

In the Hope that You Will Participate in the Unification Movement

Sun Myung Moon
February 28, 1985
Federal Correctional Institution
Danbury, Connecticut, USA
Letter from Prison to the American Clergy



Photo date and location unknown

Dear Pastors,

I send my sincere greetings to you and your congregations from Danbury. I am Rev. Sun Myung Moon. You may be surprised to receive this letter, which I am sending you from here in prison.

Revelation from Jesus on Easter morning at age sixteen

I believe you may have heard about the religious movement I founded almost thirty years ago in Korea. What you have heard or read about it is, in all likelihood, a distortion of the truth, tinged with ill feelings. This misunderstanding breaks my heart terribly, and I very much want to resolve it. But more important than that, and setting aside the opinions you may or may not have about me and the Unification Church, I earnestly wish to discuss with you my heartfelt views with regard to this United States, which is a global nation and at the same time a Christian nation. I do not expect you to agree with everything I tell you; all I hope is that you will carefully consider and deliberate on what I have to say.

I was born into a devout Confucian family in a village in what is now North Korea. When I was about ten years old, my entire family converted to Christianity. My conversion changed me profoundly. I became attached to this new faith and loved Jesus more than anyone I had ever loved before.

At the age of sixteen, I went through a singular experience. On Easter morning, I had been praying tearfully for a long time when Jesus Christ appeared before me and gave me revelations and teachings. He spoke a long time about profound and amazing things. He said that God is sad because of humanity suffering in anguish, and he asked me to play a special role in God's work on earth.

Many things have taken place in the forty-nine years since then. As I continued my study of the Bible, Jesus imparted profound words that he wants all people to hear and understand. As a result of teaching those words to others, I was arrested several times, imprisoned, and even tortured severely. For three years I was in a North Korean death camp. Most of this prison's inmates did not last a few months before they left as corpses, yet the Lord protected me for three years, allowing me to survive extreme suffering. After my escape, I again had the chance to propagate the Word to many others for a number of years, and the Unification Church has come to have roughly three million followers in more than 120 nations.

Today, God has three major headaches. The first is atheistic totalitarianism, especially the expansion of communism. Communism is a false religion, an institutionalized ideology that opposes traditional religions and works to eradicate belief in God. During the past sixty years, it has taken the lives of a staggering 150 million people. As I mentioned, I personally endured torture and hard labor almost to the point of death in a communist prison. Communism is spreading worldwide and is threatening to obliterate religion and those who believe in God.

The second headache for God is moral decline, in particular the degenerate state of young people across the entire world. The downfall of the traditional family and the influence of a corrupted mass media lead young people to abandon any sense of duty. Millions of American youth are losing faith in God, respect for values, and even self-respect. Drug abuse and sexual immorality are rampant. Young people represent the future of this world. If they are corrupted, who in the next generation will believe in religion and serve God?

Last, what makes God most sad is the rancor and disunity within the Christian faith. There is only one God and there is only one Jesus Christ. However, this day and age is inundated with hundreds, even thousands, of competing Christian denominations. In some parts of the world, people who claim to be Christians are killing one another in the name of God. In some cases, churches live together in peace, but the power of Christian faith is diluted and its impact on the world deteriorates as the days go by. The Christian faith languishes and is unable to meet the challenges and address the problems of this present world.

In the universal fight between the forces that are good, merciful and just, and the forces of evil, God has bestowed special blessings on this nation, the United States. He established the United States as the place where Christianity is to recapture true faith and form families of the kingdom of heaven centered on God's love. He loves the United States exceedingly. The greatness of the United States lies neither in its vast natural resources nor in its remarkable prosperity. It lies in the very founding principles of this nation. Brave men and women came to this United States to found "one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all." The United States is the only nation in the world where people from various ethnicities and backgrounds have come together to form a harmonious whole. All people, be they white, red, black, brown or yellow, are brothers and sisters in the one family of humankind. We can realize this ideal when we recognize God as our Father.

The reason God called me to the United States

To resolve these headaches, in 1971 God called me to come to the United States and guide a movement to revive the vision of Christianity. Following Him, I spread the Word of God and stirred the American people in order to unite Christianity, restore morality and destroy atheistic communism.

The United States is truly a nation chosen by Heaven, a nation chosen as an example of Christian love and unity as well as a nation chosen to sacrifice for and serve others in a world immersed in anguish. However, today's United States is at a perilous crossroads. On the one hand, there is the voice of God, caking for the revival of Christianity, the restoration of God-centered family values and morality, and resistance against atheistic communism. On the other hand, a malicious intolerance of religion is also rooted here. Throughout this great United States, people of faith are continuously persecuted, fined, arrested, imprisoned and judged guilty. Paradoxically, this great society is reviving the ideals of religion while at the same time succumbing to the forces of evil and rushing toward atheism, immorality and corruption.

You may be surprised to hear this, but I am grateful to God even though I am in prison today. I am absolutely sincere in saying this. It is because, through this difficult course of imprisonment, I have been given a chance to say these words to you, to warn you about the crisis you are facing, and to share with you the blessed opportunity that has been given us at this historic moment.

I would like to explain to you very briefly how I came to be in this prison. I don't care about my own happiness and comfort, and if my imprisonment can in any way help the Will of God, I could ask for nothing more. However, what is clear is that the American government persecuted me and discriminated against me. What we have is the American government showing alarming signs of increased animosity toward the religious impulse.

The IRS indictment is an abuse of power

I will share something about my historic trial. When Unification Church missionaries began to arrive in this nation, they set up a bank account to receive donations from their countries. Following a time-honored American tradition, the members asked me to manage this fund on behalf of the church. I handled it transparently and did not in any way try to hide it. In fact we deposited the money in a major bank in New York. No evidence suggests that the account was anything other than a church fund used for church purposes.

Despite this, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) began to make strenuous efforts to indict me. Caving to pressure from the public and even from Congress, it launched a large-scale investigation. In the end, after spending millions of dollars in taxpayers' money, the IRS indicted me for not paying taxes on the interest that the account earned. In fact, I did pay personal income tax on the portion of the account that I withdrew for my family expenses, but the American government ignored this. According to the government, the total amount of tax I failed to pay was between seven thousand and fourteen thousand dollars. Now, as I said, the custom of a religious leader trusted to handle church funds personally is an old and honored one. Many churches, from Catholic to independent storefront churches, follow this custom.

What happened here was that the government indicted a religious leader whom it decided was unpopular.

If I were to expose all the abuses of governmental power employed to persecute me, there would be no end to it. The people on the side of goodness and justice are aware of this abuse of power and, despite the fact that the Unification Church is controversial, they mounted an unprecedented protest against my indictment and the guilty verdict. More than forty organizations supported the petition I submitted to the Supreme Court as "Friends of the Court." Eminent organizations and individuals submitted sixteen briefs expressing serious concerns about the government's abuse of power to attack religion.

The Friends of the Court that supported my petition include the National Council of Churches, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the Presbyterian Churches of the USA, the American Baptist Church, the National Evangelical Association, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the American Association of Christian Schools, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Legal Society, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the American Civil Liberties Union, among others. These diverse and eminent organizations spoke with one voice that if the IRS is allowed to prosecute a minority church today, the freedom of all religions will be threatened tomorrow. I am praying hard that the IRS's abuse of power against me and my church will gain the attention of the American people, who love justice and freedom. And I request you to be a part of this holy endeavor to revive this great nation and return it to its Christian founding principles.

We fully realize the importance of the United States and the urgency of renewing Christianity and traditional values, and the Unification Church movement is contributing toward this goal. Through projects such as the International Religious Foundation, the New Ecumenical Research Association and conferences on "God: The Contemporary Discussion," we are bringing together theologians and clergy from all religions in order to promote and further a shared understanding of God and each other.

In addition, we are also bringing God's voice into the academic world. The International Cultural Foundation supports annual meetings on the unity of the sciences and absolute values. We involve scholars in organizations such as the Professors World Peace Academy, Paragon House Publishers and the Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy in Washington, DC. The religious ideal is manifested best in serving those in need, and we have begun enterprises such as the International Relief Friendship Foundation and Project Volunteer. For the work of saving all people from the ideology of totalitarianism, we have founded organizations such as the International Federation for Victory over Communism, the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, and CAUSA (Confederation of Associations for the Unity of the Societies of the Americas). In order to establish a standard of responsibility for the mass media, we have founded the World Media Association and News World Communications. The latter publishes several newspapers. Among them, we established *The Washington Times* to present alternative proposals with respect to national policies. This enterprise alone cost more than \$100 million.

Innumerable projects to benefit the United States

These projects require hard work and sacrifice given through the love of my church members, including the offering of financial resources. We have invested billions of dollars in the United States. We did so because this nation is going to determine the fate of the world. In terms of my movement, the United States is a recipient, not a provider of funding. We are working with the conviction that if the United States is lost, the world is lost. God can depend on this nation and no other. Understanding the scope of my work, can you possibly believe that I came to the United States to defraud the government of a few thousand dollars in taxes?

I hope you and your congregations will henceforth participate in the Unification movement. It is a joint effort to achieve the Will of God on earth. I too am aware that the faith and practice of the Unification Church have led to misunderstandings and misconceptions. I earnestly hope that the upstanding people of the United States will hold constructive conversations with us in this Unification movement. Surely we all desire understanding and cooperation. I cannot explain everything about the faith of the Unification movement in this letter, so I have asked the church leaders to send you videotapes and printed material detailing our beliefs and practices. If you have not received this gift yet, you will in the near future.

I hope you will take the time to evaluate this gift and to deliberate on my words. Our fundamental mission is to bring the entire world to love and unite in Christ, to restore the family, and to overcome atheism with a viewpoint centered on God. If you are serious about these ideals, I believe you will benefit from what we are sending you.

Thank you so much for reading this letter and for considering my words attentively. Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with what I have said, I pray with all my heart that we will love and respect one another and join hands to serve the Lord. May the blessings of God be forever with you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Sun Myung Moon
February 1985