

In the Moon church - diary entries - Cyprus 1983-4, New York-1981

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A dissident member of the Unification Church – 1983

Excerpt from my diary (unedited, uncorrected) – Nicosia, Cyprus, August 23, 1983:

... I joined the movement in New York in March 1975 – more than 8 years ago. My commitment has been somewhat off and on -- never very strong. I believe mostly this has to do with my own personality, the relative weakness of my character, rather than with the church. Right now I would say that maybe about 80 percent of my problems as a rather rebellious, dissident member of the Unification Church are due to my own shortcomings in one way or another, while the remaining 20 percent of the problems are due to aspects of the church, its leaders (including Reverend Moon himself) and its way of doing things that I honestly disagree with, or, in some cases, cannot understand.

Some of these latter problems, especially those having to do with Rev. Moon himself, might easily be resolved, I think, if I had a chance of gaining a better understanding of Rev. Moon and his thinking. Just listening to what he says or reading his speeches and hearing anecdotes from admirers about his life won't do. In fact it tends to do just the opposite. I find him extremely arrogant, self-centered and callous. I believe, however, it is certainly possible that I would feel reassured about him if I could just meet him personally and talk to him about things of concern to me -- just to see how he reacts and really to get a feeling for what kind of person he is in private.

I know him only through the accounts of his life given by all too obvious, starry-eyed admirers whom I cannot trust, and through his public speeches, quite a few of which I attended. In these public speeches to crowds of church members who obviously admire and glorify him, he often appears to me to be gloating over his success and basking in the admiration and veneration by members, not at all humble or giving, loving, kind, or anything like that. Yet I grant that both through my own distorted perspective (due to my shortcomings, my jealousy or things like that) and through the need for him to address the needs of a great many people of different character simultaneously in a speech like that, he appears different from the man he really is. How different? How can I see him in a way that he can really serve as an example, a guide, a leader, yes, a messiah to me? This I don't know.

I did get what seems to have been a glimpse of a different Rev. Moon when he briefly asked me a few questions in English in front of a thousand other members during the matching in Seoul on 10 October 1982 before taking me to Tomoko and indicating that he suggested her as a mate and wife for me. It was a very brief, uncertain glimpse -- but I will remember it. And I am sure that getting to know Tomoko will give me some clues as to whether this match -- made by Rev. Moon -- was really inspired by God. Of course I have to be objective to be able to judge that. I do have a very good feeling about it all, and about Tomoko, which is why I do feel grateful towards Rev. Moon. But I still can't grasp the whole thing. Many other feelings are in the way. For some reason, which I never expected, I feel that Tomoko is the best person to be my wife -- and I felt this way right from the beginning. Tomoko is certainly not the most beautiful girl I have seen or known. She is pretty in a simple, unsophisticated and natural way -- not what I would call beautiful.

Beauty is something I like very much to see, and I have, in the past, fallen madly in love with quite a few girls that I considered truly beautiful and that I felt very strongly attracted to in a sexual way. It still happens -- although I could not fall in love the same way anymore -- because part of the emptiness which I felt at that time (having no mate at all) is now filled (now I do have a mate, although she is thousands of kilometers away in Japan). My love was, needless to say, never answered, unrequited, because I was simply too awkward about the whole thing every time.

Reflection on why I joined the Unification Church – 1983

Excerpt from my diary – Nicosia, Cyprus, August 27, 1983:

... When I think about how I decided to join the Unification Church -- which I did around 24 March 1975, after having heard about the movement for the first time only 18 days earlier, on 6 March 1975 in New York City -- I realize that to a large extent the decision was not really my own. -- I was interested in the teaching -- the Divine Principle -- and in fact I found it to be the most satisfying theory explaining God, man's relationship to God and why God needed man (Divine Principle is -- to my knowledge up to this day -- the best and by far the most plausible answer to this particular question, possibly the single most important question to me, personally), as well as the occurrence of spiritual phenomena and their connection with the physical world and the mystery of Jesus Christ (I was raised as a Christian, Catholic in fact).

It also provided at least some sketchy elements of a plausible vision for the future of this world -- which hardly any other religion or philosophy that I am aware of does. At the same time, Divine Principle -- which Rev. Moon says he "discovered" -- also provides a concept of eternal justice (a subject which is extremely important to me -- in fact, the question about eternal justice is the second most important question about everything in my mind, after the question about why God needs man) and discards the insane Christian and Islamic notion about an eternal hell. This notion of an eternal hell is the one thing in Christianity which I rejected most.

An eternal hell -- eternal punishment of any kind -- makes no sense at all. Eternal hell for anybody, even the worst of criminals, and Satan (as the originator and master of evil in the spiritual plane is called in the Divine Principle -- which draws heavily on the Bible as well as on some Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist concepts), would mean a major failure -- and an eternal failure -- on the part of God. I cannot accept this or else I could not accept the traditional monotheistic concept of God. I prefer to think that the concept of a loving, compassionate and merciful (Islam) and somehow indirectly almighty God as the creator of our world is indeed my own concept and understanding of God -- so there simply is no room for such a thing as eternal punishment.

Also, God cannot be truly almighty in the strictest and immediate sense of the word -- because otherwise the world would not be in the state it is in right now. But I believe God is ultimately almighty, meaning God will and must at some point in the future be able to straighten out the world, which logically -- to me -- depends on the good parts of most humans gaining the upper hand in the struggle against their (own) bad parts. ...

...I joined the church to some extent because there were people in it who seemed to have more faith in me and my capabilities that I myself did -- something which intrigued me. they kind of coaxed me into joining....

Diary, Friday 7 October 1983 (still Nicosia): ...To explain the factors which I dislike and disagree with in the Unification Church: First of all, I disagree with the authoritarian style which Rev. Moon has imposed and which causes many church members to behave in an intolerant manner (in other words, it encourages intolerance -- although it does not directly cause it, since those members may have such an inclination by themselves) and promotes a kind of elitism. Maybe this is because Rev. Moon is misunderstood by the members -- I don't know.

Too many times, though, I notice that some members become like "Big Brother," invade other people's privacy (they do not respect privacy at all -- which is very bad -- and they do not even respect another person's basic human dignity -- which is unfortunately quite common and often worse in the church than it tends to be outside of it -- because church fanatics have no inhibitions whatsoever in these things -- they believe God is on their side) and criticize others in a condescending, contemptuous way. This authoritarianism also leads church members and top church leaders (like Col. Bo Hi Pak) to support political causes which I totally disagree with -- such as support for fascist-type dictators in Latin America and elsewhere, only because they are considered "anticommunist."

Politically, I find myself disagreeing with the church on many important points now -- even though for some time I had accepted their arguments. But my political views changed gradually over a period of several years, until today, when my views are much closer to what they were before I joined the church -- except that I am now much better informed and no more as naive about the Soviet Union as I was then.

Cultural communities to replace nation states -- diary 1984

Short excerpt from a very long entry in my diary on 17 November 1984, Nicosia, Cyprus: ...On a different subject: I feel I must record something to explain my feelings about politics and our church's involvement with it, because much of what I have written in these pages could give a false impression that I advocate more political involvement by our church. As a matter of fact, I really believe politics as a whole should be abolished as soon as possible. I have long been radically opposed to the present world system of sovereign nation states. I think they should be gradually abolished in favor of cultural communities. I believe there should be a kind of world federation of communities based not on the idea of sovereign territory under their control (because that is what the present nation states are all about -- they are simply concepts of territorial sovereignty, the people coming second to the land as the determining factor of a community; the only permanent aspect of a nation state is its control of a certain piece of land, which, more than anything else -- more than the people and their culture, because they are never truly homogeneous or even fixed -- actually identifies that nation state) but on communities with internal ties of a cultural or some other kind of social nature.

The whole idea of "territorial integrity," even the whole idea of an international system, international law, based on "sovereign states," is, in my view, medieval and does not belong in the 21st century, even though that century may be over before they are abolished. At the very least, I hope we can move

decisively in that direction long before that century is over, even though it will likely take several centuries to complete the process. I am actually, and have always been, an anarchist at heart. I simply realize, however, that the world is not ready (yet) for the kind of peaceful anarchy which I have in mind, a world without politics, without bureaucracy, without governments, without nations, only cultural communities which cooperate and learn from each other. Today, when we say "anarchy," we immediately think "law of the jungle." But this is not necessarily the only meaning of that concept – that meaning is merely a consequence of the present state of the human soul or heart.

I believe that, ultimately, no worldly leader will be needed – that a worldly hierarchy is really not necessary for a truly mature humankind. – I don't know if our church agrees with this idea. In general, the church actually emphasizes hierarchy very much, as an extension of the hierarchy in a family between parents and children. – But this idea of anarchy, of abolishing governments and nation states, is very much my own. I believe that a relationship to God is really first and foremost an individual affair, and only in the second instance a family affair, and beyond that as well. Maybe, in a spiritual sense, there will always be different levels which people are at – and there will be in some ways a kind of hierarchy implicit or inherent in this. But this does not need to have any kind of worldly trappings – and it should not. Any kind of respect – beyond the general respect for universal human dignity in all people – shown another person should be voluntary, and not enforced by some form of worldly authority and instruments thereof. +++

From my diary in the Moon church – New York 1981

The following text was copied directly (without any corrections) from a handwritten diary entry in my Thai school notebook. The entries in that notebook cover the period between my stay in Bangkok from 4 November 1979 until the first of February 1980 and my second (½-year) and third (1-year) stays in New York, ending at the beginning of the year 1982:

Monday, November 2, 1981 -- New York.

My attitude towards the Unification Church at this time: My feelings about this movement, of which I am still a member (have been since March 1975; I first met a member of the church in New York on March 6, 1975; I had never heard of the church before) although I have many disagreements with it, are mixed and constantly in a state of flux. I still agree with most of the basic philosophical/ideological views of the church as they are expressed in the Divine Principle teaching. I do not know a more satisfactory philosophy or religion from my own point of view as far as both morality and logic are concerned. I consider the Principle as no more than a hypothesis, however.

It is not proven. It presents morally and logically satisfactory answers to some fundamental philosophical questions. I have tried to put it into practice. But I got mixed results, at best. Then I told myself, well, maybe I did not try hard enough, and maybe my own problems are worse than I thought. I tried harder, but I just got frustrated, because I could not become completely motivated. Instead, I became somewhat resentful. I prayed to God, but I could never really communicate with him. My prayers were not answered. And later, I began to wonder what it was all worth. As far as the other members are concerned, my brothers and sisters, the record is mixed, too.

I never had any truly good friends among them; but then I am not the kind of person who can have a deep friendship. I am not really stable in that sense. In fact, I am too changeable (the Rev. Moon says, I was told, that the devil is just like that -- like a chameleon -- always changing -- like me). I can attribute most of this -- having no friends -- to my own problems, my somewhat erratic nature, my insecurity, my weakness of character, etc. But I have also seen that members of this church who were supposed to be my leaders, or my brothers or sisters, have used my weaknesses consciously in order to exploit me -- not for their own benefit, I must rush to admit, but for what they believed was the benefit of the whole. At times, of course, they also personally benefited from this -- and then their motive was murkier.

Now, I happen to believe that each person should be responsible for their own life, and that this means each person must have the freedom to make basic decisions concerning his or her life and that it is wrong and counterproductive to pressure someone into doing something. I believe it is very bad when people try to goad others by making them feel guilty about something, or by telling them, "You will go to hell if you don't . . .," or anything like that. This kind of stuff, in different form but still basically the same, (pressure, threats, etc.) is happening very much in the church. I resent it extremely. I totally reject a God who is like that. If God is anything like that, then I will defect to his enemy's camp.

Many of the activities that the church engages in, such as the most basic fundraising and witnessing, are very difficult for me to do, because I have no desire and no incentive to do them. -- I am not doing either of those things now. I have too many doubts about God, about the church and about myself to go out and witness to others. Witnessing, in a sense, means guiding others, showing others the way. It would be totally ridiculous for me to do that now, because I don't know the way -- I cannot pretend to know the right way. I don't even really know what I want -- at least not out of the things that are available in this

world for me. -- I always vacillate between wanting to do God's will and satisfying my immediate desires.

But the problem is really that "God's will" always seems really murky, unclear to me. I ask God again and again what his will is for me now, but I don't know what kind of an answer to expect. There is never any answer at all -- a fact that has really frustrated me and made me very doubtful. I also want to know what his long-range plan is, because I can't quite figure out my own feelings about what I want to do ultimately. But, as usual, there is not the slightest hint of a response -- as if God did not exist, or did not hear me. Now, maybe I do not hear him. This is possible, too. So all I can do is continue hoping. But that is when my own immediate desires win out. This is why I vacillate. I cannot completely swing one way or the other until I either do get a clear answer from God, or I have an experience that completely shatters my belief in him.

I know very well that such an experience is very possible, as long as my faith is as weak as it is now. Right now I cannot turn against God because my conscience is too strong and I am too easily plagued with all kinds of guilt feelings. -- But if I had a really bad experience, then I could not trust him at all anymore and I would turn away from him completely because I would have to conclude that he is an evil God and I was all the time just running after a dream.

I believe the Unification Church will have to change substantially if it wants to truly guide the world. It must be broadened very much, including the teachings themselves. One single narrowly-defined culture can never dominate this world. If there is to be one world civilization, one world culture, one world ideology, it has to be very much broader, more truly encompassing and embracing -- without causing serious friction or clashes -- than what this tiny little church has now.

Maybe Rev. Moon's responsibility is just to spearhead a movement in that direction based on a certain central element of that future world civilization. But when he is gone, it will probably broaden out, with the central element still kept intact by his direct successors -- but no longer so restrictive and limited as it is now. Otherwise it just cannot work -- not in this reality. The whole thing must be based on love, not dogma. -- I so often have been angered by those Moonie zealots among us, who judge me because I don't follow the dogma. It makes me want to follow even less. They criticize me -- and others like me -- because I don't do the things I am supposed to do according to dogma.

They only criticize, not out of love, no way -- but out of sheer self-glorification. They want to say, hey you, see, I am an exemplary follower of God and Rev. Moon, I am right, I am good, I am great, I am a saint -- but you, look, you are not even doing this and that -- you need to take a lesson from me. -- This kind of thing stinks. -- But there are many people of that ilk in this church. -- I know if I were full of love and faith and close to God, this kind of thing would not bother me. The fact that it does just shows that I am very distant from God. But that is just it. Such a thing reminds me of that and it is frustrating. I feel weak then, helpless. I don't have a high opinion of myself. I have no self-confidence. I cannot say anything then. I feel paralyzed. And it only creates resentment -- resentment even against God. -- So, why do those people do it?

There are many other things that I do not like about this church. -- But I must concede that the world all around is much worse, in general. If the world as a whole were more like this church, it would still be far from good, but it would be much better and more acceptable than it is now. At least there would be no murders, no tortures, no rapes, no muggings, etc. This is why I consider the church a movement for constructive, positive change. It is certainly not the only movement like that -- and not even necessarily the best. -- A number of questions are still in my mind as to the integrity of this church and its leader, Rev. Moon. I don't exclude the possibility that I might have been fooled -- although a lot of things would be hard to explain if you thought that the church is some kind of Mafia or something. But I tend to see the church more as a boon to society here than as a threat. Any threat to society posed by this church is clearly minor compared to the real evils in the world. I think overall, the positive aspects far outweigh the negative ones -- speaking from my experience of about six years of more or less continuous activity in the church and with its newspaper, The News World. This is the reason I have remained a member, despite my quarrels with some aspects of the operation. I also hope that this culture can be broadened. I will work for that.