

## My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 17

J. Scharfen  
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No investment of heart, no unselfish love expressed sincerely, can ever be lost. Our prayer may not immediately bear fruit, our sacrifice may appear wasted, even our lives may seem a series of dead ends and frustrating derailments, and yet, as Sun Myung Moon, our True Father, teaches us, love is the only universal force in which output far exceeds input. When we empty ourselves, the infinite God fills the vacuum. Our lives serve as the proof of this theory.



When our first child, M., was born on March 9, 1990, Cindy was deep into her residency and I was finishing law school and studying for the California Bar Exam. Busyness consumed our days and we had very little income to show for our long hours. At the time, Bà Nguyen, Hanh's mother, worked as a cook in a Vietnamese restaurant specializing in a traditional crab dish. After M.'s birth, Hanh approached us and said her mother would retire and care for M. while we worked. Bà initially refused any payment for her offer of childcare. Finally, we prevailed and the Nguyens would allow us to give something, an amount far less than she deserved.

Cindy took just a few weeks off before returning from maternity leave to her residency at UCSF. We got off late from work, and in my case as my firm's

newest attorney, I often traveled for depositions or court appearances to Southern California or the East Coast. If I was gone and Cindy worked into the evening, M. would often stay the night with the Nguyens. Since she spent most of her days with the Nguyens and many of her nights, and Bà spoke no English, M. grew up speaking Vietnamese. Over the next few years, she naturally folded into the routines of their daily lives, surrounded by her adopted brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles. One of my fondest memories is of Bà following M. around the house feeding her noodles, while Ông would peel grapes for her. Bà's daughter, Bich, gave birth to a daughter shortly after M. was born. The two of them grew up together in those early years and remain very close. Thai and Hanh taught her traditional poetry in Vietnamese, so M. could internalize the Confucian values through memorization. To this day, when M. goes with me to Vietnam, though she does not remember the language well, her accent is perfect and she is very comfortable navigating the streets of the cities.

One of the great challenges for a religious person pursuing a professional life, especially in the law, is to maintain a spiritual perspective in the midst of many mundane demands and worldly pressures. It is so very easy to shorten prayer time, neglect study, and to allow work anxiety to steal one's peace of mind. Add an intense travel schedule to the mix, and a person can easily find themselves adrift. I very quickly determined that I needed to draw on the resources of my monastic and missionary training, if I was going to succeed as a spouse and a father. I couldn't sleep in, no matter how tired I was. I continued to rise early to pray, study Father's words, and meditate. If I overslept, the day's rush of events would overwhelm me and I would feel "off." I also kept the bible that True Father gave us after the 1974 World Day fundraising competition, on my desk. Always within reach, I could pick it up and read a psalm or a random passage to inspire me.



Daily discipline saved me. Especially when traveling, temptation seemed ever present. This may be true for every brother and sister, but I have often thought, because I chose my own path, my way of restoration required many tests. My brother tells the story of how, when commanding the Marine Security Battalion for Central Europe and the former Soviet Republics, beautiful women would throw themselves at him, with a frequency and zeal that never had occurred prior to his embassy security assignment, nor after. The successor agencies to the KGB - the FSB (domestic) and the SVR (international) - made the same use of "honeypot" tactics that had been successful operational methods in the Soviet era. To prevent any slip, Jock always traveled with his

trained for security and counterintelligence. (The single time he left the American Embassy in Moscow without his Gunny, he was tailed by two FSB thugs, down into the Moscow Metro, where they jumped him, pulled his winter coat over his head to restrain him, and roughed him up on a crowded platform. Everyone turned their backs. No one came to his assistance. Ultimately, only his ribs and his pride were hurt).



Unlike my brother, I didn't often have the luxury of traveling with a companion. My strength came from a determination never to betray my wife or daughter, and the inspiration from daily and constant prayer to walk the path of restoration. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a consistent daily practice of prayer and study. Even when prayer feels uninspired or fruitless, retreat to a quiet place and pray. Advance along the course of restoration by prayer, study, setting conditions, and serving others. The spiritual life knows no stasis. We either move forward or we slip backwards, the currents of the world are too strong.

Cindy and I continued our spiritual reading together every night, deepening our bond of heart, not only as husband and wife, but as parents. I would generally get up in the middle of the night if M. cried, and to lull her back to sleep, I would sing her "Omaya," as True Father sang it, trying to capture his cadences and intonations. Walking the floor, late at night or early in the morning, I would draw the spirit of True Parents' love into our family. These precious moments together with my small family became times of deepest prayer.

Though not immediately, they would bear an amazing fruit.

