

UNIFICATION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND INTEGRATION

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A SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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My predominant childhood memory consists of a collage of fleeting images of faces and places in a never ending slide show. By the time I was 14 years old, I had been enrolled at 7 different schools and had lived in more than 30 different locations in various regions of South Korea. My parents were one of the earliest followers of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and they lived as traveling missionaries, propagating Rev. Moon's teachings to anyone who would listen, and wherever they were allowed to preach. Although it was exciting to experience new people and new places, it was always difficult to let go of all the relationships I had made – the friends and people I was able to briefly acquaint myself with.

My parents were extremely fervent believers and their lives were totally dedicated to their faith calling. At that time, Korea was beginning to experience economic, political and cultural transformations following the devastation of the Korean War.

More so than today, people were gravitating towards the appeal of a religious life in order to find solace in the midst of social upheavals that were taking place at breakneck speeds. My parents were very much a part of that socio-religious scene. As the early pioneers of a new religious movement, they were called to sacrifice individual and family needs if it was necessary to bring about the ideals of the religious teaching. A story written by my father in his autobiography succinctly depicts the lifestyle we were in.¹

My father was a poor teenage orphan when he met Rev. Moon and armed with newly-found religious zeal, he was determined to help millions of children who were suffering from poverty, illiteracy, and neglect. He built a school building, brick-by-brick, and began teaching the elementary and middle school children who could not afford to pay tuition. In those days, secondary education was not free. He was known as the “shoeshine teacher” who shined shoes in order to generate funds to educate his students.

When I was only a baby, my parents had to leave me for few months. I fell gravely ill when a caretaker could not provide enough food for me. When my parents came back and saw the horrible state I was in, they immediately took me to a local doctor, but the doctor refused to provide any medicine for me, tersely stating that I would be better off dead than alive with utterly irresponsible parents. When my mother in tears explained the reasons why and how it happened, the doctor was so moved by their dedication to help poor and suffering children which were not even their own, that not only did he treat me, but he did so absolutely free of charge.

It was an intense early childhood for me. My grandmother was the one who actually raised all nine of us as “a single mother.” I can hardly recall any real moments spent with my parents growing up until I was about 14 years old. Rev. Moon’s Unification movement was growing rapidly in Korea, Japan, and also in many other countries in Europe and the Americas. Rev. Moon was then, and is still now considered the pinnacle of new religious movements worldwide. In the US, the Unification movement began spreading like wildfire and had already reached tens of thousands of new members by the 60s and 70s.

Coming to America

In order to help build the ministry in the US, my parents were sent to America in 1977. Our entire family immigrated to America and initially located in a Los Angeles suburb. When I arrived, my first thought was that America is truly a blessed country with an abundance of material wealth and natural beauty!

¹ Park, Chong Goo. The Sun Rising in the Shade. New York: Collegiate Association for the Research of Principle, 1989.

As an impressionable boy coming from a completely different culture and upbringing, it was a completely transforming period of my life. My lanky 90-pound, 14 year-old body miraculously shot up 7 inches and gained 40 pounds within a year after we set foot in America. My belly was always full, which was a new but very satisfying experience for me. I felt as though I had finally escaped the life of hunger and misery.

Because I was struggling at school work due to the language barrier, I was sent to a small boarding school near Santa Barbara. I was the only Korean student in the high school which forced me to adjust to the new environment quickly. These were productive years. I quickly adjusted and excelled in academics and in sports. By the end of my high school tenure, I had somehow become vice president of the student body, and even graduated as the valedictorian with many honors.

Although this was an externally rewarding period in my life, I always felt empty inside. I remember many nights unable to fall sleep, trying to use one of Rev. Moon's speeches or a Cat Steven's song as a sleeping aid.

One particular incident I will never forget took place during one of my vacations. My father had just come back from one of his trips, and just like other times, he had asked me to give him massage while lying on his bed. As a filial son, I would always continue my massage until well after he had fallen asleep. On this particular occasion, he suddenly got up in the middle of his sleep and began shouting "Father! Father! Father!" His face was red with tears pouring from his eyes. I still do not know what kind of dream he had, but his impassioned plea created a lasting impression on me. To this day, I still have that vivid image inscribed in my memory. I knew it must be something my father held so dearly that even in his dreams he was proclaiming his deeply held love and passion.

During the course of my young adulthood, it was difficult to understand why my father was never there for me. Not once did he visit me while I was away at school, or show any interest in anything I was involved with. I knew he was busy, but I became resentful towards him for what appeared to be his lack of any attention for me. Yet, at that moment that he was profusely expressing his passionate plea even as he lay unconscious in his sleep, something stirred inside me.

"Who is this "Father" my own father is shouting in tears about? What is driving a grown man to such zeal and passion towards another man?" It caused me to have so many mixed emotions and questions during my impressionable young adulthood.

I was 17 years old, a senior in high school, when my father suddenly passed away. In life, he was such a physically strong man full of vigor and enthusiasm, yet unexpectedly one day he was gone. Later I found out that he had been suffering from mesothelioma from breathing in carcinogens while fixing old buildings, which was one of his hobbies. Soon, it had turned into lung cancer, and within 3 months he had passed away.

I was completely devastated. I have never shed so many tears in my life. I was called a "cry baby" when I was a boy because how easily I would cry when things were sad. But, since then, I do not remember any other occasion where I have shed tears. Thousands of people came to my father's funeral in Korea. Many came to me and expressed their condolences. They all expressed how much my father had touched their lives and changed them. Even today many decades later, people who knew my father still come to me and share the experiences they shared with him, often in tears.

In a way, even though I did not really know my own father, I began to appreciate and understand him indirectly through those who knew him. That lingering feeling I felt throughout my childhood suddenly

became more amplified. I was determined more than ever to find out the source of my father's passion and dedication. When I think of my childhood, it was my father, even though he may not have been physically there for me, who guided me towards my personal path of spiritual growth and faith.

College Years

I enrolled in Columbia College in 1982. The fast-paced hustle and bustle of New York City life was quite a change from the completely laid-back lifestyle I had become used to in California. Although it was hard at times, I was excited to be in New York with brand new challenges and opportunities.

Right around that time, the center of the Unification movement had established itself in the greater New York area. Rev. Moon and his family were located just north of NY City, and Rev. Moon was actively engaged in his ministry. I would catch the 3 AM subway downtown to the New Yorker Hotel from my dorm, and would hitch a ride to the Belvedere training center, located in the Westchester NY, where Rev. Moon without fail would come to give a sermon every Sunday. The training center was a previously converted automobile garage. Hundreds if not thousands would all sit on our knees on the hard cement floor like sardines, with literally no elbow room to spare. Then, Rev. Moon would give the sermon at 6 AM and his sermon would often continue for many hours.

On one occasion, he gave a 17-hour sermon, and I remember not being able to go to a bathroom to relieve myself for all those hours because there was no room for me to walk out of the room. Without fail, every Sunday for the next couple years of my college life, I was there at Belvedere training center sitting in the front row, waiting for him to come to speak. Rev. Moon was "the Father" my own father was shouting out in his dreams. I had to find out why. My father literally died for this man. What made it possible for him to give his life for this Father?

I was born into the Unification movement as a second-generation child of one of the early followers. But the devout faith which my parents possessed had never really been my own; I was simply born into this faith and therefore was expected to inherit it. The process of the discovery, the acceptance, and the conversion into a new state of being had to be self-made. And it was during those years that by the Grace of God, I believe I began my conversion process.

Those in the Unification movement are thoroughly enlightened by its main scripture, the Divine Principle.² The revelations which the scripture contains are unquestionably the truth which all humankind should embrace. If the Divine Principle is the framework, Rev. Moon's words are the living flesh that gives infinite life to its truths. His sermons were the living expression of how God was suffering behind human history waiting for thousands of years to finally reveal His undying Love for his lost children. Rev. Moon's tearful prayers and sweat-filled passionate speeches completely captivated my young intellect, emotion, and will. It gave me a sense of hope and empowered me with the source of strength. With God's help, I felt I had the power to literally make the world a better place.

One theme that I constantly challenged myself with was the teaching of mind and body unity. It was taught that before anyone hopes to conquer the world, one was to conquer himself. As a young adult growing into manhood, it was imperative that I subjugate my "body" and put it under the control of my good "mind." When a rocket reaches an earth orbit, it will travel in orbit effortlessly. But, in order for a rocket to reach that orbit, it requires a tremendous initial amount of fuel.

² Moon, Sun Myung. *Exposition of the Principle*. New York: HSA-UWC, 1996.

In order to reach the state of enlightenment where I could be in peaceful communion with God, I believed I had to first subjugate my body's temptations. I remember during my sophomore year in college, in preparation to attend Rev. Moon's sermon, I would fast on weekends. In fact, that year I fasted all 52 weekends without exception. Strangely, it wasn't hard for me to fast on weekends; I felt more joy and happiness during those fasting periods. His sermons and words soothed me more than my need for food. For me, it truly fit the phrase, "man can't live on bread alone."

There was an abundance of exciting adventures for young Unificationists to experience during my college years. We would go to Gloucester, MA during summer vacations and join the fleet of fishing boats to engage in an ocean challenge program. It was fun and exciting, but was also extremely-hard physical training. We would wake up 3 AM and be on the boat before sunrise. Once we embarked from the Gloucester harbor we would drive our boat one hour to the fishing destination in order to catch giant Bluefin tuna.

Most of the time weather was not pleasant. Rain or shine, rough seas or not, we pushed ourselves everyday chumming, baiting, and waiting for tuna to be hooked. The sensation of a 1000-pound tuna pulling your fishing line and fighting for many hours on the rough open ocean toughened us mentally and physically. Often times, we would wait many days in order to catch just one tuna, but it was well-worth it. Ocean Challenge was truly the perfect balance of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical training. In fact, I sincerely believe it to be one of the most effective character building experiences. When we were done fishing and returned to the church-owned property where we were staying, Rev. Moon would begin speaking to us until well past midnight. Then, we would only be able to sleep for 2-3 hours before having to begin the entire process again.

When you are in the middle of the ocean you are all alone, completely at the mercy of Mother Nature. You cannot complain or hide when the weather turns bad. Nor can you run away from it when things become challenging. It really was a life and death situation every time we were out there in the middle of the ocean. Being in these situations builds a person's character. No matter how difficult the situation, we always had to find a way to overcome it, instead of becoming a victim of it. Ever since then, whenever I feel stress in my life overwhelming me, I look to the ocean. I go out on a fishing expedition and reconnect with my memories of how I was able to overcome such intense hardships during the Ocean Challenge. This is how I feel reenergized.

Marriage and Family

In 1986, when I was a senior in college, some other second generation Unificationists and myself were suddenly called by a church elder to come to Korea. I had no clue as to the reason for my sudden visit to Korea, but I obliged.

As soon as I arrived at the airport, someone was waiting to take me directly to Rev. Moon's residence in Seoul, Korea. When I arrived at the home, I was ushered to a room where a tailor instructed me to wear a traditional Korean wedding suit for a groom. From that point on, I can honestly say that what followed was a complete blur. There was no discussion of any sort with the soon-to-be bride, nor with her parents. After changing into the wedding suit I was taken upstairs where hundreds of wedding guests were apparently waiting for me. There, Rev. Moon's daughter, Un-jin, was waiting for me in a beautiful Korean wedding dress. It seemed she was just as shocked and nervous as I was. We both went through the Korean style wedding ceremony, exchanging vows and bowing to her parents and to the guests.

The next day, there was a western style wedding ceremony where thousands of guests were there to congratulate our marriage. It all happened at such a furious pace that I had no time to digest everything that was happening. All I could do was simply accept the things that were happening to and around me, almost like a spectator. God works in mysterious ways that our limited minds cannot possibly fathom. Abruptly I was pulled into the center of the Unification movement where I now became an integral part of the “true family,” and Rev. Moon, a messianic figure, was now my father-in-law.

In the Unification teachings, marriage is not only considered to be holy matrimony, but also the greatest blessing which God wanted to bestow onto mankind. A marriage is believed not to be just a union between a man and a woman, but a place where God can dwell in. God-centered marriage is the cornerstone on which the God-centered family, society, nation, and the world can be created.

The Unification movement is well-known around the world for its “blessing” ceremonies where countless young men and women pledge their marriage vows to each other in order to establish more God-centered families. Participation in the blessing was an act of one’s ultimate faith. In fact, it was God, represented by his living embodiment Rev. Moon, who chose your spouse for you.

Rev. Moon matched couples together whom he saw God designed as a chosen couple. This unique act of faith brought cross-cultural, international, interreligious and interracial couples together, all who pledged to create ideal families under God’s lineage. An American man might be matched with a woman from former-enemy Japan or Germany, or a white might be matched with a black spouse. A Christian might be matched with someone with a Muslim background. Only the true love between faithful couples could destroy all boundaries. Love was more powerful than any boundaries that were created by men. All of us who participated in these blessing ceremonies strived to fulfill our pledge however difficult it would be.

My marriage with Un-jin Moon began just like any other young marriage. After the initial newlywed bliss, we had to begin dealing with the issues any young married couple would have to deal with: finances, work, children, and so forth. I can honestly say that I was ill-prepared for the task at hand, but I tried to be a good husband to the best of my ability.

At that time, my wife was training hard as an equestrian rider. She was extremely dedicated to her sport and always strived to be the best. She excelled so much that she was even able to participate in the 1986 Asian Olympics as well as the 1988 Seoul and 1992 Barcelona Olympics representing the South Korean Equestrian team. In preparation for her Olympic endeavor, Un-jin participated in numerous equestrian events all throughout the US. We traveled to places like Virginia, Florida, New York wherever the prestigious show jumping events were held, and stayed on the road for months at a time. My wife and her brother, Hyun-jin Moon, who also was an equestrian rider, and I were a traveling team staying in hotels and trailers training hard to fulfill the dream of a successful Olympic event. During this time, my wife and I were blessed to give birth to two beautiful daughters.

As a faith-oriented people, we tend to focus on more spiritual work and often neglect our duties in the realm of more mundane earthly responsibilities. The priorities in my life were shaped by an apocalyptic view where one was to sacrifice everything for sake of God’s salvation. Daily duties as a husband required more of a “realized eschatological” approach of being a good provider and good loving husband.

It was a challenge from the very beginning of our marriage and I cannot say that I have been completely successful. Although my wife and I eventually separated in the late 90s, I am eternally grateful to Rev. and Mrs. Moon for welcoming me into their family, and for allowing me to be a part of their lives.

Although my marriage lasted only ten years, those ten years was a time of amazing blessing and happiness in my life like I had never experienced before. Since the separation, my two daughters, Shinyeon and Shinji have been in my custody, and I have been faithful to Rev. Moon's teachings of marriage and stayed single all these years.

UTS and a Call to Ministry

In the early 90s, I felt a strong desire to go back to school. Many of my college colleagues had gone into fields where they had respective interests in, such as finance, law, science and so on. I knew deep in my heart, that a career in theology, faith, and ministry was the direction I really wanted to pursue. The Unification Theological Seminary seemed like the perfect opportunity at the time, so I decided to enroll.

At UTS, I was privileged to meet so many diverse groups of people who had interests similar to me. Students from all walks of life were congregated there. Comparative religious studies with ecumenical focus presented us with an academic approach to all aspects of diverse religions, faiths, and devotional practices. At times, it was challenging to view faith in more intellectually-critical approach, but my studies only widened my horizon, and gave me a deeper appreciation of my faith.

Also, during my studies, I came to realization that faith is much more deeply rooted in the act of practicing its religious ideals than theorizing about which religious principles are superior to others. It was more important to act on salvation than to only think and discuss about it.

In my third year of study at UTS, I had an opportunity to be part of an overseas missionary activity in the former Soviet empire. In the early 90s, Soviet Union was undergoing tremendous transformation. Perestroika under Gorbachev was the final nail to bring about the end of the 70 years of communist rule. Rev. Moon who has suffered greatly in the North Korean concentration camp had been declaring the end of communism many decades before the end finally came. He had secretly been sending missionaries to the communist-ruled Soviet Union since the 1960s. And when the empire began crumbling, he wisely dispatched UTS graduates to help the Soviet people during their time of tremendous social and political difficulty.

Although atheistic communism is the absolute enemy of God's ideals, it was the people living in Communism who also happened to be God's children, and who were suffering the most. Rev. Moon wanted to liberate them by sending us, the UTS graduates, to teach them that God has been working hard all along, to bring them back to his fold.

As an itinerary worker, I began traveling cities all over the former Soviet empire, meeting other missionaries and encouraging them to keep faith. I wanted to be in the field and experience the missionary work for myself, instead of being stationed in one place. I began travelling starting from smaller cities near Moscow, and then moved on to cities near Kiev, Ukraine. Back in Moscow, I journeyed eastward, passing cities along the trans-Siberian route: Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude, Chita, Khabarovsk and my other cities, and all the way to Vladivostok. In all, I was able to visit close to 70 cities in the span of a half year.

Along the way I encountered so many amazing people. Although they were living in a completely different environment than I was used to, I could sense the amazing level of pride in their culture. Because they suffered so much under the communism, I sensed a pureness of heart and a deep profound humility which I have never found anywhere else since. During this time, I am proud to say

that we were able to bring tens of thousands of seminar participants to places like Crimea and convene workshops in order to educate the Soviet youth in the teachings of the Divine Principle.

Once I was on a bus with youth seminar participants. A young lady in her late teens sat next to me, and we began conversing. Apparently she had been given a Divine Principle book a year ago as a gift, and she began talking about how much it had changed her life. She had literally read it more than 100 times, and pretty much memorized the entire book from start to finish. She asked me questions that a trained seminarian like me could not answer. It really made me humble to think how God had prepared such incredible people who were ready to receive Him in a place where so much pain and suffering had taken place for so long. Instead of being resentful towards God for their untold amount of pain and suffering, they were able to remain positive, and even be grateful for what they had in their lives.

After my IW period was over, I promised myself to do my utmost to help these young people whom God had prepared under such extraordinary circumstances. I gave a report to the missionary leadership asking them to somehow provide the external means through which they could survive materially so that they could be freer to engage in their spiritual work. God had already prepared them internally and spiritually, all we needed to do was to provide basic necessities like jobs, food, and a home, rather than insisting on teaching more ideology. They were tired of 70 years of communism indoctrination. I completed my studies at UTS soon after returning from overseas.

Student Leadership in CARP

In 1994, I was suddenly called by Rev. Moon during a banquet. He told me, not asked me, to be in charge of World CARP.³ Just like that I was given the responsibility. Prior to that Mrs. Moon was inquiring about my interest in working for the multi-national conglomerate Christian Bernard Company, but I politely declined. But when Rev. Moon directed me to be in charge of World CARP, the church's student wing, I knew deep in my heart it was God's calling. It was also in a way my family legacy. My father, known as "Tiger" Park, was the active leader of the World CARP right before he passed away. I felt the responsibility was a natural continuation of my father's work and also my desire to continue his dream and mine.

In the 1990s, after a couple decades of persecution towards the Unification movement, there were signs of strains, particularly in the area of declining membership and a lack of new young members. The first few days of my tenure as the president of World CARP demonstrated that situation. There were very few young CARP members in the US for me to tap into. Most of them were assigned to the former Soviet Union as missionaries. The only thing I had to work with was a couple of staff and an office.

I felt that World CARP was in such a shambles, I had to do something about it quickly. I could not ask Rev. Moon for any assistance. I did not want to burden him with our problems. I recruited a few fellow UTS graduates and began formulating our plan. We began by visiting the church regions in the US.

America is indeed a giant country. We rented a Lincoln Towncar, and everyday logged in over 500 plus miles travelling at high speeds. We even ate and slept in the car. And as soon as we arrived in the regional churches, we encouraged membership and shared Rev. Moon's vision of what WCARP and US church was. By the time we finished our trip, we logged more than 10,000 miles in 3 weeks. It was an

³ CARP stands for Collegiate Association for the Research of Principle, and was the student wing of the Unification Church.

effective way to see the members and personally evaluate the general status of the US church membership.

For the next year or so we made a couple of similar IW trips around the country. However, as a youth organization to be able to do the work, we needed more young people to participate in our work. There still weren't enough people to realize our grand vision of WCARP. Finally, when I started my "hunger strike" which was 21 days of fasting while I was with a mobile fundraising team (MFT), I was able to secure about 50 young members. Whether it was an act of sympathy or not, by completing my condition, I was able to bring together a core group of young people in WCARP.

Also, I began approaching the second generation Unificationists. Since the early "blessings" many of the children of "blessed" families were already attending college. However, when I called on them to participate in World CARP, only 5 out of more than 200 plus eligible US blessed children volunteered. I was disappointed but decided to go ahead and create a "Special Task Force," centered on young second generation blessed children. We were asking them to take a one-year leave of absence from their college lives and directly engage in frontline WCARP activities.

At the same time, we were conversing with the mission department about the young former Soviet Union members. There were tens of thousands of young recruits in those countries who were inspired by the Principle teachings and enamored by the great vision of Rev. Moon. We thought it would be wonderful for them to come to America, their former enemy country, and offer to help educate and witness to the youth. We began inviting them, and some of them were inspired enough to join us.

We were ready to report to Rev. Moon about World CARP's plans and visions. In a private meeting I laid out a few proposals. They were as follows:

First, World CARP should encourage members to "be proud of and love True Parents." In my fact-finding tour across country, I found out that due to intense persecution, especially after Rev. Moon's Danbury imprisonment, our members were facing some level of identity crisis. We found out that some of the World CARP members were even ashamed to reveal their identity as Unificationists, even to their parents and relatives. The new members were educated in such a narrowly defined path that only a select few out of thousands of people who were educated in the Principle actually joined as full-time members.

Therefore, it was critically important for World CARP to be "proud of and love" who we were. We were proud children of God and True Parents who were not afraid to fight against injustices in the world. We encouraged members to share their life-changing experiences in the church and reach out to their parents and relatives.

And we relaxed the educational process to be much more inclusive. Literally if you are in agreement with Rev. Moon's vision of world peace and his mission to restore the world back to God, you are "proud of and love" our true parents. In order to reach out to young collegiate Americans, we should not build such barriers so high that even those who respect Rev. Moon are discouraged to be part of his vision.

Second, we needed to tap into the tremendous potential resource of second generation Unificationists, whom I shall simply call blessed children (BCs) from this point on. The statistical number of the natural multiplication based on blessed families was staggering. By then, the number of couples who had participated in the blessing ceremonies was in the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, and their children would be more naturally ready to receive Rev. Moon's teachings than any other young people.

Being a second generation myself, I also realized that it was a so called “double-edged” blessing. Many BCs are aware of how much their parents have suffered on the frontline of providential work. Given the choice, they would not choose the same paths that their parents took. Being born into this faith did not guarantee the same, or even a similar level of the faith that our parents had. Each member of the second generation had to go through their very own conversion experience in order to make the faith their own, just as their parents had.

I reported to Rev. Moon that World CARP would provide a system and place for these precious BCs to find their true relationship with God. For that purpose, I proposed a “hell training” program as the initial program. During summer vacation, we invited BCs to attend a workshop where they would go through extreme training spiritually, emotionally, and physically, challenging them to face their deep inner self. They were given grueling daily regiments, educated in the Divine Principle, and even were sent on fundraising trips. There were also opportunities for them after the initial workshop to experience community service work on an overseas mission. Through such intense experiences, we were hoping they could kindle the seeds of their life of faith. There could not be any “special” treatment for simply being a BC, you had to earn your place in the eyes of God by remaining true to your faith.

Third, I proposed the World CARP Academy as the institution that would encapsulate Rev. Moon’s “formula course” which is the fastest way to reach the unity between God and man. What are the best aspects of the Unification movement in America, and what is the fastest and most effective way to inherit that tradition?

The World CARP Academy would be a place where we could invite the best and brightest teachers and lecturers in the movement to come and inspire young members in their respective fields, whether it be faith, science, business, or media. Our movement’s strength was not only in the area of religion, we had many successful preachers, entrepreneurs, media editors, social workers and other professional experts who were more than happy to lend their expertise to our students.

The World CARP Academy would send its students to participate in various social work projects around the US and the world. Volunteerism has always been a character building experience throughout human history and we wanted to strengthen the practice of “helping thy neighbors” who are less fortunate than you.

The World CARP Academy would also include a “mobile fundraising” program. The MFT program has been an integral part of the US Unification movement and has affected so many of the early followers. In fact, some of them were involved in MFT for more than a decade. We wanted young members and BCs to experience the incredible character building experience that only MFT could provide. And we wanted our youth to wholeheartedly inherit this invaluable tradition. Ultimately, the goal was for participants to, in a few short months, experience what our church elders so often had to go through, and participate with pride in their work.

Additionally, the World CARP Academy would provide an “intern” program to various businesses, social work, media outlets, academic institutions our movements had to offer for participants to experience life in the “real world.” Most of the WCARP members were students and they needed to prepare for the eventual career in their future. So we hoped to provide opportunities as head starts in their respective future endeavors.

Fourth, I truly wanted World CARP to try to be “self-sufficient.” More often than not, many of our church endeavors relied too heavily on other sources of funding, and I have witnessed situations where

as soon as the funding sources stopped, the programs had to be shut down, even if they were brilliant programs.

In retrospect, this promise was one of the hardest promises to keep. It is extremely hard for a student-run organization to help pay for its numerous projects. Instead of promising to be completely independent financially, it would have been much better to find a compromise where we could receive some assistance financially.

We embarked on a variety of ambitious projects with different degrees of success. Many of the World CARP members reached out to their families and relatives, and to their surprise they were warmly received and mended their relationships. It had simply been a matter of misunderstandings and miscommunications. In fact, many parents and relatives began appreciating their children's sincere desire to dedicate themselves to a higher cause, rather than simply taking care of their own limited careers.

When members were blessed and began having families of their own, there was an even greater appreciation between them. By widening the path to our faith, simple respect and love for Rev. Moon allowed the members and their families and relatives to discover a greater sense of being a part of the large extended family. The Unification movement is a brand new religion less than 50 years old since its inception, yet we were able to create a worldwide movement with so much to offer towards the betterment of the world. We became more "proud" of our identity.

The second generation education also achieved a great degree of success. The STF which started with only 5 BC participants in the first year expanded to more than a hundred members each year. In some years, the number of participants exceeded more than 200 members. It also spread to other parts of the world such as Europe, Oceania, and Asia. It is still continuing strong.

Even though the nature of STF varied year to year, the core concept remained the same. When the parents of the BC participants realized the STF program provided short intense conversion experiences and that it planted "the seed" of faith that BCs could apply for the rest of their lives, it was they who encouraged their children to wholeheartedly engage in this faith oriented endeavor. When BCs were able to graduate from the STF program, they now had some "common ground" for them to relate with their parents who were now not only their physical parents, but also spiritual comrades who shared their same faith.

The World CARP Academy was a partial success. For the first 2 years it was a great success, but we soon realized that lack of funding and lack of new students made it impossible to continue the program successfully. So, eventually it had to be closed. However, the concept of an experiential faith oriented educational program for youth remains strong. The World CARP Academy opened up opportunities for groups or individuals who had a like-minded concern for the education of our youth to pursue the creation of similar programs in the US and around the world.

"Absolute Sex" and the Pure Love Alliance

Rev. Moon made a famous speech at the Hilton hotel in Washington DC in the mid-90s where he coined the term "Absolute Sex". The whole idea of absolute sex espouses absolute fidelity between husband and wife, which is the cornerstone of any healthy family, as compared to the practice of "free sex" which leads to the breakdown of marriages and family. It truly was a ground breaking statement.

After the fall of communism, the Unification movement was going through a pseudo identity crisis of its own. During the Cold War, there was a clear demarcation between a God-centered theology juxtaposing against the atheistic communist ideology. Our movement was at the forefront of the fight against communism, and the clarity of our “enemy” effectively mobilized our focus and resources without any internal conflict. However, when the end of communism was ushered onto us, it seemed that the clarity of our focus was somewhat diffused. When focus was directed toward more on the issue of family values, we soon realized it may not be as clear cut a case compared to what we faced with communism.

It was early spring of 1997 when I greeted Rev. Moon on his way back from an overseas trip to his New York residence. He made a brief comment regarding what World CARP should focus on. Without a long explanation, he asked WCARP to focus on the “purity” movement. It truly was a difficult direction. Many of my key staff was disheartened by this direction and some actually decided to leave World CARP. It also was a great challenge to my personal life. I was facing my own breakdown of marriage. My wife was going ahead with her divorce proceedings and I was in the middle of a custody battle for my children. How could I lead the World CARP members while I was facing such intense struggle in my personal life?

Faced with so many personal dilemmas and organizational concerns, I decided to push ahead with Rev. Moon’s direction. At that point, the only thing I could really count on was my conviction in the wisdom of Rev. Moon and my faith in the power of God. I decided to simply yield. I had to be humble and obedient to what was asked of me. What choice did I have?

From the organizational view point, the main difficulty was that in the free-spirited college environments in the US, the concept of purity was not only foreign but almost disdained by the liberal young people of the day. My closest staff did not believe that WCARP would be able to overcome the strong influences of the liberal culture that young people were immersed in. After all, the 90s were the product of decades long of 60s 70s and 80s culture of free spirited lifestyle. If we were going to create a purity movement, it had to challenge the negative preconceived notion of the idea of purity and make it much more exciting than that of the liberal notion of free love. The battle of the “absolute sex” versus the “free sex” had begun.

We created an organization called the Pure Love Alliance. In the summer of 1997, three hundred young Unificationists embarked on a 27-city national tour starting in Los Angeles, and ending in Washington DC. It was a miraculous tour. To our great surprise, we were wholeheartedly welcomed by the leaders and citizens of the cities we visited. We held rallies and concerts in each city where young Unificationists would give passionate testimonies about their struggles with purity. Many preached openly on how purity and fidelity in marriage would lead to happier and healthier families, societies, nations and the world.

In every city we visited, media crews appeared and gave us positive coverage in their newspapers and on TV. In all, more than 10 hours’ worth of TV news coverage was dedicated to the PLA. The president of PLA and its spokesman was invited to appear on talk shows such as Bill O’Reilly’s No Spin Zone. From that point on, whenever an issue of purity and abstinence arose in the news, PLA was at the top of their list of organizations to call.

After a successful tour, it was repeated the following year in Japan and Korea. In 1999, a PLA tour was successfully conducted in Europe as well. At the same time, PLA members were asked to teach the abstinence peer education in public schools in Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami. It was much more

effective for the peers to proudly and convincingly persuade others in their same age group about the value of purity and abstinence. God, indeed, was working behind the scenes, blessing us with the work that World CARP and PLA members could successfully and proudly immerse in.

Being Relieved of My Ministry

Despite these successes, my ministry in World CARP and the Pure Love Alliance was to come to a sudden and shocking end. In 2000, the Unification movement was holding its World Culture and Sports Festival in Korea. As in previous years, it was customary for the president of World CARP to give a speech at the festival during the sporting event. As I approached the podium with a prepared speech, I was flabbergasted to find that a newly appointed World CARP president was about to give his own speech, instead of me. I was embarrassed that I was not informed of it. On the spot, I found out that Rev. Moon had decided to give the World CARP responsibility to his son, Hyun-jin Moon.

The transition to the next successor to World CARP was not smooth, to put it mildly. There was no farewell ceremony. In fact, I believe I was rather unceremoniously pushed out. To this day, I wish the transition was handled in a better manner for the sake of everyone else involved. It did not have to be carried out in such a disgraceful way. I was waiting for my burden of the public responsibility to be lifted off my shoulders for a while. A simple gesture of thanks for the job would have been more than adequate. I have no regret for the times I was involved in the public ministry. Whether or not I have accomplished all that I set out to do, it was one of the most productive and rewarding years of my life.

For several years afterwards, I could do little more than focus on raising my two young daughters. When I heard about the Doctorate of Ministry program, I realized that, once again, as it had 15 years earlier, God might use the theological education and reflection as a way to lead me on a new path.

I believe however unprepared and unqualified I may have been for all of my life's callings, God has always continued to train and guide me. As the pastor Joel Osteen points out in *It's Your Time*, God has always been there for us whether we knew it or not.⁴ If we can see beyond our inadequacies or perhaps self-pity and if we let God work through us, then there will always be a new door ready to open.

⁴ Osteen, Joel. *It's Your Time*. New York: Free Press, 2009