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Challenges and New Development in the Emerging Women's Leadership in Unification Church Ministry

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The founders of the Unification Church, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, have elevated and promoted women's value.^[1] Speaking at the 2012 inauguration of the Abel Women's UN, one of the organizations that they founded, Rev. Moon promoted women's rights and gender equality based on the maternal love of women who establish families and societies, and therefore realize God's ideal for the creation.^[2] He also encouraged women leaders to choose the path of a true mother, a true wife, and a true daughter to unite to build a peaceful world. He proclaimed that "in the twenty-first century, women will be the central axis"^[3] of leadership.

Like other Christian denominations that encounter struggles and challenges, the Unification Church ministry is facing similar issues, such as engaging new members, upholding membership retention, and educating the younger generations (children and grandchildren of the first-generation disciples of Rev. and Mrs. Moon). There are women leaders who reach in and energize people to be more engaged in the life of the church. They reach out to others by identifying, serving and helping them in their needs and wants, including through public social services. These women juggle the multiple tasks and roles of being mother, wife, daughter, and sister at home as well as a team leader, counselor, mentor, cheerleader, and friend in the church setting. Their efforts and dedication ought to be appreciated, for they contribute to the larger organized and structured system within the church ministry that benefits the church as a whole.

This article addresses what these spiritually-oriented women leaders are facing while eagerly desiring to share the love of God and truth with others by communicating, cultivating, evangelizing, and sometimes educating converts and supporters. The challenges they encounter while playing their role and functions in their families and church communities with their God-given feminine, motherly, nurturing qualities are a focus of the article. Furthermore, it will shed light on how women leaders can contribute their talents, strength, and skills in exercising their God-given nature, qualities, and characteristics to the providence of national restoration as Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has focused on in *Vision 2020*.^[4]

Indeed, women are playing more important roles in the twenty-first century than they were in earlier centuries. With their motherly, nurturing nature, women are innately equipped with the care, love and strength to lift up themselves, their children, their husbands and their immediate and extended family and societal members, as well as to work together with other women and men to make a difference in their families, religious communities and affiliated public social settings. In addition, these days there are more women receiving higher education, which generally leads to more opportunities in employment and making an impact on society. Therefore, demographics increasingly favor the involvement of women in the community, including the church community. That female leadership is on the rise in the Unification Church is no exception; however, there are tasks to be worked on.

As the Unification Church is striving to reach national restoration, activities to strengthen the church and edify its members have been the central focus of efforts in church ministry.

According to the recent direction provided by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to International Headquarters as part of *Vision 2020*, the worldwide Unification Church is to focus on three goals: witnessing, creating the environment for witnessing, and educating future leaders. The issues of women's roles and functions in the church as well as the opportunities for women's participation in church ministry are linked to the fulfillment of these goals. This is because women (and men) are the channels and instruments to carry out this mission and ministry from the church level to the realization of national restoration.

The Duality of God and Mothering Capacity

In God's blueprint for creation, it was not good for man to live alone, so God created woman as his companion and complement (Gen. 2:18-24). According to God's divine design, the unity of the first man and woman was seen as delightful in God's eyes. Moreover, the portrait of a loving family with God as the center is what God deliberately created—man and woman who love each other and live for each other. This is God's design: man and woman together forming the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

Not only human beings but also the whole creation is made in resemblance to God. It means the whole creation is in a resemblance of duality, of male and female. Therefore, the duality of God, the femininity and masculinity of God, is clearly expressed and demonstrated in God's creation, specifically in a loving husband-and-wife relationship. Rev. Moon often said that through the unity between husband and wife, the Love of God can be expressed and experienced internally and externally.

Unless husband and wife come together and are united, there is no way for God to express His Love ultimately. So, love means to be united internally and externally. Unless you find oneness, you cannot find joy. When you are one with a person, you don't want to be parted; you want to be with each other for eternity. You are never tired of each other.^[5]

On Jan. 7, 2013, prior to Foundation Day, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon addressed Unification Church members, telling them that they should refer to God no longer as Heavenly Father but as Heavenly Parent. This also was supported by Ye Jin Moon.^[6] This point also can be found in Unification theology, as Dr. Andrew Wilson explains that God's characteristics of masculinity and femininity are expressed in both Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother.^[7]

Rev. Moon did stress the existence of both genders of Heavenly Parent in Cheon Seong Gyeong.^[8] Even *Wolli Wonbon*^[9] treated God as existing as two "genders," the dual characteristics of Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father, as Dr. Wilson explains in his article. Hence, God is a being of dual genders.

Human beings were created in separate genders, divided from God's dual genders, so that they can unite in perfect love and dwell in joy. When a man and woman unite in love, there comes to be a complete correspondence between God's love and human love, bringing perfection to both.^[10]

Since God is our Heavenly Parent with both masculinity and femininity, God's parental love exists as both Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. The Heart of God means the Love of God, because the Love of God expresses the Heart of God. Rev. Moon always referred to the Heart of God in his speeches. It is fascinating that the Love of God is commonly expressed in God's femininity, the Heavenly Mother's Heart.

A woman standing in a pivotal position in her roles and functions as a mother, wife, daughter (or daughter-in-law), sister (or sister-in-law), and friend experiences and expresses Heavenly Mother's love through these roles. Because she understands the heart of God, especially the heart of Heavenly Mother that is the femininity of God, she has the potential to bring divine compassion and love to her family—her husband, parents (parents-in-law), children and siblings (siblings-in-law)—on behalf of Heavenly Parent.

As a matter of fact, sometimes women are put in the situation and position that they are in the front line to guide and lead their family, as Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon explained:

When it comes to educating and raising children, the mother has to be stronger than the father. That is why I told my daughters-in-law, “You have to follow the traditions and become stronger than your husbands.” The mother’s role was crucial during Israel’s course of paying indemnity while living in a difficult environment. It is the same with the Unification Church. Women have the responsibility to march at the front line, organize and handle everything, and help the men.^[11]

Women are in the position to represent their families and their communities. The position they are in makes them responsible to take care of others. She continued by saying:

Representing the entire world, you should offer repentance by praying sincerely, “For the past forty years, we have continued to be indebted to You, causing only trouble, without being able to repay anything. Please look at us, Your inadequate children, with compassion. We will do our best. We beseech that You trust and stay with us one more time!”^[12]

Even as Rev. Moon proclaimed the era of women and emphasized the important role of women, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon would raise women leaders and help them to fulfill their motherly mission.^[13]

The mothering instinct, or mothering capacity, is a gift bestowed by God to all women, especially those women who perform a mother’s duties and obligations to their full capacity. It is due to the innate motherly nature and mothering instinct that come from Heavenly Mother’s heart of femininity. If women do not have a child or children of their own, they may either adopt children or decide to dedicate their mothering capacity to raise other people’s children as their own. In human history, Mother Teresa is one of numerous examples of unmarried women who are exemplary in living for the sake of caring for others.

In general, Unificationist women have been performing a wide range of roles and functions at home and in their church community. Unificationist women are in the position to potentially restore, revive, and transform their husbands. For this, the requirement and qualification is that they stand on a solid, sacred, and principled ground of spiritual discipline and self-cultivation. A woman may experience and express her loving service and dedication to God and True Parents as a foundation throughout her life, including her wifehood in relating to her husband and motherhood in relating to her children. These are crucial foundational resources for her personal growth, which is mandatory for church ministry. The ministry that she conducts at home is the prerequisite and stepping stone prior to serving on the larger scale of church community.

The mother’s heart can be the full, realistic expression and manifestation of God’s Heart in femininity. Rev. Moon even believed that woman is more developed than man:

Women are more creatures of the heart than men. Therefore, it is not unusual to see them go ahead in spiritual experiences. Men should follow them in this case.^[14]

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon addresses the important role of women who bear and raise children and who possess the essential feminine nature to be God’s representatives, as follows:

By nurturing the fruits of love and investing in her children’s upbringing, a woman connects and extends the traditions and lineage of her family. For this reason... her role as a mother in cultivating character and raising her children to have healthy, wholesome natures is the highest function of womanhood. In fulfilling this role, women truly represent the heart of God.

The characteristics of God as Heavenly Mother enable women leaders and women generally to care for, encourage, support, and uplift their families and church communities. A woman holds a crucial position by Heaven’s design. Women, and women leaders, need to express and manifest Heavenly Love, to passionately and dynamically manifest Her femininity. Women’s involvement in church ministry completes the image of God and balances local shared ministry, which helps

our global, ecumenical, and evangelical movement contribute to the world in a more productive and effective fashion.

Experiencing and Appreciating Femininity as Divine

It is clear that women represent the feminine side of God, namely, the Heavenly Mother side of God. However, women cannot exist by themselves or for themselves; neither can men. A woman needs to be partnered with a man; likewise, a man needs to be partnered with a woman. As Rev. Moon said:

A woman is not made to be a man's assistant or simply an object of his protection. Rather, a woman is an interdependent entity who completes a man by standing in a position that represents half of God. In the ideal of true love, a woman exists as a man's noble partner, as the recipient who can reciprocate his love.[\[15\]](#)

The Heavenly Mother's Heart is the tender loving, caring, sensitive heart to hope, heal, cure, comfort, consult, encourage, lift up, inspire, and resonate with her children. This feminine characteristic love of God inspires women to share with others. This love is what a baby needs in order to grow, a husband needs in order to share and be a man, a son or daughter needs to demonstrate his or her filial piety toward parents (and parents-in-law), and a sibling needs to guide or support. This feminine love emerges through the informal and domestic training that a woman receives in her own household.

God surely has intentionally designed women with both child-bearing and life-nurturing qualities. Through the birthing and nurturing processes, they experience physical, emotional, and sometimes spiritual pain and suffering. God made them strong enough to love, yet at the same time sensitive enough to feel, nurture, and complement men. The qualities of the femininity of God are the sensitivity of heart and the power of love (God's love) that women possess. Thereby, a man can experience God's love through her; he can experience God through her femininity. Rev. Moon expressed this explicitly in his speech about the feminine side of God:

Women do not exist to confront or struggle against men. Rather, they exist as individual embodiments of truth, representing one side of the two aspects or dual characteristics of the invisible Creator, God. In other words, women represent one half of God's internal and external characteristics, and one half of God's original nature.[\[16\]](#)

God's Love is the source of True Love. Man and woman experience love, joy and happiness through True Love in marriage. Husband and wife should treat each other with honor, dignity, respect, and admiration, to the extent of an ambassador from heaven with the authority of having been sent from God. Nora Spurgin, an early motherly figure in the Unification movement, also worked as the editor of *Blessing Quarterly* magazine, one of the early church publications. She quoted psychologist Dr. Custodiosa Sanchez who said that husbands ought to look at their wives as ambassadors from God: "She, your wife, is a special envoy from God with love and life, not your wife."[\[17\]](#) If a man understands that, he definitely would treat his wife very specially every day, because he would know she is sent from heaven by God. He can experience God through her; he experiences her femininity that is from God, the Divine.

In addition, as Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon expresses, women carry a very important mission which is sacred and for which there are no substitutes, that they play civic and lineal roles for their families and communities:

Women play a sacred role that is both civic and lineal. We carry the future of humanity in our wombs; we give birth to and nurture the unlimited potential of human beings. If the role of mothers is ignored, where will we find human hope and prospects for the future?[\[18\]](#)

Challenges and Limitation that Women Leaders Face in Church Ministry

Honestly speaking, the ultimate aim of this discussion is for godly women to have equal opportunities to express their love, service, and care to Heavenly Parent as well as to express their compassion, commitment, devotion, and dedication to their commissions which have been entrusted to them by heaven. In so doing, they definitely face challenges and struggles. The following are some of the challenges and struggles that women face while performing their leadership in ministry. These points are based on my research interviews with three Unificationist women leaders in 2018.[\[19\]](#)

Challenge #1: Qualifications – Perception of Being Unqualified

The perception that women leaders are inexperienced and unqualified due to lack of field experience and lack of seminary-based education is apparent among the general membership of the church. In reality, we can see the growing trend of female leadership in the Unification Church, especially with the second-generation women's participation in church ministry.

Women leaders need to be equipped with both theological and field-related training for the purpose of being capable to edify, foster, and facilitate the older generation as well as to raise up the younger generations in church ministry. Hence, there is a need for religious education training programs, projects, and seminars that would enhance their theological understanding in church doctrine, ritual, and ceremonial practices as well as advance their qualifications for leadership in church ministry. Women leaders in the field should be encouraged to participate in such training programs.

Once women leaders decide to serve the church community with the assurance of God's commission to them and their firm commitment to their ministries, they have to decide whether or not to further pursue their interest and invest time and energy to educate themselves in church ministry. They may be encouraged to receive higher, official education for further theological training, to enrich their spiritual cultivation, and to enhance their skills in interreligious dialogue and ecumenism.

Currently there are two venues that offer seminary-based Unification-thinking-related education that is aligned with True Parents' teaching and Unification theology.[\[20\]](#) The church has been opening its door for women leadership more than before; hence, religious education for women's leadership has been promoted. Both empirical education in the field and academic, seminary-based education are emphasized in equipping women leaders for the modern-day Unification ministry. By promoting seminary-based education and creating more religious education curricula and programs, both of these church-affiliated seminaries are recruiting both women and men students and enhancing the accessibility and availability of seminary-based education for the sake of training more Unification Church professional clergy.[\[21\]](#)

Challenge #2: The Gender Issue – Related to Expectations

Historically speaking, women have been expected to stay home, take care of children, do the household chores, and serve their husbands and parents, sometimes including serving parents-in-law. Apparently, these days society is shaping up the image that working outside of home is significant for women to feel self-worth and be self-sustaining. By the year 1990, women had taken two-thirds of the millions of new jobs in the information field. At the same time, the population of single parent households has risen dramatically since 1980, and now single mothers head 29 percent of the households in the United States, according to Letha Scanzoni.[\[22\]](#) That means that men no longer are expected to be the sole bread-earner for the family. In fact, women are the sole bread-earners for their families in many cases. This situation happens to Blessed families as well. Blessed wives sometimes are in the situation of being the decision-makers and running the 'business' of the whole family, including taking care of the affairs of their parents-in-law. Oftentimes, the whole family is depending on Blessed wives for finances, the morale of the family, church-related duties, employment opportunities, children's schooling, family budget and diet, and so on. Overall, the women who are "housewives" are working hard, often become exhausted, and have not been sufficiently appreciated and supported by their families.

Women have been expected to take on roles in parenting and childcare in any situation or environment, whether domestic or public. However, in recent decades there has been a gradual shift in thinking; women want to work outside of home. In the workplace, they want to have a sense of dignity, self-worth, and self-confidence, and they demand not to be treated inappropriately or without respect. In general, there has been a strong tendency for male leaders

to assign a woman leader to be in charge of making coffee and providing snacks for meetings, cleaning up messes in the kitchen or other hospitality chores in any given situation. This is a gender-biased expectation. A well-trained, qualified woman leader in the church should be treated as a professional, since she is contributing her best capacity and ability in the field of her expertise to the church community and deserves to receive respect and appreciation in return.

As is often observed, some men have a hard time receiving words of guidance or consultation from women. They do not believe that women are capable of consulting, teaching, lecturing, or preaching. To such men, it is not acceptable for women to be the ones who are able to share the love of God with them. They do not believe that women can or should preach to them, because they do not believe that women are intellectually capable to do so. Hence it is true that women have different kinds of struggles in communication than what men experience. This is also due to gender expectations.

Moreover, Renee Adams points out that the way women express themselves and how they are viewed are different from how men express themselves and how they are viewed.^[23] Adams explains that there is a bias which often comes to light in the way that women are described. If a woman is competent, she does not appear to be nice enough. But, if she appears to be nice, she is considered to be less competent. If a woman defends herself, she is often considered to be aggressive or ambitious, a negative sign; but when a man does the same, he is considered to be confident and strong, a positive sign. Unfortunately, society already has the stereotype of how women leaders should behave, which is different from the expectation that already exists for men leaders. It is fair to say that some men have a hard time to overcome this gender bias regarding women, and even some women do so toward other women.

Challenge #3: No Role Model – Related to Acceptance

A big struggle that women leaders face is in relation to acceptance; they feel that there is no role model for them to look up to or learn from. They have had to start out from scratch, inventing something from their experience, and sometimes unfortunately it had to be by trial-and-error. If there is no existing system, then they have to create or invent something new.

The drawback of the current church situation is that lay women leaders are not given enough opportunities to participate in ministry formally on the local level. The leadership of the local churches has a tendency to continuously depend upon men clergy to execute church administrative roles and functions, leaving out godly and talented women. Women in the male-dominated environment are often ignored, without support and assistance. Hence, lay women leaders naturally have the tendency to lose self-confidence, without realizing that they too have the potential and talent to be leaders. Low self-confidence leads to a negative self-image; a negative self-image results in facing internal challenges and feeling threatened by the non-supportive criticism and opinion coming from outside of one's immediate surroundings. Women leaders in a male-dominant, patriarchal church community can experience this kind of challenge from male clergy, which comes out of the man's ego, chauvinism, or arrogance.

Another kind of challenge that is related to role acceptance, is called the *role congruity of prejudice*.^[24] Alice Eagly and Linda Carlie point out that this can be found in feminine leadership on the local church level. According to Eagly and Carlie, role congruity of prejudice is demonstrated when there is a belief that a woman should not be a leader. For instance, when people expect to see a man, not a woman, as pastor, a woman in that role is judged more harshly than a man. She is treated and judged differently just because she is a woman. Women get questioned and challenged more, due to being women. They have to work harder for their credibility.

Women leaders are confronted with different stereotypes of anticipation from their 'central figure' or superior in their work environment, which puts them in a confused and frustrated state in which they do not know how to behave. Sometimes, women confront themselves with the outside perception of what they are supposed to be, how they are supposed to look, to dress in a certain way, or to talk in a certain way. Amid all the expectations, they have nobody whom they can turn to for guidance or help. There are no female mentors or role models in their specific field or ministry to follow; this particularly was the case in the era of an early church movement. Now the situation is improving to some extent.

Challenge #4: The Multi-Tasking Struggle – Balance Between Church and Family Responsibilities

Most of Unificationist women, whether first-generation or second-generation, but especially first-generation sisters in the early movement, have experienced this kind of situation, having to go witnessing at the same time as being the bread-earner and care-taker for their families. As the first generation have grown older, they now have time and energy to care for other families' second generation and young people in their wider church community besides their own.

In reality, genuinely successful women leaders, regardless of age, are facing many tasks and challenges in their daily lives. They have to determine their own practices, including children's education and up-bringing, family diet, time and money management, saving, budget, and debts. These are the domestic domain of women's leadership within the family. Often, God also calls women to do more for the family ministry of the church. With their talents and experiences dealing with and relating to their own family, the domestic domain of God's providence, these women have naturally developed skills in counseling for the pastoral care domain of church ministry. They have the passion and experience, and often they take initiative and dive into that part of pastoral care as their personal ministry.

Women leaders confront the challenges of multi-tasking. Effective leaders do and learn as they go, simultaneously managing projects, consulting on the phone, and working on the budget. They have learned and still are learning how to juggle many things at once, and expect a decent outcome in efficiency and effectiveness. Unificationist women, both first-generation and second-generation Blessed wives, have labored alongside of men in their work in church ministry. In reality, it can be a more burdensome and unappreciated task for the women, especially in cases when the congregation size is small or in the early church movement. For instance, a pastors' wife is supposed to be the bookkeeper, cook in the kitchen for the meal after Sunday Service, and be one of the teachers for Sunday School. Sometimes she has to clean up the bathrooms on Saturday before Sunday arrives, especially when the job seems to be assigned to nobody.

Within women's ministry, a crucial necessary element is how to conduct a balancing act while facing multiple tasks and demands from domestic and church domains, between family and church responsibilities. While facing these challenges and struggles, they need some kind of moral support and encouragement to be strengthened and supported spiritually. Ideally that support should be coming from their spouses.

Spousal input and emotional encouragement can be their backbone support and heavenly boost from above. Moreover, if women leaders as well as their spouses can transform this heavy-duty burden and often hectic working schedule into heavenly-thanksgiving and heartistic-appreciation to their families and church communities, it would truly be a big blessing to all.

Trying to find balance between church ministry-related demands and family obligations may be more difficult for women in ministry than for women in other vocations, simply because of the way the ministry is structured. According to Zikmund et. al., married women leaders are much more likely than their spouses to bear the major responsibilities for children.^[25] This burden may have implications for how women leaders carry out their ministerial duties.^[26] Women leaders are expected to perform their vocational duties as well as care for their homes and children. With these obligations of women leaders—trying to be mothers for their children, wives to care for their husbands, career women—there will be a strong tendency toward “holy burnout.”^[27] Carroll, Hargrove and Lummis further believe that women's involvement in church pastoral ministry “reveal[s] a pattern of ghettoization, whereby they have been placed into the least desirable of positions.”^[28]

Emerging Women's Ministry in the Complementary Relationship (CHIP)

Woman is not independent from man, nor is man independent from woman. Based on the Bible, the first man and woman were created for each other. They are meant to need each other, want each other and help each other, and therefore, together they become one. In the creation of Adam (mankind) in God's image, the Bible says that “He created *him*; male and female He created *them* (Gen. 1:27). Man and woman are different, “male and female,” “them”; but they are also one. In man and woman, although they may have different roles and maybe also functions, there is equality in value, personhood and spirit, as Elizabeth Inrig described.^[29] According to God's divine design, the unity of the first man and woman would give the Creator great delight.

The Unification theological view of the complementary relationship between man and woman teaches that man is not superior to woman, nor woman superior to man, and that woman should not experience subjugation to man. It is a relationship in which both man and woman experience

the loving, caring, harmonious, supportive, interdependent, reciprocal, correspondent, interconnected, and interrelated relationship to each other. The principle of complementarity in Unification theology is focused on mutual accord and complementarity between men and women.

This relationship is founded on the fact that man and woman receive the equal Love of God (equality of God's Love), and as co-bearers of God's image (equality of personality)[30] they relate to each other maturely and collaboratively. Wives naturally surrender to their husbands who are loving, caring and understanding. Husbands live for the sake of their wives who are considerate and collaborative with them.

If wife and husband are equal partners in ministry, then they must be companions to each other while they journey physically together in their spiritual search, pursuit, and advancement.[31] They are in a significantly complementary relationship, in which the man and woman stand side-by-side harmoniously. Indeed, through this guiding principle, they co-exist in a harmonious, interdependent, and complementary relationship. I would like to characterize this principle as the Complementary and Harmonious Interdependence Principle (CHIP).[32] This relational principle should be exercised in a spiritually-oriented unit, such as in a family environment or in a church ministry.

This principle of CHIP explains the relationship between man and woman as a working relationship that is meant to be positive, effective and beneficial, specifically in the family and church community, and is aligned with Unification thinking. It is the guiding principle and driving force for women in performing their roles at home, in the church and the workplace. It calls for women to relate with men and work in balance with men effectively and collaboratively for the benefit of the whole.

The feminine aspect of God enhances and supports women's ministry. Women can participate in the church ministry and spiritually fight a good fight like men do. But more than that, they can embrace the discouraged and lost, reach out to the weak and disabled, comfort the isolated and unappreciated, and provide unconditional care and support to a bigger church community. The church needs what a mother's heart can provide. Women leaders can bring motherly perspectives and gifts to their church pastoral care. They can provide a more balanced and collaborative relationship and environment. Together with men leaders of the church, they are the agents to bring positive change, harmony, cooperation, complementarity, and a team spirit and dynamics to the church ministry as a whole.

Looking at the nature of ministries, whether in church ministry or personal ministry, some seem to be more fitting for women leaders, such as older women ministering to single women or younger women. Others seem more fitting for men leaders, such as older men counseling other men or younger men. But all ministries are significant and essential to the life of the church.

The church needs to equip qualified women and men for carrying out the church's crucial mission and ministries, as well as their own personal ministries and services. The church needs both women and men complementing each other according to their gender strengths and characteristics, making the whole church community strong in faith and spiritually enriched to an extent that is beyond what either men or women alone could accomplish without their counterparts. Men and women are created equally and meant to work together harmoniously and effectively, and they recognize the mutual need for each other in teaching, shepherding, pastoring, caring, evangelizing, ministering, and any other dynamic aspects of ministries of the church; this is what CHIP is meant to be on the church ministry level.

Recognizing Women's Role and Functions in Heavenly Tribal Messiah Ministry

In the Unification Church community, more and more blessed couples are being encouraged to invest themselves in their families and tribes as their personal ministry, and to love them and serve them with God's love and care. They are to live their lives for the sake of their families and tribes on the foundation of love for God, love for people, and love for their nation. The Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry is the ministry for the blessed families to serve their families and tribes, striving to reach the ideal of being parents to their tribes.[33] A heavenly tribal messiah is to walk the path as a messiah to their tribes and inherit the tradition for their tribes, to bless and convert their lineage, and to guide them in order to form ideal families. Together with their tribal families, they are to build a community of tribes which are restored, blessed and inheriting the heavenly tradition.

Of course, there are challenges and difficulties in the practical and operational aspects of conducting a Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry. They can be overcome when wife and husband function together as a team, recognizing that women and men are “co-laborers and co-workers” of God’s providence, serving the whole through a true complementary reality of the joint endeavor of the sacred Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry.

There is a substantial difference between the clergy couple’s relationship and the relationship between couples in general. The relationship between the clergy couple is much more intimate, meeting-of-the-mind, in-the-same-rhythm; their working paces have to be matched, balanced, harmonious, and complementary with each other and closely connected and spiritually-oriented. Sometimes the clergy couple can find that they are more like friends to each other than in a couple relationship, because they constantly have the sense that they are on the mission together, more than being romantic to each other. In their working relationship, rather than looking for perfection in each other’s characters and personal habits, they are supporting each other in order to be spiritually-providing and supportively-guiding in giving pastoral care to the people who depend on them. To some extent they walk in a lonely and pioneering ministerial journey. This makes the women leaders strong through the difficulties and hardships in their leadership roles. It results in the mentality of being hardworking and strong in reality, in order to establish balanced, supportive, and credible cooperation and collaboration in their joint ministry.

With this mentality in the Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry, the clergy couple working together and providing spiritual, emotional, as well as physical support to each other, can be in an intensive relationship. Because clergy couple ministry is the ministry that takes two people working together mentally, spiritually and physically, it takes lots of coordination between the two. It takes discipline and efforts to put aside one’s own concepts, bias, or even prejudice, overlook the other partner’s negative habits or shortcomings, and at the same time to be prayerful and vigilant conscientiously to care, support, and sustain each other for the sake of the spiritual needs and growth of others, the objects of their shepherding. It is a life-giving and sacrificial endeavor to invest in any such joint ministry. Their joint effort contributes to the bigger and higher purpose, which is the essence of the ministerial care of the church. In this sense, one can optimistically say that it is an intimate and rewarding experience.

In general, clergy couples go beyond their unique differences, unite with each other for their common mission and goal, and focus on their strengths, skills, and talents in a collaborative, cooperative, and complementary fashion for the purpose of accomplishing their joint mission. The Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry in the Unification Church is an exemplary opportunity for blessed couples to work together as a clergy couple, support each other in their ministry and mission, and work out the details of living together productively and effectively, regardless of their differences in approach, means, and strategies.

Conclusion

God created women in the special and unique positions of daughter, wife, and mother, appointed them with honorable roles and functions, and anointed them with filial, loyal, virtuous, and compassionate qualities to fulfill their responsibilities and accomplish their missions in the purpose of creation. That is to say, women work together with men as the co-bearers of the image of God, and collaborate with men for God’s will to be accomplished on this earth.

With a motherly nurturing nature, women are taking up their privilege, honor, and tasks to voluntarily pursue the noble mission of healing, comforting, encouraging, and nurturing. This starts with their own families first, then their church communities. By carrying out church ministry, such as the ministry of Heavenly Tribal Messiah, they make their best efforts at reaching out and breaking through the barriers that exist in the past and present, to build better relationships for the future. Because women are playing important roles in harmonizing, loving, and caring, in order to bring healing, peace and harmony, and erase hostility and hard feelings in their surroundings, they are agents for peace.

Just by taking a look at the congregation on any given Sunday Service at the Unification Church, as well as in most Christian denominational churches, we know that women compose the majority of the membership. They are not just sitting in the pews; they are also the backbone of the church, not only in the United States but also internationally. They make up the majority of the volunteers on the local church level. “Any church that excludes women from leadership roles is clearly missing out on 50 percent of the potential, talents, and wisdom of its adherents,” said Kate Kelly.^[34]

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has been encouraging women leaders to take up their leadership in this “age of women” era, to serve and to lead:

The age of women has arrived. Now we women throughout the world should create a movement for the practice of true love. It begins by embracing our husbands and properly educating our children and it expands as we women take up leadership roles in political arena, in business, in culture and the arts, in society and so on to work for world peace.^[35]

In this era of women, Unificationist women have such a privilege to follow Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon’s exemplary leadership to conduct their personal and/or public ministries that manifest godly empathy and sympathy, and express Heavenly Mother’s heart, love, and wisdom. It truly is an eye-opening experience for women who know that they are now assured by God of their value, who are assured that their motherly nature and capacity are such a special gift from heaven. Moreover, women are equipped with Heavenly Mother’s compassion within their femininity, which draws them closer to God’s Heart and Love even as it resonates with their husbands and embraces their children. Endowed with such love and compassion, they have the higher calling for the ministry of the church, which recognizes the emerging leadership of women. The age of the Pacific Rim being the age of women, as Rev. Moon talked about numerous times, it is time to understand the Heart of God in Her femininity, even though it had been suppressed for a long time. Women have much to offer in this regard; it probably is the time to recognize it.

Through the Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry, women’s perspectives and insights are taken into consideration. The more gifted women leaders involve themselves in this shared Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry, the more inspiration and resources can emerge to resolve the issues facing the church as well as the society. The church needs women with diverse spiritual and worldly gifts, wisdom, and talents to meet the needs and massive demands of church life as well as the social life of this 21st century.

Notes

[1] The Unification Church is formally known as Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) or the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC) in the USA.

[2] For the account of the inauguration of the Abel Women’s UN, see *Pyeong Hwa Gyeong: A Selection of True Parents’ Speeches* (Seoul, Korea: Seonghwa Publications, 2014), 982.

[3] Sun Myung Moon, “Inauguration of the Abel Women’s UN,” at Cheongshim Peace World Center on July 16, 2012, <http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon12/SunMyungMoon-120616a.htm> (accessed on Sept 12, 2019).

[4] *Vision 2020* was mentioned in the Joint Worship Service for the Victory of Vision 2020 on May 5, 2013 (the Korean holiday Children’s Day), by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. In that speech she proclaimed and announced the start of a seven-year course for the substantiation of Cheon Il Guk—God’s Kingdom on earth. The blessed families of the Unification Church communities are encouraged to inherit the tradition that True Parents have exemplified and to fulfill the mission of tribal messiah in order to achieve national and global restoration. See <http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/HakJaHanMoon-14/HakJaHan-140816.pdf> (accessed on April 19, 2018).

[5] Sun Myung Moon, *New Hope: Twelve Talks by Sun Myung Moon* (New York, NY: HSA-UWC, 1982), 51.

[6] Ye Jin Moon elaborates by saying, “The term ‘Heavenly Parent’ necessarily implies that God is equally Heavenly Mother as well as Heavenly Father, for in Korean the word ‘parent’ means both father and mother.” From her article “The Need to Recover Gender Balance to Understand God as Both Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother,” *Journal of Unification Studies*, Vol. 16 (2015): 65.

[7] Andrew Wilson, “Heavenly Mother,” *Journal of Unification Studies*, Vol. 10 (2009): 73-104.

[8] See *Cheon Seong Gyeong; Anthology of True Parents’ Teachings*, (Seoul, Korea: Seonghwa Publications, 2013), 719.

- [9] *Wolli Wonbon* (원리원본) is Rev. Moon's first manuscript of the Divine Principle or "The Original Text of the Divine Principle." He began writing the text at the end of April 1951 and completed it on May 10, 1952. On it, as described by Andrew Wilson, "there is considerable emphasis on the genders within God and God's position as Heavenly Parent—Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father." <https://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Wilson/Wilson-160223.pdf>.
- [10] *Cheon Seong Gyeong*, 24.
- [11] SunHak Institute of History. *True Mother Hak Ja Han Moon: An Anthology 1, Global Unity Through True Parents*, (Seoul, Korea: Sung Hwa Publishing, Inc. 2018), 319.
- [12] Sunhak Institute of History. *True Mother Hak Ja Han Moon: An Anthology 1, Global Unity Through True Parents*, 319
- [13] Sunhak Institute of History. *True Mother Hak Ja Han Moon: An Anthology 1, Global Unity Through True Parents*, 319.
- [14] Sun Myung Moon, *Master Speaks 2* (New York, NY: HSA-UWC, 1982), 2/9/65:6, cited in *Moon Sisters, Krishna Mothers, Rajneesh Lovers: Women's Roles in New Religions* by Susan J. Palmer (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 78.
- [15] *Pyeong Hwa Gyeong: A Selection of True Parents' Speeches*, (Seoul, Korea: Seonghwa Publications), 951.
- [16] *Pyeong Hwa Gyeong: A Selection of True Parents' Speeches*, 950-1.
- [17] Nora M. Spurgin, ed., "Homeward Bound," *Blessing Quarterly: An Educational Journal for the Blessed Families of the Unification Movement*, HSA-UWC, Vol. 7, winter (1992): 1-28.
- [18] Sunhak Institute of History, *True Mother Hak Ja Han Moon: An Anthology 2, A Model for the Ideal Family and World Peace*, (Seoul, Korea: Sung Hwa Publishing, Inc. 2018), 125.
- [19] I was privileged to have the opportunity to interview 3 prominent American women leaders for a research study on their ministry experiences in the Unification Church. This qualitative case research study is based on field-based, in-depth, semi-structured interviews which explore in narrative form their personal experiences as Unificationist women leaders as well as their relational and social interactions with others. These interview experiences allowed me to savor and share with them on their precious experiences, intimate moments and emotional memories.
- [20] They are the Unification Theological Seminary in New York, USA, and Sun Hak Universal Peace Graduate University in Seorak, Gapyeong, South Korea. In addition, the Sun Moon University in South Korea also offers theologically related studies and courses.
- [21] See the suggestion of exploring and linking a formal procedure or regulation that ties leadership appointment to seminary education by Dr. Tyler Hendricks in his article "Ordination and the Unification Tradition," *Journal of Unification Studies*, Vol. 10, (2009): 1-32.
- [22] Letha D. Scanzoni and Nancy A. Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be: Biblical Feminism for Today*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 30.
- [23] Renee Adams, "Women in the Boardroom and Their Impact on Governance and Performance." www.responsible-investor.com/i/Women_in_the_boardroom.pdf mages/uploads (accessed on Oct. 12, 2018).
- [24] Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carlie, *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 2007).
- [25] Barbara Brown Zikmund, Adair Lummis, and Patricia Mei Yin Chang, *Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 1-55.
- [26] See Paul Perl, "Gender and Mainline Protestant Pastors' Allocation of Time to Work Tasks," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 41, (2002): 169-178.
- [27] See John A. Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982). Also, a dissertation written by Nancy Jo Jacobs, *From Divine Calling to Holy Burnout: the Relationship between Social Interest, Empowerment, and Burnout Among Episcopal Clergy*, Ph. D. diss. Seattle Pacific University, 2005.
- [28] Jacobs, *From Divine Calling to Holy Burnout*, 132.

[29] Elizabeth Inrig, *Release Your Potential: Using Your Gifts in a Thriving Women's Ministry*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2001), 90-92.

[30] Unification Thought Institute, *Essentials of Unification Thought: The Head-Wing Thought*, (Seoul, Korea: Unification Thought Institute, 1992).
<https://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Books/Euth/Euth06-03.htm> (accessed on Dec. 13, 2018).

[31] A good biblical example is the case of Priscilla and Aquila, a husband and wife team in the days of Paul's ministry (Romans 16:3-4).

[32] CHIP: Complementary and Harmonious Interdependence Principle is a unique term created by the author of this article.

[33] Heavenly Tribal Messiah ministry is a focused providential activity in the Unification Church community. See "*What Is a Heavenly Tribal Messiah*," Heavenly Tribal Messiah Collection 1 (of books 1-5), (Seoul, Korea: Heavenly Tribal Messiah Academy, 2018), pp. 4-16.

[34] Quoted in "15 Christian Women Get Real About the Role of Women in the Church" by Carol Kuruvilla. www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/15-christian-women-get-real-about-the-role-of-women-in-the-church_us_56e1dd0ee4b0860f99d84e80 (accessed May 16, 2018). Kelly is the founder of the ordain women movement in Mormonism. She also says that societal parity for women will never be fully realized until women are spiritually integrated as equals into every major faith tradition in the world.

[35] Universal Peace Federation, *World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon* (World Scripture II), edited by Andrew Wilson (2007), p. 1014.