rev. Yoshio Watanabe (1800 couple), who had long been responsible for VOC activities. Earlier, as a word of encouragement, a heartfelt and moving letter from father to child was read on his behalf. From now on, a tradition of parents praising their children, such as this, will be established in the Family Federation.

Workshops held under heaven's guidance

On September 4, I received a phone call from True Mother. We talked about a variety of topics, and she proposed that 20 second generation from Japan be educated in Korea before taking posts in Japan. I thought that if Mother was going to educate them, I would like to send as many second generation as possible, so I asked each district to select one candidate and (after collecting the names) I sent a list to Mother. She was very pleased.

Twenty people were selected and preparations were made for a workshop to be held in Korea. However, with daily media reports affecting church activities, the workshop in Korea had to be put off due to the fear of potential problems occurring if the ministers were away from the field for a long period of time. Therefore, it was decided for the workshop to be held in Japan for 12 days from October 14.

October 14 is the day that True Father was liberated from Heungnam prison in 1950. At that time, Korea was the poorest country and many people in the world did not know where Korea even was. The United Nations composed a group of soldiers from sixteen countries, who were dispatched to such a small country.

UN forces stepped up their offensive with the successful Battle of Incheon on September 15 of the same year. The North Korean leadership became impatient and began executing prisoners in Heungnam. On October 12, prisoners with sentences of seven years or more were executed, and True Father, whose sentence was five years, was scheduled to be executed on October 14. How serious was God at that time? At around 2:00 a.m. on the 14th, the UN forces attacked the camp in full force, and Father was able to escape.

The workshop began on this day, where Father escaped Heungnam, and ended on the sixty-third True Children's Day. The participants were officially appointed as district leaders on that day. I still wonder to this day how the dates fell like this accordingly. It was completely coincidental, but I can't help but think that there was a plan from heaven.

True Mother has been concerned about the second generation and prepared the way to develop human resources for the future.

The Family Federation has re-launched with an even stronger witnessing-centered structure. The mass media are more concerned than we are and are asking, "Can the former Unification Church really change?" Today, twenty district leaders are being appointed at the same time, and there is no doubt that dramatic changes will come from this.

On the other hand, we must not forget that behind these appointments, there are senior ministers who have handed over their positions as district leaders to the second generation. Some of them are retiring at the age of sixty-five and above, while others will support the new district leaders as church leaders. Recently, I invited these leaders to a meeting at Shoto Headquarters. When I asked each of them what they thought, they all expressed their sincere joy at the birth of the second-generation ministers. I was moved to tears by the senior ministers who, without any objection to the personnel changes, said they were so happy that the second generation were leading the Family Federation. Then, I firmly promised that the realm of second generation, including myself, will do our best!

True Mother called me on November 4. At that time, she asked if I had sent the second generation leaders to the field. She reminded me that we had to protect these second generation.

Last night, True Mother appeared to me in a dream. It felt like a long moment, but I vividly remember that she gave me a lot of instructions. Even in my dream, she was concerned about the second generation.

Recently, many second generation, who have left, often appear in reports from the main stream media. The second generation, who are vigorously walking a life of faith, or those who live for the world and have inspiring testimonies are not being noticed. That is very frustrating, but now is the time to sincerely listen to our brothers and sisters who are former believers and seriously consider why they have come to make such statements. We must repent for our shortcomings in not being able to protect them and determine that from now on, we will absolutely protect all second generation.

After True Father's seonghwa, True Mother sold their private helicopter and created a scholarship fund for the second generation community. She also established UPA to nurture cadets, who will be the future of Heaven's providence, and to dispatch them to the world.

She also praised the second generation as "pure water" and "as clear and beautiful as crystal," and gave them the title of "hyojeongnang." This name derives from the young men known as "hwarangdo," who played a central role in the nation during the Silla Dynasty. Thanks to their efforts, Silla pacified Goguryeo and Baekje and achieved the unification of the three kingdoms.

When I was responsible for Taiwan, a local scholar asked me who had created the term, "hyojeongnang."

I answered, "President Hak Ja Han." The person was deeply moved and said, "Ordinary people would never come up with such a word."

The twenty second generation, leading the way for hyojeongnang have now become district leaders. When they go to the field, there will be four or five church leaders under them. Therefore, this appointment is directly related to about 100 church leaders. In other words, one-third of the approximately 300 churches in Japan will undergo a major change.

The second generation were born as children of True Parents

I was in charge of a traveling witnessing group in Korea around the time of the 30,000-couple blessing ceremony. About 130 young men who had graduated from college and wished to become ministers belonged to this group, and they underwent different kinds of training for a year before being assigned to the field. I would like to tell you about one young man I met there.

When he introduced himself, he told me that he hadn't known that he was a second generation until then.

His parents were of the 72 couples. They were devoted members in Seoul, but had to move to the countryside near the 38th parallel to take care of their parents. Living in poverty, they couldn't get a picture of True Parents. Because of their busy work schedule and also because the local church was far away, they gradually became estranged from the church.

This man had an older brother. They both did well in their studies, and his older brother entered Seoul National University while he entered Yonsei University. He was witnessed to first, and later he invited his older brother to attend a summer workshop with him. Moved by God's words, they were both restored and were told that there would be a 30,000-couple blessing ceremony. So they prepared the documents and applied for the first generation blessing.

Getting married without informing their parents weighed on their minds, so they decided to return to the countryside and testify about their faith to their parents in order to seek their permission to attend the blessing ceremony.

There are a lot of biased reporting in Japan now, but it was much harder in Korea at that time. Ten million Christians would criticize the Unification Church every day. When meeting their parents, they were so worried that they would oppose vehemently, that they were unable to broach the subject of the blessing. Finally, their mother urged them to speak what was on their minds.

They both told her that they wanted to get married, but she replied that they were still college students and asked them, "Why now?" and if they had partners. They both told her that they didn't have a partner, yet ...but that they were currently attending the Unification Church and wanted to participate in the blessing ceremony.

Their father, who was lying down and almost asleep, jumped up when he heard that and their mother shouted, "What?!" As they braced themselves for a rebuke, the mother cried out, "Thank you, True Parents!" The two sons were stunned when their mother told them that they were second generation from 72 couples.

The next day, the parents took a day off from work and visited headquarters. They received confirmation that they were a 72-couple, and so the brothers had to retract the documents they had submitted (for the blessing for first generation), and reapplied for the blessing for second generation. They received the second generation blessing safely and are now raising solid families.

Upon hearing this report, True Father said, "For couples who have received the blessing to not come to church is their decision, so it cannot be helped. However, the second generation are children of True Parents, not yours. Although they were born from your bodies, they are children of True Parents. Therefore, you must seek out all second generation and bring them before True Parents." This caused a great uproar in churches all over Korea.

There are many second generation who are not able to come to church for a myriad of reasons. We must bring them all back before heaven. We need to come face-to-face with the second generation, who are venting their frustration on mainstream media, and listen to their pain, sorrow, and heartache. This is God's wish and True Parents' wish.

Ministers are in the position of a parent in the church

You all know about the twelve tribes of Israel. Land was allotted to each tribe, but not to the tribe of Levi, the priests. The tribe of Levi was given the mission of guarding the tabernacle where God presided, and the other twelve tribes - including Manasseh, the son of Joseph, and the tribe of Ephraim - were to support

them by offering one-tenth of their income. This became one of the origins of the Jewish and Christian traditions in which the faithful offered a tenth of their income to the church.

Because the Levites guarded the tabernacle, this provided the Israelites with God's protection. Our church ministers should guard the church altars and are responsible for the spiritual lives of the members. They are in the position of parents, and whether they are asleep or awake, they will care for the members as their own children. Parents are always concerned about whether their children are doing well, or whether they are troubled. If they seem to be having a hard time, they will try to deal with the problem immediately. In this way, the ministers will need to face the members and listen to what they have to say.

Daily prayer is essential for this. Please offer the names of your members before heaven and give tearful prayers. Also, ministers must never become conceited. We must always be humble and modest.

True Father once said that leaders are in the most pitiful position, and instructed them to serve the members. Some of the members may complain about the church, but the ministers take it all in stride and wrap them with love. However, sometimes it can cause them trouble. We must not forget that we are in the "age of justification by attendance" where "attending" is considered righteous.

In Christianity, the emphasis was on "believing." Christians believe in Jesus' redemption through the cross and believe that they can go to heaven by accepting Jesus as their Savior. The Family Federation differs from Christianity in that it not only believes in salvation brought by the Lord of the Second Advent, but also seeks to comfort people by serving heaven.

Moreover, Christians respect the pastors as if they were God. They believe in what the pastors teach and say. I believe that Christianity developed in Korea because the pastor and the congregation were united in this way.

Ladies and gentlemen, please do not complain towards church leaders and staff. True Father instructed us that complaining is like poison. It is understandable that we are tempted to complain when we see shortcomings in the church or when things are not going the way we want them to. But if we do so, we harm ourselves.

My older sister is seventy-seven years old, and she is a very devout Christian. She has absolute faith in Jesus, and even now when I see her, we sometimes get into big arguments. She tells me with a serious look in her eyes, "Sang-il, you have to pray in Jesus' name."

She has never said a bad word about the church she attends. She believes the words of the Bible as they are written and chants, "Hallelujah, Jesus. Hallelujah, Jesus," from morning to night. This always reminds me that we need to lead Christians to the blessing and to heaven as soon as possible.

Let us pledge not to speak ill of one another. Words are precious gifts. Words are there to praise the other person. Here is a conversation between an 80-year-old father and his 60-year-old son:

Two sparrows were perched on a power line. The father asks his son, "What are they?" The son told him they were sparrows and the father replied happily, "Oh, I see."

After a while, his father asked, "What are they?" A little agitated, the son replied, "They're sparrows." Then the father asked again, "What are they?" This time the son was annoyed and said, "I told you they're sparrows! How many times do I have to tell you that?!"

At that moment, his father said, "When you were three or four years old, you would ask me, 'Daddy, what is that?' and I would answer, 'It's a sparrow.' I answered you over a hundred times. And yet, I never hated you for it. I responded each time with love and care."

Can you think of anything that comes to mind in your lives when you hear this story? If a minister asked you the same question three times, you would probably start to get frustrated. However, since the minister is a parent, even if you ask them the same question ten or even a hundred times, they will be patient and polite. I hope that you will be considerate of the ministers and build a warm relationship with them.

Pray often and walk in gratitude in every situation you face

In the words I read in the beginning, it mentions "heart." In a life of faith, it is very important to be connected heartistically with heaven.

I discovered something interesting when I came to Japan. When members pray in Japan, many will divide the time into three minutes, seven minutes, twelve minutes, and what not. In the middle of their prayers, some people check their watches and wonder how many minutes they have left, while others open their eyes and look around while they pray. Are you able to focus on your prayer if you do so?

Prayer is a dialogue with God. It is not something we do while looking at the clock or the things around us. It is by closing our eyes that we connect vertically with God, the subject of our prayers. The moment we open our eyes, we tend to become horizontal.

It is difficult to find a person who can smile and be at peace in the face of the recent news reports. I am sure that many people are angry. I, too, feel angry and say things like, "This is absolutely unforgivable!" But when I close my eyes and start praying, "Beloved Heavenly Parent (God), victorious True Parents..." I feel a calm and no words of condemnation come out. It is truly a wonder. Then, naturally, I think, "People in the mainstream media act like that because they don't know heaven's providence. Heavenly Parent, please forgive them."

We do not judge people in prayer, and we can even love our enemies. How great that is! Let us pray a lot and realize how we need to change. Let us also walk in gratitude despite the situation we find ourselves in.

Joshua and Caleb were the only ones from the first generation of the Israelites who were able to enter Canaan. The Bible says that Caleb was 85 years old, and Joshua must have been about the same age. I sometimes think of it this way. Among the Israelites who entered Canaan, there must have been many people of the same age as Joshua and Caleb. I think that Joshua and Caleb represented these people (who could not enter).

In order to establish God's kingdom, the first generation led the second generation with solid faith like Joshua and Caleb. From now on, the second generation will take the lead and carry the first generation, whose legs have grown weak with failing bodies, and bring them into God's kingdom.

Just as True Father never lost hope in the midst of disappointment and despair, let us continue on the path of God's will with confidence and dignity.