

Response to Dr. Mickler's assertion of the Providential Necessity of Open Blessings

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"Father was always calling on members to bring others who could unite with his own thinking, vision and standards. If there was ever a human being who refused to compromise his ideals, it was Father."

In his article asserting the [Providential Necessity of Open Blessings](#), Dr. Michael Mickler offers what I feel is an overly humanistic view of the Marriage Blessing in True Parents' tradition. Dr. Mickler's primary focus seems to be on numerical expansion of the Unificationist culture, or at least an increase of what are called "Blessed Couples".

If what True Parents are accomplishing through the Blessing were simply marrying people into the faith, as could be argued with other faith traditions, such as Christianity, the comparison might be valid. However, while Father often spoke of huge numbers and goals for blessing candidates and participants, his concern remained clearly one of quality, and personal and social transformation.

While we can cite examples of many candidates for the blessing being marginally related to the movement, and marginally educated as to the meaning of the Blessing, Father made it clear that he intended such marginal candidates to be fully educated and transformed into people who would come to hold a deep and clear commitment after receiving the blessing. Father was trying to maximize his foundation during his short physical lifetime, which is understandable, taken his Messianic responsibility and mission.

The "pre-1992" model, as described by Dr. Mickler, indicates that the conditions requisite for the blessing have somehow changed. While Father loosened the pre-requisites for blessing candidates in order that they participate, his expectations of their eventual fulfillment of the core, required qualifications never changed. When were the requirements for the 7-day fast, 3-day ceremony, indemnity stick, and blessing offering removed? There are several essential steps to the complete accomplishment of the "change of blood lineage" through the Blessing. Dr. Mickler refers to the Holy Wine Ceremony as something that "signifies" the couple's change of blood lineage. Does "signifies" mean that the Holy Wine Ceremony is seen as just one more symbolic religious ritual, like baptism?

And the other model cited by Dr. Mickler, called the "globalization model", makes reference to "marriage rededications". I would posit that this was a fabrication of the Church leadership and membership in an effort to accomplish Father's ambitious blessing goals. Only in the most liberal sense can the Marriage Blessing of True Parents be considered a "marriage rededication". This effectively puts the Marriage Blessing on the same level as traditional marriage, and downplays the real meaning and value of True Parents Blessing. I can find no evidence that Father ever used such an expression in reference to the Blessing. In contrast, leaders and members saw it as a convenient way of inviting contacts to participate in the ceremony of the Blessing, often without even a basic understanding of what it was really all about.

If Father and Mother come as the True Parents of humanity, then their spiritual authority behind the blessing makes it incomparable to other church rituals. The blessing (complete with all the required steps, where necessary – different for blessed children) was called by Father the "antidote" to the fallen lineage of humanity, a matter of "life and death". Using academic arguments to justify making it more palatable to the general public so that more people will participate in it could only be justified within the clear framework of Father's own parameters about it. The eventual total transformation of each human being has never been a negotiable item for Father. And, the full participation of each person in all of the requisite steps of the "Change of Blood Lineage" has also never been a negotiable item for Father.

As far as an "Open" Blessing being the "dialectical synthesis" to offer a humanistically more comfortable compromise to some of the challenges that are being faced, this would again seem anathema to what True Parents are all about. No one can argue that both God and Father (and Mother) are loving parents to us all, and they empathize and sympathize when individuals do not have the requisite faith and conviction to implement the ideal course of a prescribed life of faith. This applies even to their own children. Thus, there are plenty of examples when Father blessed people after allowing them to choose their own blessing partner. In some cases, the member was of an advanced age, for which there were few available potential matches. In other cases, Father allowed people to find their own partner when they could not, or would not, accept Father's match. In other cases, couples were previously married. Father even allowed controlled self-selections among second generation when he orchestrated, supervised, and personally approved each pairing in the process. There are other scenarios, as we all know. But, shall we be afraid to repeat Father's declaration that "If a person chooses his own spouse, it is the same as repeating the Fall?" Why did Father make such a strong statement, and why did he maintain the value and importance of the "Cheon Il Guk Standard Blessing" in the face of all the other variations of the process that were being

implemented in his later years? Some suggest that Father's standards changed as the providential eras progressed? I would say that his ideals never changed. And, the Principles behind his ideals never changed.

The matching by True Parents, or by the participant's own physical parents, was never prescribed simply as a means to find a marriage partner. Father clearly explained that the purpose was to remove as much "self" from the foundation of the Blessing candidate as possible. He explained that the first step in the process of the Fall was when Lucifer began to experience an exaggerated realization of "self". From that point, a cascade of wrong perspectives and decisions ensued. Father did not want people to bring a self-centered perspective into their blessing any more than necessary, acknowledging that fallen people are soaked with it, anyway, as well as the ancestral influences that all fallen people shoulder.

We all heard Father talk about the fact that the first two of God's children had no choice, of course, in who their spouse would be, and he used that platform to exclaim that "neither should we." He said that he wanted to create a new human culture which will eventually be better than it would have been if Adam and Eve had not fallen. Through this, he wanted to remove the basis for God's historical pain and suffering, so that God could eventually feel grateful that history went the way it did. That is why Father held up such a high "ideal", especially towards purity and the blessing. He said he was originally intended to bless only celibate priests and nuns, not people with compromised past lives.

Thus, we have a tendency to mix the ideal with the reality which Father had to deal with. If we use academic arguments to dismiss Father's explicitly stated prescription for the change of blood lineage, then what will we NOT eventually dismiss of True Parents' legacy when it becomes too "unpopular" and "uncomfortable" for the masses? There will soon be little left of Father's legacy, except some books on a shelf and some theological debates. Where will the transformation of humanity come from?

Some will say this is heartless legalism. Certainly, many loving exceptions must be made, especially in this difficult time in the early stages of the providence. But making exceptions of the heart is totally different than reinterpreting Father's ideal about something as essential as the Blessing and the change of blood lineage. The flood of Noah was not a popular method by which God made an initial foundation upon which to build his providence to bring His new Adam. The standard of faith that God sought from Noah and Abraham, as the foundation of His preparations to bring Jesus, was not a comfortable one. The standard of what God sought when He admonished us to "love our enemy" has not been easy to embody, as demonstrated by Cain and Abel, and by Esau and Jacob. The captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians and Assyrians was not a popular procedure by which God culled out a relatively small but righteous remnant of the Jews whom He could use to restore the Jewish traditions in preparation for Jesus to come.

Father needs quality, more than quantity, in transforming humanity. There were certainly the times of symbolic accomplishment, seemingly intent upon numbers only, but in the long run, Father's concern and goal is one of quality. Quantity without quality will be of no value to anyone.

Mother's lamentation about the exodus of youth from our movement was not a call to compromise Father's ideals for the sake of popularity. Instead, Mother founded the Universal Peace Academy, promoting the highest standard of human transformation in harmony with Father's lofty ideals.

Father did not kill himself trying to create a world in which the Marriage blessing became just another religious ceremony for people to sit through, drink the Holy Wine, and then continue to live their lives the same way they always had before. There is far too much of that already. And, Father made it perfectly clear on numerous occasions that he was not happy about it. And institutionalizing the pairing of sinless blessed children with non-blessed children would be as contrary to True Parents' providence as anything could be.

The personal and social transformations that Father is all about are not comfortable. Popularity will come through the development and implementation of far more effective techniques of conveying a profound understanding of what the Divine Principle and the Blessing are all about to the American people and to the world -- something that should be a top priority of UTS training -- rather than by compromising the very essence of True Parents' legacy. Father was always calling on members to bring others who could unite with his own thinking, vision and standards. If there was ever a human being who refused to compromise his ideals, it was Father. At the same time, he was a realist who worked with whomever he had to work with to accomplish all he could in his short lifetime.

There will always be a need to lovingly accommodate those who are not ready to allow themselves to be subject to the matching process. But, it would be an absolute mistake to confuse that accommodation with dismissal of True Parents' ideals.