

Sun Myung Moon and Meditation: a Christian Contribution

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The teacher with whom we have the closest relationship is our heart...For a person to polish his heart to the point that it becomes as clear as crystal, he absolutely must spend time in direct conversation with his heart in an environment where he is away from the world and alone with his heart. It will be a time of intense loneliness...When we isolate ourselves from the noise around us and allow our thoughts to settle, we can see into the deepest parts of our hearts. It will take a lot of time and effort to go all the way down to where the heart has settled. It will not happen in a day.
A Peace Loving Global Citizen; p.226-227

Although you worship God as the center of your faith, your understanding of God, as you know, is very vague. Then where do you start looking for Him? That question is of the utmost importance.

Where do you start? ...You should not start looking into God Himself. You should look into yourself first.
The Completed Testament Age and the Ideal Kingdom (CTAIK); p. 262-263

Father, to my knowledge, never taught a specific type of meditation, but passages, such as the above, in which he emphasizes elements of silence, solitude, letting go of thoughts and a deep level of interiority, tell us that a distinctly meditative approach to prayer was among his practices.

While meditation is often associated with traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, the practice is also deeply entrenched in ancient Christian tradition. In lay Christian practice, however, meditation has been much overlooked, perhaps dating back to the Reformation.

In recent years there has been a movement within Christianity to introduce and spread the practice of meditation, also known as contemplative prayer. Two movements have emerged with somewhat different approaches to the practice. Both have been founded and led by Catholic monks.

In contrast to non-theistic spiritual traditions, Christian meditation is understood as a form of prayer, one of intentional silence. It is both a relationship with God and a means of deepening that relationship.

I have been a practitioner of one of these approaches, known as [Centering Prayer](#), for a number of years. I understand its teaching as offering a specific method for the “polishing” Father is encouraging.

With Father Moon, Centering Prayer emphasizes silence, solitude, letting go of thoughts, and opening to one’s interior depths. In those depths, God is said to be “present and active.”

The leading advocate of Centering Prayer is a Trappist monk, Fr. Thomas Keating. He is the author of Centering Prayer's seminal work, "[Open Mind, Open Heart](#)," and is also the founder of [Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.](#) whose mission is the promotion of Centering Prayer worldwide.

Fr. Keating, like all mystics, sees interior silence as critical to the spiritual life. For him, "silence is God's first language. Everything else is a poor translation." He also quotes the observation of the 16th century mystic [St. John of the Cross](#): "The eternal Father spoke only one Word, and He spoke it in an eternal silence; and it is in silence that we hear it."

Based on the passage above in which Father speaks of isolation from noise and letting thoughts "settle," we may say he also recognized the value of silence, both without and within. And based on this passage and innumerable others we may say that he saw the inner "heart" as the place where God as Love takes up residence.

Father is certainly one of history's great mystics, and he has offered many significant teachings on the interior life. Of particular note for the present purpose is his teaching that each person has an inner "gate," and that "without going through such a gate you as a minus cannot make a relationship with God who is a plus." Father goes on to state "when the gate of God and [your gate] become perfectly one, you can feel exactly what God is feeling." (CTAIK: p.263-264)

My experience is that contemplative prayer, involving interior silence and an opening to God below the level of the thinking mind, can contribute to the process of "going through" the "gate" Father describes.

It is noteworthy that Father's reference to an internal gate resonates with teachings from the New Testament. For example, Jesus exhorts his followers to "[enter through the narrow gate](#);" and in the Book of Revelation we learn that God-Christ-Love stands "at the door," waiting (Revelation 3:20). Contemplative prayer can lead over time to deep opening of an inner gate/door and opening to union with the Love which God is.

Keating claims that the practice of contemplative prayer can lead to psychological and emotional healing. This has been my experience. The practice brings one into his/her depths where "deep calls to deep" (Psalms 42:7) and where the mysterious, subtle action of Love can bring healing to "the wounds of a lifetime" (Keating).

The practice of contemplative prayer is not an easy discipline. It requires the substantial "time and effort" that Father mentions. But for Unificationists, who hold that spiritual perfection and union with God is the first purpose of life, a discipline which supports progress toward that reality would seem to be worth a try.

If anyone would like to share thoughts on this topic, please email me at wfjj5@yahoo.com

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