

Who owns Cheon Il Guk?

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March 29, 2014

One of Father's mantras when he was alive was to encourage everyone to become 'true teachers, true parents and true owners'. This three-fold mandate of course is grounded in the three blessings which are the core principles of creation as it is only through fulfilling the three blessings that people come to resemble God and embody his divine character of heart, logos and creativity. This theme of ownership comes up again in the Family Pledge that, Father stated in Peace Message 14, 'is the absolute standard and constitution for the establishment of God's kingdom of Cheon Il Guk.' Recently a constitution for Cheon Il Guk has been published so it is worth investigating to what extent it expresses the values of the Family Pledge and in particular the idea of ownership. So, who owns Cheon Il Guk?

Cheon Il Guk is defined in the constitution as, 'the world where all humanity both in the physical and spiritual worlds, lives in attendance to God as their parent, under the ideal of "One Family under God"'. Since this is not the case it is clear that CIG has not been established and indeed is by all accounts very far away from being established. So this is a constitution for Utopia meaning 'Nowhere'. In reality the constitution is a document to organise and establish legitimate structures in what is traditionally called the Unification Movement as the scope of the document encompasses most of the organizations that make up the movement over which Sun Myung Moon exercised the power of patronage. Despite the disparity between aspiration and reality it is a significant document and should be examined carefully.

The preamble of the constitution includes the Family Pledge and it is important to unpack some of its implications so as to be able to evaluate to what extent what follows is in conformity with its core values.

Each paragraph of the Family Pledge opens with the statement, 'Our family, the owner of Cheon Il Guk'. That this phrase is repeated eight times reveals its significance. The statement 'our family' means that all authority is grounded in the family. This of course follows on from the family being both God's ideal and the basis of society. Not in the individual or the institution or the state but in the family. But not any single family but 'our family.' In other words in all the families of Cheon Il Guk. It is all our families, yours, mine and everyone else in our community who are the 'owners of Cheon Il Guk'. What does it mean to be an owner? An owner has certain rights and duties over the things or institutions that belong to him or her. An owner has the authority to make decisions or at least to be an active participant in the decision-making processes if this ownership is shared with others. So if our families are the owners of CIG we have the right to be involved in the decision-making processes. This indeed is the basis of democracy. The idea that all the citizens of a community have the right to participate in the decision-making processes deciding policies and leadership etc. And the Divine Principle states that, 'With the establishment of constitutional democracy, the framework for the ideal political system was set up.' (EDP II.5.3.2) As to the role of True Parents, in the Family Pledge it only says they are to be 'attended.'

When we turn to the constitution proper we find a very different state of affairs. Article 6 for example states that, 'True Parents have the final decision making authority over the management of Cheon Il Guk.' And, 'True Parents may, when necessary, delegate their authority in matters of management, within limited scope.' So all authority for decision-making originates with the True Parents and not with the blessed families. And to the extent that others can be involved it is merely a delegated authority as opposed to one held in one's own right. This is again emphasized in article 10: 'The sovereignty of Cheon Il Guk for the peaceful ideal world comes from God and True Parents.' How is this all expressed in the structure of the constitution? It is the power of patronage, the power to appoint people to positions of authority that is significant here. It is through appointing placemen that a ruler is able to control every aspect of organizations as those people hold office at the discretion of the sovereign. Here is a list of the main places in the constitution where this power of patronage is exercised:

- The Cheon Il Guk Supreme Council is described in article 28 as 'the supreme decision-making organ of Cheon Il Guk.' The chair and vice-chairpersons of this body are appointed by the True Parents. The chairperson moreover has to come from True Parents family and is also concurrently the world president of the world government. Apart from the ex-officio members, who are in any case appointed by True Parents to head various other institutions of Cheon Il Guk, the remaining members of the Supreme Council are also appointed by True Parents. (Article 31)
- The Cheon Jeong Won (the world government) has its world president and vice-president appointed by True Parents. The world president is simultaneously the chairperson of the Supreme Council and the world government. (Articles 41 and 42)
- The heads of providential organizations according to article 45 will be appointed by True Parents. (Article 45)

- The Cheon Il Guk National Assembly has a chairperson appointed by True Parents. (Article 49)
- The Cheon Beob Won (the Cheon Il Guk Court) has a chief justice and judges that are appointed by True Parents. (Article 61)
- The Chae Jae Won (Cheon Il Guk Foundation) which controls the financial side of the Cheon Il Guk is run by a committee all of whose members, including the chairperson, are appointed by True Parents. (Article 66)
- The Cheon Gong Won (the Cheon Il Guk Media Committee) has its membership entirely appointed by True Parents. (Article 71)
- In matters of church governance True Parents appoint Continental Directors and national messiahs. (Articles 74 and 78)
- And when it come to the blessing, ‘True Parents have the sole authority for Blessed Marriage’ although that authority can be delegated ‘within a limited scope.’ (Article 7)
- There are also numerous other instances in the constitution where True Parents approval must be given in order for something decided, for example by the National Assembly, to be implemented.

As well as having the power to appoint and fill the above positions, only True Parents have the authority to dismiss and replace the occupants although there are admittedly maximum term limits for the holders of the offices. Except for the member of the True Family who is the chairperson of the supreme council and world president for whom there is no term limit.

So, far from all families being the owners of Cheon Il Guk in reality only one family, True Parents family, are the owners of Cheon Il Guk. Only True Parents have authority to appoint and decide who fills all the most significant posts and positions in Cheon Il Guk. The most significant post – chairperson of the supreme council and world president of the government – has to come from True Parents family and their descendents. Only True Parents family have the authority to control and manage the assets accumulated by the work and donations of blessed families. All other families are effectively disenfranchised and dispossessed by this document. So there is no continuity between the Family Pledge and the Constitution. The positions given to the True Parents and their family are not supported by the Family Pledge. So the constitution fails to express and reflect the values of the Family Pledge.

The True Parents of course will not live in this world forever. Indeed Father has already passed into the spiritual world and Mother will follow him at some point. What then? Who will inherit the power of patronage that True Parents exercised with absolute and unquestioned authority during their lifetimes? Who will own Cheon Il Guk in the future?

Article 36 states that, ‘Centered on the Chairperson, the Cheon Il Guk Supreme Council shall vicariously exercise True Parents’ authority as prescribed by the Constitution and law, in the event of True Parents’ death, complete incapacity, or transfer of authority.’ So all the authority of True Parents will be transferred to, and exercised by, the Supreme Council. This means that as the members of the Supreme Council are all appointed by True Parents they will become a self-appointed ruling group accountable to no one but themselves. No one can dismiss them and they will decide themselves who will be on the council. They will also be the group that will exercise the power of patronage over the entirety of the movement appointing people to all the significant posts throughout the worldwide movement. At least they will only be able to serve on the council for a maximum of twelve years. However it is not inconceivable that this ruling group will appoint themselves and each other to one important position after another (e.g. Supreme Council followed by the Cheon Beob Won and then the Cheon Jeong Won etc.) so as to stay in public office and enjoy its fruits. So what has been established is basically an oligarchy or a ruling Establishment. Since lineage and family are such important concepts within the Unification community it is not hard to imagine that the members of the Establishment will also use their authority to promote their own family members and friends. This would make nepotism and cronyism the governing principles of Cheon Il Guk. Finally, although the supreme council exercises True Parents authority, it is not clear if this means they also have the authority to dismiss the chair of the council and world president. It would appear not as every decision made has to be supported by the chairperson and vice-chairperson even if they are in the minority. (Article 34)

Through the mechanism in article 36 the authors of the constitution have appropriated True Parents authority for themselves and the Establishment within the movement they represent and thus use True Parents name to legitimate their positions and decisions. It is not unlike the verse in Matthew 18:16 “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church”, which the Popes and Roman Catholic Church used to establish their claim to superiority over other churches and a monopoly on spiritual and later temporal authority in Europe. It was claimed that only the authorized representatives of the Church had the

authority to administer the sacraments without which there could be no salvation. *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church there is no salvation):

“In the second place, we ask whether you and the Armenians obedient to you believe that no man of the wayfarers outside of the faith of this Church, and outside the obedience of the Pope of Rome, can finally be saved... In the ninth place, if you have believed and do believe that all who have raised themselves against the faith of the Roman Church and have died in final impenitence have been damned and have descended to the eternal punishments of hell.”

In like manner the constitution also reserves for True Parents the authority over when and where Blessed Marriages can be held and by whom. This authority of course will be inherited by the Supreme Council and is a way to prevent, if they so choose, people who they don't 'like' for whatever reason from participating in the blessing ceremony. It is not hard to imagine the blessing being denied to groups of Unificationists that are regarded as being sectarian, schismatic, heretical or merely disobedient. This is a way of exerting spiritual control over people in a way that was done for centuries by Christian churches. This is all a far cry from Father's teaching that Blessed Couples and families own Cheon Il Guk and would have the authority to bless their own children.

The constitution also has an interesting series of clauses that seriously restrict the rights of members and establish a new basis for membership of the community. A citizen of Cheon Il Guk can lose their rights if they commit one of four acts: disavowing God and True Parents, whatever that might mean; disavowing the identity and ideology of Cheon Il Guk, whatever that might mean; disavowing the constitution, of which one imagines essay such as this would count; and hindering the establishment of Cheon Il Guk. It doesn't say they would lose their citizenship but only their rights. When one looks at the list of rights though there really isn't much to be lost.

Still these conditions that have been laid down are not in accord with the Family Pledge's ideal of 'perfect[ing] a realm of liberation and complete freedom.' In Cheon Il Guk there is no freedom of religion. Yet there are members of our spiritual community who do not believe in God, or rather have their own notions of the numinous. There are also a wide variety of beliefs about the person and identity of True Parents. So is it possible that people will effectively be excommunicated for having the wrong beliefs about God and True Parents? Is it permissible to critique the unspecified 'ideology of Cheon Il Guk? What is this ideology and how does it differ from the Divine Principle? Is this basis for the loss of rights very different to that exercised by fascist and communist regimes towards dissidents and others who didn't accept the state ideology? Is our spiritual community now to be constituted by the constitution and will those who do not accept the constitution for whatever reason lose their rights? Is it permissible to attend God, True Parents and follow their teachings while at the same time rejecting the constitution because it is contrary to those teachings? This is a classic Catch-22 (see below) as it can easily be used to delegitimize any attempts to change the constitution. So citizenship of Cheon Il Guk appears to be severely constrained by such conditions that certainly mean citizens are not owners.

Let us now turn to the extent to which citizens are owners. Article 20 lists a few 'rights' that citizens of Cheon Il Guk can enjoy. They fall far short of the rights enjoyed by Englishmen as established in the 1215 Magna Carta or those of the American Constitution or those of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. And also far short of the ideal articulated in the Family Pledge of a 'realm of liberation and complete freedom in the Kingdom of God.' Furthermore they are not grounded philosophically or theologically. One of the core rights of the owners of Cheon Il Guk is to bless their own children. This is not a right that is recognised in the constitution. Still, one of the rights is to 'hold elections and be elected.' Some of the 210 members of the National Assembly are to be elected. National messiahs are ex-officio members along with some representative national leaders. There are 193 members of the UN so presumably there are also 772 national messiahs (four national messiahs per country). This doesn't leave much scope for elected members. So not much ownership here. Another right is, 'to submit petitions to any agency related with Cheon Il Guk.' This approach of being a petitioner is essentially feudal in origin and mentality as it involves a person asking a superior for a favour. It is not what owners do.

In conclusion it is clear that the constitution does not flow out of the structure and values of the Family Pledge or indeed the Divine Principle. Instead it has its roots in some other unspecified ideology and value system. The Family Pledge with its emphasis on every family being the owner of Cheon Il Guk is inherently liberal and democratizing empowering all citizens to actively participate in the life of the community. It shows great respect for the role of each family. By contrast the constitution disenfranchises the membership by locating all authority and patronage in the True Parents but then transferring all that authority to the Supreme Council that is drawn from a very narrow section of the community that will probably become a self-selecting and self-perpetuating Establishment. Thus the name of True Parents is being taken in vain to legitimize and enforce the power and authority of the Establishment so that anyone who objects and criticizes the leaders, structures and policies can be accused of going against True Parents. So under this constitution the owners of Cheon Il Guk are True Parents family, the Establishment and their descendants.

“You mean there’s a catch?”

“Sure there’s a catch”, Doc Daneeka replied. “Catch-22. Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn’t really crazy.”

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one’s own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn’t, but if he was sane, he had to fly them. If he flew them, he was crazy and didn’t have to; but if he didn’t want to, he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

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“Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we can’t stop them from doing.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Yossarian shouted at her in bewildered, furious protest. “How did you know it was Catch-22? Who the hell told you it was Catch-22?”

“The soldiers with the hard white hats and clubs. The girls were crying. ‘Did we do anything wrong?’ they said. The men said no and pushed them away out the door with the ends of their clubs. ‘Then why are you chasing us out?’ the girls said. ‘Catch 22,’ the men said. All they kept saying was ‘Catch-22, Catch-22. What does it mean, Catch 22? What is Catch-22?’”

“Didn’t they show it to you?” Yossarian demanded, stamping about in anger and distress. “Didn’t you even make them read it?”

“They don’t have to show us Catch-22,” the old woman answered. “The law says they don’t have to.”

“What law says they don’t have to?”

“Catch-22”.