

HPHC Japan: Hope Abounds For Us In Communion With Heaven

Tomihiko Tanaka
November 10, 2022



On August 24, Bang Sang-il, Regional Group President of Heavenly Japan for the Heavenly Parent's Holy Community, delivered a message at the "19th Hyojeong Cheonbo 21-day Workshop" held at the Chiba Central Training Center (in Hanamigawa-ku, Chiba City) from August 6 to 28. Bang encouraged the young people from the second generation participating in the event, saying, "Even if you fail and are knocked down, you can get up again and again."

Things to learn from the faith and attitude of followers of Korean Christianity

I see many people here around 20 years in age. I think people around this age ponder a lot on life.

I joined the Unification Church (Family Federation) when I was 20 years old. Before that, I had attended a Christian church. There, the pastor went on to condemn True Parents, calling them "Satan" and other such slurs. I was influenced by his words and thought that Sun Myung Moon must definitely be an evil person.

However, the more the pastor condemned, the more I began to question whether it was true. In Christian churches, we emphasize the preciousness of loving our neighbor. Just as Jesus said to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44), the Bible teaches that we must love, even our enemies. However, my pastor kept attacking Sun Myung Moon, calling him Satan and that he had to be destroyed. I felt that this contradicted what he said in his sermons (of loving your enemies).

One day, a college friend of mine came to visit me at my boarding house. He was a member of the Unification Church. The university I attended was a university with about 25,000 students. He was the only one who was a Unification Church member. In the 1980s, witnessing was that difficult in Korea.

This is what I told him. I said, "You are a disciple of Satan. Disciples of the devil need to get out of here!" I tried to kick him out. It really is difficult to love someone you hate, isn't it? In the end, I lost to the tears that he shed for me, and I promised him I'd attend a workshop, but my dislike for the Unification Church did not go away.

The Christian church I attended was Presbyterian with a congregation of a thousand. It was one of the largest churches in Gwangju City, South Jeolla Province. At that time, there were about 50,000 pastors in Korea, and the pastor of my church was the president of a national association of pastors. He was a very famous pastor, and half the seats would be filled an hour before services started on Sundays just to hear him preach; and the whole chapel would be filled thirty minutes beforehand.

I am sure all of you have studied the word carefully during this 21-day workshop and have made up your mind to attend services earnestly from now on. However, there are many people who arrive at church just before service starts. This is not the case in Korean Christian churches. The congregation would arrive at the church with plenty of time to prepare for the sermon; they would meditate or pray by themselves. This allows the pastor's words to enter their hearts more easily. I think this attitude of faith is one of the reasons why Christian churches have developed in Korea. We need to learn from them.

Vows to witness to all citizens in the heart of Gwangju City

I attended the seven-day workshop under the guidance of my friend.

I had never heard anything taught in the Unification Principle in the Christian church I grew up with, and it was like my heart was jolted continuously. I even began to think that the Christian church was Satan's pawn to blind me from seeing heaven's hopes. I remember telling myself that I had to follow this (Unification) path. This is what I must devote my life to! I was so convinced that I had to do this that I filled out the form to join the Unification Church.

After the workshop, I started taking part in church activities with my friend. Ladies and gentlemen, if you had to choose between joining a group of a thousand people or a group of two, which would you join? Most people would probably choose the group with a thousand members.

At that time, the population of Gwangju was about a million. I remember going to the city center - similar to the scramble crossing in Shibuya. I got on a pedestal about a meter high and prayed in a loud voice.

"God, I will witness to all of the citizens of Gwangju! Please do not worry."

This was what I prayed: a prayer of a young, 20-year-old man who was not afraid. If I were 30 or 40 years old, I might not have been able to pray like that.

Passersby probably thought I was weird or strange. In fact, from a worldly point of view, "strange people" are the only ones that might be able to join this path. Common sense tells us that it would be easier to go to a church with a thousand people. How much witnessing can two people actually do? But I chose to follow this path.

Ladies and gentlemen, since its inception, the Family Federation has been persecuted. There has not been a single day when we have had an easy life.

When True Father was fifteen years old (sixteen in Korean age), Jesus appeared to him in spirit while he was praying earnestly at Mount Myodusan. From that encounter until his seonghwa, Father's aspirations never changed, no matter how harsh things got.

Was True Father sent to prison because he committed crimes? The Heungnam Concentration Camp in North Korea, Danbury Prison in the United States... Whatever prison he went to, he was innocent. And yet he never prayed to God asking Him why he had to go to prison. No matter how tough things were mentally or physically, he comforted God by telling Him not to worry. As a son of God, he had a strong will to never be defeated by Satan.

It would be natural to go to jail if you committed a crime. It is when you go to jail with gratitude and acceptance, even though you have not committed anything, that God can receive it as an indemnity condition without Satan's false accusations. Complaining is not an indemnity condition.

The struggle between democracy with God and communism without God

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was struck by a deadly bullet, and this news shook up not only Japan but the whole world. Although we did not cause this incident, the mainstream media has been attacking the Family Federation as the main culprit. They are making up stories and reporting them without any solid evidence. Satan, who is behind this, must be afraid of God's ever-advancing providence and True Parents' ever-expanding sphere of victory.

The so-called "fortune-telling fraud" originally began to be used by the Japanese Communist Party and Asahi Journal, an anti-Unification Church paper, and became entrenched in society after Asahi Shimbun launched a campaign of backlash. I cannot help but think that this uproar is a struggle between godly democracy and godless communism. This is not on a level of religious persecution against the Family Federation. "Does God exist, or not?" It is time to resolve the question that humanity has been pursuing for so long.

The atheistic and communist forces now probably control the mainstream media. Therefore, they are attacking the Family Federation, which has been upholding theism and calling out the errors of communism.

Gentlemen, God will not be defeated. No matter how many times He has been beaten, True Parents have always won in a come-from-behind victory. As long as the Heavenly Parent (God) and True Parents are with us, there is no way we can lose.

On the road of hardships you will find God, not Satan

True Father was charged with tax evasion in the United States. He was accused of failing to pay taxes on the interest on deposits in an account in his name that was being used for church activities. When compared to the amount of money to establish the Washington Times and how much was invested in

America, it was a small amount.

At that time, True Father could have returned to Korea instead of going to Danbury Prison. However, he chose to be incarcerated for America's sake. To those members whom he had to leave, he asked them to not pray for him, but to pray for America.

Ladies and gentlemen, Satan is clever. He will not take the way of hardship. That is why you will find God on the path of hardship. True Father once told us that if we go to prison, God will welcome us. His way of thinking is fundamentally different from ordinary people.

If you are a parent, you will try to protect your children at all times and feed them so their stomachs are full. However, many of your parents have been striving to accomplish the vision of a peaceful world that True Parents have set forth, even pushing such thoughts of supporting their families aside. (Many parents have thought,) "What will remain if we don't put our lives on the line and walk the way of God's will when the True Parents of humankind are present, whom history had long sought after?" With this in mind, we have put our all into our work.

Earlier, I said that you will find God on the path of hardship. Also, as the saying goes, "You can't buy your way out of hardship when you are young." This is the idea that hardship will help you in the future. In fact, through hardship, we can gain enlightenment in life. Therefore, I am not trying to tell you to "follow the path of hardship." I just hope that you understand your mother's and father's hardships.

There has been a lot of biased media coverage of the Family Federation throughout Japan, and your fathers and mothers have endured such unjust accusations for a long time. How pitiful is that?

It is not that they did not know how to live comfortably. I, too, think it would have been easier to stay in the Christian church. Then, why didn't I do so? Because I had come to know that God and True Parents were walking the way of blood, sweat, and tears for the salvation of humankind.

Incorporate the pillars of "saving the nation and world," "developing human resources for the future," and "promoting church reform for headquarters"

There are some things in Christian teaching that are difficult to understand with common sense. I will list two of them.

One is that Jesus was born after Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Many Christians around the world naturally believe in the "virgin birth." However, a child can only be born when a man and a woman love each other and become one.

The other is that after Jesus died on the cross, his body was resurrected on the third day and he appeared to his disciples for forty days and evangelized them.

How many people in today's society would accept it if you told them to "just believe?" I fear that Christian influence will continue to wane.

Even in America, which was founded by Puritans, values rooted in Christianity are becoming more and more obsolete by the day. In South Korea, Christians make up about 30 percent of the population, but they're beginning to show signs of slowing down. One of the reasons for this may be that Christian doctrines cannot be explained scientifically or deal with real problems.

Twenty one days is only a short time in a long life. However, your life will change during this workshop. It is true. You are learning the "Principle" that surpasses the doctrines of any ideology or religious group. Please speak to the second and third generations around you, and the brothers and sisters who have yet to study the word in depth, as well as those who do not come to church. Testify to them of the grace you received during this period.

Currently, the entire Family Federation is beginning to work on reform. The three pillars are the salvation of the nation and world, the development of human resources for the future of the church, and the church reform for headquarters. We will also be taking steps to ensure that we are responsive to the mass media.

We will strive to become an organization that can lead not only blessed families and members, but also all people involved towards happiness. But at this point, we are still lacking in many areas. If you have any requests, please inform headquarters. Let us work hand in hand to realize the ideal family, the ideal world, and the world of peace that True Parents desire.

The first thing that I consider a "success" after joining the Family Federation is that I was able to meet True Parents.

You probably did some "treasure hunts" when you were young. Humankind has been searching for treasure throughout history. The greatest treasure in history, that spans thousands and tens of thousands of years, is True Parents. Since you have already found that treasure, your life will definitely be rich and fruitful.

The second "success" is that I received the blessing from True Parents.

Heaven's desire is for men and women who have perfected their individuality to meet and receive the blessing marriage under the Heavenly Parent. This will never change. Same-sex marriages are contrary to Heaven's original desire and poses a threat to the survival of the human race.

The third "success" was that I had blessed children.

It is said that Japan and Korea are facing a national crisis due to their declining birthrates and aging populations. No matter how much a country or society develops and matures, it will be difficult for it to survive without children.

My wife and I were blessed to have four sons and two daughters. We have always felt sorry for our children because we were rarely able to eat out as a family. I am sure you can all relate.

Heaven's plan to bring awareness through the eldest son who cares for his parents

This is something that happened when my oldest son was in the third year of middle school. I had some money, so I decided to take my family out to dinner for the first time in a long while. However, it seemed like I didn't have enough for eight people, so I said to my wife, "I'm really sorry. I'm thinking of taking the boys out for dinner, but would it be okay if you stay home with daughters?" My wife smiled and said, "I'll protect the daughters, so don't worry!"

When I told my sons that we were going out for dinner, they couldn't believe it. They were skeptical and questioned me repeatedly.

We decided to go to a conveyor-belt sushi restaurant. I was overwhelmed with happiness watching my boys happily eating sushi. They said things like, "Sushi tastes so good!"

However, after a while, my eldest son kicked the leg of my second son who was sitting next to me. I warned them to eat quietly and not trouble those around them. He started eating again, but a little while later he kicked his brother again, and I tried to scold him. Then, he pointed at me to look behind us.

When I turned around, I saw that the plates were priced according to their color: 500 yen, 400 yen...100 yen. They were not all one hundred yen. My oldest son noticed this when we sat down and he had only been eating the hundred-yen sushi the entire time. On the other hand, my other sons and I had been eating the expensive ones.

After noticing this, I told my eldest son I had had enough and that he should eat the 400- or 500-yen sushi. He replied, "That's alright. The one hundred yen ones are delicious, too." I was moved to tears at the sight of my eldest son, who had put up with his own feelings and cared for his parents.

How happy would True Parents be if we could anticipate their hopes and take action on our own in these difficult times? How reassuring would that be? Looking back, I feel that the memory at the conveyor-belt sushi restaurant was Heaven's plan for me to keep this in mind.

Some of you here may have been in financially difficult situations as our family was. Nevertheless, I am sure that your parents did not spend money without telling you so that they could eat good food behind your backs. They did so in order to realize God's dream of one family under God and to live happily with you.

Recently, my wife has set up a 40-day, 400-bowing indemnity condition, and so she is bowing every day. When I asked her why she started this, she replied, "Because I wanted to understand True Parents' heart and mind as much as possible." She told me that when she prays after doing the four hundred bows, she feels a distinctly different sense of connection with heaven than when she prays normally without doing them.

God has entrusted each of you with a hope that is appropriate for you. Please earnestly seek what that is for each one of you while establishing the conditions of cheongseong.

The time to overcome the last mountain pass with True Parents

Youth must have a vision. The word "hope" is often used with young people, but what kind of hope do

you have?

People who have hope will have the strength to get back up, even if they are knocked down. Those who do not have hope will not be able to get up when they fall, and they will only complain and grumble.

True Parents - together with your fathers and mothers - have been trying to create a world of happiness filled with true love. True Mother is now in the second year of the second seven-year course to realize that hope. We have less than sixty months to achieve that goal by 2027.

True Mother is now 80 years old in Korean age. In 2027, she will be 85. Are elderly people who are 85 years old working hard like she is? No matter how healthy they are, the elderly can be limited in their activities. Until 2027 is the time for the Family Federation to be able to overcome the final mountain pass with True Parents.

Whenever I feel tired, I think back to the feeling I had when I was 20 years old when I vowed before heaven that I would witness all the citizens of Gwangju City, at the city center. This gives me a surge of strength.

You are all here to strengthen your resolve and remain unchanged and consistent no matter what happens in the future. There are still a few days left in the workshop, so pray hard. God will surely remember your prayers.

When you are young, you can fail and fall, but you can get up again and again. Try to put in your best effort without fear of anything. Recently, there have been young men and women from the second generation who've testified of their faith on YouTube, and young men and women from families who respond to TV interviews with pride. We are truly grateful for their courage and energy.

The word "hope" is appropriate for young people. In your surroundings that Heaven has placed you in, please study hard, work hard, and do your best for your community, your country, and the world.

Tuna are said to swim without stopping because they will suffocate if they stop swimming. They swim very fast, sometimes reaching speeds of up to 160 kilometers per hour. Like the tuna, we want to keep on swimming, never stopping.

However, human beings must rest or they will collapse. I hope that all of you take good rests when necessary, and when you partake in activities, that you run full speed ahead. I am always praying for you and for our brothers and sisters in Japan. Let us work hard together.