

A View of God's Story

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April 2016



Gerry Servito is the first person on the right of True Mother, Joon Ho Seuk is directly behind True Father

My view of "God's story," began developing in my early days from listening to lectures in Barrytown, in 1974. Back then, we went to three-, seven-, twenty-one-, forty- and one-hundred-and-twenty-day workshops. Instructors taught Divine Principle completely -- every chapter, three sessions a day, three hours per lecture, with neither questions and answers nor discussions, just intensive listening and note-taking. I filled notebooks with tiny handwriting and versions of every diagram I could manage to copy from the board. Each workshop, I'd refine the diagrams, catching what I'd missed last time.

In the one-hundred-and-twenty-day workshop, Ken Sudo, Tom McDevitt and Kevin McCarthy trained us to lecture the Divine Principle. (We also had to learn Victory Over Communism theory and Unification Thought.) We had intensive lectures, such as on Unification Thought, and then had to practice lecturing. We all worked from our handwritten notes. One method we learned was the "napkin lecture." Rev. Sudo taught us that we could find a new person in a casual meeting place, where we'd have to grab whatever paper was at hand and begin drawing circles and arrows to explain the basics.

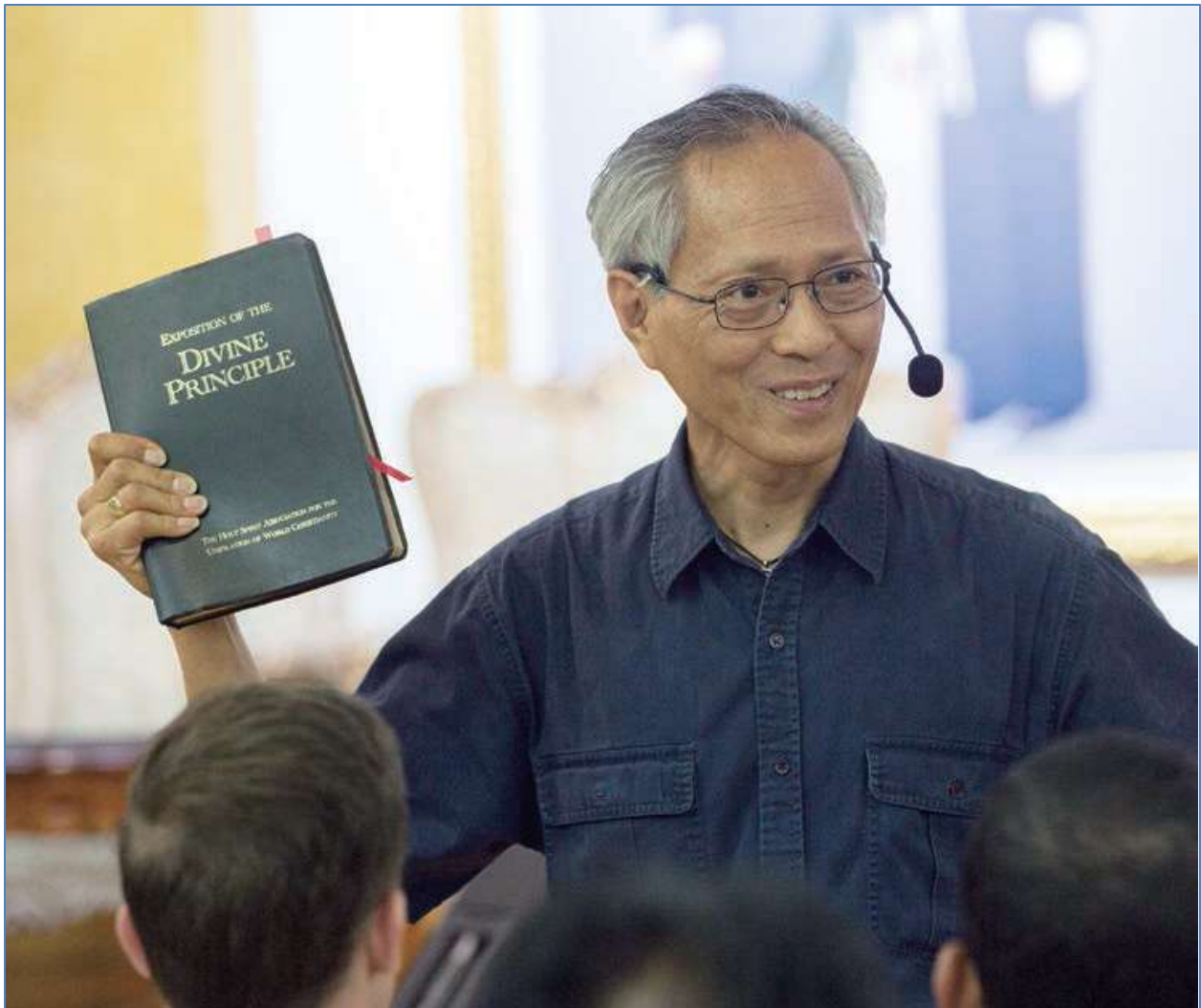
A twenty-one-day pioneering condition jump-started my lecturing. They dropped off each trainee in a city with clothes, cassette tapes of Rev. Sudo's lectures and an easel.

I had been in the movement for less than a year. A caravan of vans carrying six to eight members each, their suitcases and easels, left Barrytown one morning, driving from location to location, dropping us off. At dusk, we arrived in my city. My bags and easel were on the sidewalk as the now empty van drove off. I began teaching the Divine Principle on the boardwalk (my city was a summer beach town).

Though our Barrytown lecturers had taught us passionately, I did not clearly have a sense of the Divine Principle as God's "story." Rather, I saw it as an amazing revelation of a large number of spiritual principles and laws that explained exactly what was happening in well-known Bible stories and in the post-biblical world.

I had to commit to memory an enormous number of facts about Jewish, Christian and European history, the Bible, science, some philosophies, governments and the world wars. I had to know enough to sound knowledgeable in order to be a convincing presenter. I practiced until I could teach a one-day, two-day or seven-day lecture series. Each lecture covered enough material to last the standard three hours. When I eventually joined workshop staffs, I learned to participate in teaching twenty-one-day workshops.

By constant repetition, the overwhelming amount of material I'd accumulated sometimes became dry. I sometimes felt that it was so dry that I wished the time would end, so I could finish talking! After some years, I stopped teaching altogether.



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Reawakening

Initially, I was relieved but increasingly I felt a sense of unease and emptiness. The Divine Principle and Unification Thought were so elevating that not to be sharing them -- especially after all the training I'd received -- made me feel half alive. As a New York member, I had the chance to see Abo nim speak every Sunday. His urgency caused me to begin teaching again.

At one point, I returned to Barrytown to attend the seminary. I firmly decided to learn to teach Unification Thought, which was instrumental in my acceptance of Abo nim six years earlier. I created a Unification Thought study guide. From Unification Thought, I was able to understand Abo nim's vision of the original world and the original way of God-centered life more deeply. One year, I also managed to win first place in the Divine Principle lecturing contest.

After I graduated from the seminary, I joined CARP. Dr. Joon-ho Seuk appreciated my interest in Unification Thought and arranged for me to meet and work under Dr. Sang-hun Lee. Eventually Dr. Lee certified me to teach Unification Thought. I learned how much Dr. Lee loved and honored the Divine Principle. Thus, his education elevated my appreciation of Divine Principle.

Unification Thought Theory of Education teaches that education of the heart is the most important education and that it comes through grasping three states of God's heart -- the heart of hope (or expectation), the heart of sorrow (or grief) and the heart of pain (or suffering). These three correspond to the Principle of Creation, the Human Fall and the History of Restoration. Awareness of this grew within me and transformed my understanding of the Divine Principle from an intellectual one to an emotional one.

My teaching of the Principle changed according to my understanding of God's heart within the Principle. I cannot forget once calling on Hyo Jin nim at his office in the Manhattan Center, because of the teaching I had been doing. He sat me alone in his office and asked me what I thought of Abo nim, himself and the Divine Principle.

I explained that the Divine Principle to me is the greatest epic saga in the universe. It explains one person's hopes, dreams and everything he lived and longed for, followed by an account of the calamitous tragedy that devastated it all. It concludes with the story of that person's whole life afterward, trying repeatedly to pick up the broken pieces of his dreams, hopes and heart.

Perhaps that was the first time anyone had asked me to verbalize what I had come to feel about the Principle. This had built up inside me, until I finally understood "God's story."



God's story

I had begun to see that beneath the translation, beneath all the principles, laws, and historical and biblical examples was the story that had gripped Abo nim's heart and Jesus' heart before him. This made it impossible for them not to give anything necessary to come to the aid of their God, their divine parent. It had shaken their hearts so hard that they withheld nothing in trying to rectify the circumstances and to restore the beauty of life as God had intended it to be.

One presenter likened a Divine Principle lecture to "God's prayer to man." That penetrated my awakened heart. Even as we kneel to God in desperate supplication, God's heart mirrors that very feeling when a Divine Principle lecture is given to us....

Years later, as I was guiding students to give their own "napkin" lectures, we were reading the Divine Principle textbook together and I found a sentence that I'd overlooked for decades:

"Can we ever grasp the heart of God? The new expression of truth should be able to reveal the heart of God: his heart of joy at the time of creation; the broken heart he felt when human beings, his children whom he could not abandon, rebelled against him; and his heart of striving to save them throughout the long course of history."

Exposition of the Divine Principle, Introduction, p. 8

I realized then where the Unification Thought idea of the "three hearts of God" comes from. Just as Dr. Lee had explained, everything starts with the Divine Principle.

The Divine Principle also explains God's heart in Adam's family, Noah's family, Abraham's family, and in Moses' and Jesus' lives. Stripped of symbols and interpretations, the focus is solely on how God felt during the hardships of these figures' lives. In only a few pages, a narrative of emotional experience is painted for us that tries to help us feel what God was feeling throughout the lives of these heroic figures. This transformed my understanding of hundreds of pages about the topic of "restoration."

The sheer number of insights, in the second part of Divine Principle, into the meanings, implications and historical consequences of events usually obscured the emotional narrative underlying it all, but Unification Thought stripped that all away, laying bare the course of one person's life. This had the effect on me that surely was intended all along: my heart could break for God.

My heart toward the Divine Principle transformed. I had seen it as a book containing the doctrine of the church -- an utterly remarkable compilation of innumerable revelations and insights into the Bible. It also became the most dramatic and epic of all historic sagas, encompassing all the drama extending from the beginning of time, through pre-human existence, through the entire account of the human race, into the vision of the end of the world and the beginning of the new world that many scriptures herald.

This led me, as Unification Thought so often does, to notice a small passage in Cheon Seong Gyeong: "...to be a son or daughter of filial piety, you have to know your father and mother's heart. ... the heart of God before creation, his heart during the process of creation, and his grieving heart after the Fall. ... the sorrowful heart with which he has been leading human history toward restoration, and his heart of hope for a new world after restoration is completed. (14-174, 1964.10.03)"

I have to say that that last heart -- one of hope after restoration is completed -- connects me to the three new scriptures that Omo nim has authorized. I remember that Abo nim repeated that he would reveal more than was contained in the black Divine Principle book. I believe that True Parents have made good

on that promise; indeed so much more is contained in the Cheon Il Guk Scriptures than in the 1966 [Korean] text.



Omo nim is asking that we all share what we believe with the people we love. She has been asking where the young people are who can take over from the elders. As an elder with friends who have already passed on, I can feel this heart more than ever before. I do what I do because most of my beloved teachers have transitioned to the spiritual world. If I do not do this, I fear that their love and their labors could be forgotten. I hope to inspire my nephews and nieces in this movement to love the word and inherit it, especially since Omo nim has expressed her heartfelt concern about this very issue.

I continue to educate others in the Divine Principle. True words have power to change the world. That power seems to outlast all efforts to extinguish it and its bearers. Some people cherish worthy teachings, learn them and give them to succeeding generations even though other people have ignored, rejected, even executed or assassinated the great religious or philosophical teachers that provided those teachings.

So the lesson to me is to participate in the transmission of great words, to contribute what I can so that those words will do what they are capable of, what they always do: change the world, in time. This is not just a great story to me -- it is the key one, it's God's story, and it goes to my heart. I have tried to unite mind and body by intellect or will, but in the end, only what is in my heart brings my mind and body to act in concert. This is a key thing that Abo nim and Omo nim have been striving for: to bring God to become the very center of our hearts.