

## FFWPU USA: Understanding the 3 Transitions of Life - Life in the Womb; Earthly Life and Life in the Spirit World

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September 25, 2023



Throughout our lives, we encounter many different moments of [change](#) and transition, such as entering adulthood, learning to live with a partner, and becoming a parent. Still, no other life change compares to the transition between this life and the afterlife.

Father Moon, founder of the Unification faith, serves as a prime example of someone whose physical life was lived to the fullest in love, and whose spirit can only live on, burning as brightly as ever. On August 12, we celebrated the eleventh anniversary of Father Moon's ascension - or Seonghwa - into the next life.

The concept of an afterlife has long held the fascination of humanity, both religious and non-religious, leading to the creation of different beliefs, such as a spirit world or reincarnation. Unificationists believe that we are eternal children of God and that though our lives exist in phases that we must transition through, it does not end.

Just like a fetus who cannot possibly know what life outside the womb is like, we cannot know the full extent of the world that follows our physical life. Believing in the spirit world requires more faith since it's much easier to scientifically prove the life stage we came from before than the one that follows.

We believe that we are given our physical bodies to mature into individuals with the capacity to love large. Our relationships with our families and with God during our physical time on earth prepare us for our transition into our eternal form in the spirit world; a form that is made up of love. Once our time comes to move on, we can let go of our bodies and transition into a world where the spirit exists freely with God, in love.

Because of this, we see the time of transition from the physical world to the spiritual world an event we call the Seonghwa - ascension - as a time to rejoice rather than to mourn. We congratulate and offer to our [Heavenly Parent](#) the life of love led by the person, and celebrate their rebirth into a whole new, beautiful part of life. Though Father Moon's passing marked a somber moment in our history, we cannot help but celebrate, because who better to embody the essence of Seonghwa than someone who lived such a full life, dedicated to serving people and bringing the world closer to God?

It doesn't mean that the feelings of loss and grief are not present, but this perspective fills us with the encouragement that, just as "death" is not an end but a transition, our relationship with our loved one is absolutely not over. We learn to let our love evolve and extend to an entirely new realm of being.

## A Story of Rebirth from a Young Unificationist



*Jennifer Pierce on a coffee plantation in Kona, Hawai'i (photo courtesy of Jennifer Pierce)*

**Easter and spring are a time for rebirth and renewal.** It's a good reminder that I don't have to be anything. I can bloom in my own time and in my own way.

In 2021, I broke off an eight-year relationship. In Unificationist tradition, it was the Blessing I had "broken," but in a colloquial understanding, it was like a long engagement. The break strained my relationships at home, and it unveiled all of the pain I had been hiding.

Suddenly, I was unable to be productive or feel competent. I wasn't inspired by anything. It took me months to feel any excitement again.

So, I quit my job and bought a one-way ticket to Hawai'i. A last-ditch effort to find some peace and meaning in my life.

Officially, I had gone to volunteer with Aloha Ocean Challenge, a program that provides an opportunity for young adults to experience God through fishing. I was encouraged to come earlier by the local pastor who is like an uncle to me, and I took him up on his offer.



**I had very seriously considered not coming back.**

Kona was such a gift to me. I felt like I had become some poster child of the Unification Movement—which I no longer wanted to be—and felt trapped. I wouldn't say I was having a crisis of faith, but rather a crisis of self.

But Kona was healing. She gave me once-in-a-lifetime experiences and people who gave me so much love.

About a week after I arrived, Mauna Loa erupted for the first time in 38 years. (We were fine.) We went to see the lava flow. I felt awestruck. It was magnificent. The bright lava was surrounded by billions of stars. (Pictures do not do her justice.)



*Mauna Loa eruption (photo courtesy of Jennifer Pierce)*

**I was looking at her and feeling understood.** I had just blown up my own life, but it wasn't a problem. Somewhere in the aftermath was new life, and it was coming.

Kona was the opposite of urban. Most of the Big Island of Hawai'i is old lava rock from the volcanoes. A small town here, a shopping mall there, a resort there, all separated by this lava rock. I loved it. The roughness, the emptiness. It was part of the island's beauty. It showed me that *my* jagged parts are beautiful, too.





*Aloha Ocean Challenge group photo on lava rock (photo courtesy of Kodiak Ocean Tribe)*

**Being there, I realized I needed the space to be on my own.**

At home, I was crumbling under the weight of trying to heal, be good, and be productive all at once. I was angry and frustrated. There was no space to feel free and learn to love the woman God created.

Kona was that space. I cried a lot in Hawai'i. I let myself be inspired and loved. I let myself feel lonely, angry, and sad. I let myself do fun things and explore. I was recreating myself. Reborn from the lava and the ocean.



*(Right) Jennifer Pierce (photo courtesy of Kodiak Ocean Tribe)*

I visited Mother Moon's property in Kona. I realized why one of her residences continues to be in Hawai'i. It's not just the prehistoric and deeply spiritual beauty of the islands. It's the space. The space to just – be.


Mother Moon uses her time in Hawai'i to heal and connect with Heavenly Parent. To realign herself and refresh. To redetermine and be appreciative.

I love Kona, Hawai'i. To me, it'll always be my second home, my second birthplace. I hope I can be there more often in the future.

I'm stateside now. I'm not completely over everything. I still struggle. A lot. A lot more often than perhaps people who know me expect. But I feel like I have a real chance at life now.



by Jennifer Pierce

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## Is God a woman?



As a Unificationist woman, I often think about what that means.

Since 2012, the global Unificationist movement has been led by a woman, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, also known as Mother Moon. In the Unificationist community, this has been a huge change from her husband's leadership. She applies a more feminine touch to our larger movement.

### Heavenly Parent

Most notably, Mother Moon has shifted our language on God from "Heavenly Father" to "Heavenly Parent."

"We must change the names we use. When we pray to God, from now on, please change what you say to 'Heavenly Parent'...The first words you say when you pray should be 'Heavenly Parent.'"

— Mother Moon, 2013

By naming God as Heavenly Parent, it includes both feminine and masculine aspects of God. To Unificationists, Heavenly Parent is the encapsulation of fatherly and motherly affection, because it is from God that all people, both man and woman, were created. [We're not the only religious group wondering the same thing.](#)

**This inclusion is shifting our entire understanding of God and of women.**

Not to break any new ground here, but being a woman is hard. I feel like there's so much we come up against as women. There are unnecessary challenges to our identity. Things like menstruation are taboo even though it happens to half

of the world's population. As most of history and society were shaped by men, it feels like we're still struggling to find a place to fit in.

Growing up, I rejected traditionally feminine things because I felt like they took away from who I was and made me less than. But there is something divine in being a woman regardless of how feminine you are, and Heavenly Parent was my ticket to understanding that.

I embrace a lot more of the feminine things about myself now because it's more real and fun. Because I have realized that being feminine isn't /ess – it's just different.

### **God is the Sum Total**

I think that's the value of having God be both masculine and feminine. It's not like I, as a woman, don't have masculine traits. And men aren't shut out from being feminine. God is the sum total of all traits, and that makes both divine.

I think society as a whole is missing so much by denying women and feminine expressions of life into public spaces and places of influence. To use an insular example, having Mother Moon lead the Unificationist movement has highlighted these differences and what, I felt, was missing from our movement.

"It's not a men vs. women problem. It's a men and women problem. "

### **We Need Women's Leadership**

In her Forbes article, "[Why the World Needs More Women in Leadership](#)," Raisa Ghazi, Award-Winning Global Public Speaker on Women's Leadership & Inclusive Leadership and SER TopWoman & Columnist, says women tend to be risk-averse, community-driven, and are more likely to make ethical decisions in leadership.

Ghazi states, "But we also need more women because they account for half of the world's population... In the end, women's leadership is not just about anticipating trends... It's about leaving untapped potential behind simply because we used to believe women were incapable of making sound decisions."

### **It's a Men and Women Problem**

Where should we go from here? I think we've made a lot of strides, but I think there is more to do to give women the platform to express themselves and

share what they have to offer. It's not a men vs. women problem. It's a men *and* women problem.


In Unificationist teaching, the feminine and masculine aspects of God are inseparable and unable to be removed from Heavenly Parent's heart. I think we, as a society, would do better if we followed that example.



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