

This Week in History, December 28-January 3

December 30, 2014

December 28, 2001 Letter from God



True Father understood *Cheon Il Guk* to be the nation of “cosmic” peace and unity. As such, it encompassed not only the visible world but the totality of creation, both physical and spiritual. As he expressed it, “The world has entered an age in which the spirit world and physical world can become one and communicate freely with each other.” Communication with the spirit world was nothing new to the Unification Church. In fact, since 1935 when he encountered and experienced a divine call from Jesus, True Father had carried on a ministry to spirit world in parallel with his ministry on earth. For most of that time this was not a matter of public knowledge. With the proclamation

of *Cheon Il Guk* this changed. True Father insisted that messages from the spirit world be disseminated as widely as possible.

The most prominent of these was “The Cloud of Witnesses,” a collection of messages which derived from “seminars” in the spirit world, initially for four religious founders (Jesus, Buddha, Confucius and Muhammad) and subsequently for leaders in their traditions as well as for famous communists. The “Cloud of Witnesses” messages culminated in a “Letter from God,” addressed to “My beloved True Parent” and dated December 28, 2001. If True Father’s lifelong goal was “to melt the block of ice frozen in the heart of God,” the letter indicated that he had succeeded.

God, who self-identified as “Jehovah, the God of all humankind,” stated: “My gratitude and appreciation for you is beyond words. The word ‘love’ is inadequate to express My feelings. ... I want to embrace you in My bosom and never let you go! I would carry you on My back and never let your feet touch the ground! I would hold you, and we would talk together all night long.” Apart from this, God validated True Father’s position, stating, “You have been victorious on every level and have restored to its proper position everything that had fallen. ... Hence, Jehovah, the God of all humankind, hereby bestows upon His beloved True Parent the title King of all kings.” The Unification Church subsequently published “The Cloud of Witnesses” and “Letter from God” in space purchased from leading newspapers in all fifty states.

December 31, 1976 The News World Begins Publication



Creation of a media network was not originally part of True Father’s thinking or planning for the American mission. However, the print and electronic media increasingly vilified his work. This created a climate of extreme hostility and frustrated the Unification Church’s witnessing efforts. True Father, in turn, recognized the “awesome power” of the media “to create or to destroy.”

Therefore, in October 1976, he assembled a dozen or so Unificationists with journalism degrees and “set the deadline” for producing the first issue of a new daily newspaper in New York City on December 31, the last day of the United States’ bicentennial year. The vision of ushering in the United States’ third century “with a new era of modern journalism” was compelling. Nevertheless, according to one account, “It seemed impossible to start a daily newspaper literally from scratch, using inexperienced people, in dilapidated offices, in less than three months.” Still, “second-hand desks and typewriters were purchased,” and in November “the few who had journalism degrees ... gave the first staff of about sixty a crash course in journalism.” On December 31, the presses rolled early in the morning and the first issue of *The News World* hit the streets of New York.

Replete with a color photograph featured each morning on the front page and a motto that described it as “New York’s oldest daily color newspaper,” *The News World* was a twenty-four-page general-interest daily with a staff of 200, the bulk of whom were Unificationists. It was eventually housed in the former

Tiffany Building on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, which Unificationists purchased. *The News World* was the only paper to publish during the New York City power blackout of 1977 and during a later three-month newspaper strike, when its circulation soared to 400,000 daily. The paper's boldest move was to predict a "[Ronald] Reagan Landslide" in a banner headline on Election Day, November 4, 1980, followed by an equally large banner headline the following day which read, "Thank God! We Were Right!" The News World gave birth to several other New York papers, including *Noticias Del Mundo*, a Korean-language daily, a Harlem weekly, and a press service, Free Press International. It later changed its name to *New York City Tribune* and eventually gave way to the media network's flagship newspaper, *The Washington Times*.

January 1, 1968
God's Day Established



God's Day was the last of the Unification Church's original four Holy Days to be established after Parents Day (3.1.60 lunar), Children's Day (10.1.60 lunar) and Day of All Things (5.1.63 lunar). It also was the only one of the original four Holy Days celebrated according to the Gregorian (solar) calendar, beginning January 1, 1968. True Father observed that if humankind's original parents had not fallen and had achieved perfection, they would have received God's blessing and that day would have been God's Day. As it was, True Parents had to restore and install each of the original Holy Days, representative of God's three blessings, over seven years following their Holy Wedding in 1960. In 1996, True Father added the word "True" to God's Day and the other original Holy Days. In 2010, True Father established the "Heavenly Calendar," which displaced the Gregorian calendar in Unificationist observances and corresponded in most respects with the lunar calendar. As a result, from 2011, True God's Day was no longer observed on January 1 but on the first day of the first month of the Heavenly Calendar (February 3 of that year). On January 7, 2013, True Mother announced that Unificationists should address God as "Heavenly Parent." Thereafter, True God's Day became "True Heavenly Parent Day."

January 2, 1984
The Day of Victory of Love



The Day of Victory of Love, observed on January 2, commemorates the passing of Heung Jin Moon, True Parents' second son. He was critically injured in a car accident north of Poughkeepsie, New York, on December 22, 1983, while returning with two companions to East Garden in Tarrytown, New York from the Unification Theological Seminary in Redhook, New York. Though seriously injured, his two friends survived because, according to their testimony, Heung Jin Moon swerved the car at the last moment to take the brunt of the impact himself

and save them. He suffered massive head injuries and lingered in a coma for ten days before ascending at 1:15 a.m. on January 2, 1984. He was seventeen. By all accounts, he was an exemplary son. True Father described him as “the most exemplary, obedient son, with the greatest piety ... the most comforting son to Mother and me.”

True Parents were out of the country at the time of the accident, conducting a series of Victory over Communism rallies in Korea. A number of spiritualists had communicated to them that December 1983 was a “very dangerous time” and that True Father “must absolutely be careful.” True Father later testified that at the last rally in Kwangju, a left-leaning city with a reputation for rebelliousness, 36 terrorists were prepared to attack but were prevented from doing so because “the auditorium was already completely packed by the time they arrived.” During True Father’s speech in Kwangju, Heung Jin Moon’s accident occurred. According to True Father, “Satan lost his condition to attack me and then turned his attention to the next best, my second son.”

Having laid down his life for his friends and standing as a substitute for his father, Heung Jin Moon occupied what True Father described as “the position of the living Jesus in the Unification Church.” While Heung Jin Moon lay in a coma, True Parents conducted a ceremony in the hospital chapel in which, on the foundation of Heung Jin Moon’s “precious sacrifice,” they called for the unity of Judaism, Christianity and the Unification Church; the unity of Korea, Japan and the United States; the unification of True Parents and their family and the members of the Unification Church, as well as all races of the world. After Heung Jin Moon’s ascension, True Parents established the Day of Victory of Love.

The Day of Victory of Love found a permanent liturgical expression in the church’s tradition of Seonghwa (“ascension and harmony”) ceremonies, which True Parents established after Heung Jin Moon’s own ascension. Unlike traditional funerals, these ceremonies were not to be gloomy or sad but “beautiful, enlightening and joyful,” using bright or light colors. True Father explained:

“In the secular world, death signifies the end of life. However, in our world, death is like a rebirth or a new birth into another world. Particularly those who give their life for the purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven and for the sake of the movement are special heroes.

For that reason, we must not make those occasions gloomy or sad or feel discouraged. ... If we here on earth become very mournful and gloomy, it is like pulling the person who is going up to the heavens down to the ground. This is a birth from the second universal mother’s womb into another world, just like when a baby emerges from its first mother’s womb.

A Seonghwa ceremony is actually comparable to a wedding, when men and women get married. It’s not a sorrowful occasion at all. It’s like an insect coming out of its cocoon, getting rid of a shackle and becoming a new body and a new existence, a new entity. That’s exactly the same kind of process.

In our way of life and tradition, spirit world and physical world are one, and by our living up to that kind of ideal, we bring the two worlds together into one.”