

How I joined the Unification Church

Sang Hun Lee

Compiled by Taekon Lee November 16, 2015



I was born into a Confucian family and joined the church in 1956 when I was forty-three. If you look at the newspapers from that time, you will see I joined the church when we had a bad reputation. When I read the newspapers, I was not worried about the rumors but only wondered whether the teachings were the truth or not. Someone that had heard Divine Principle from Eu Hyo Won (the first church president) led me to the Unification Church headquarters.

When I was a student, for a time I had been engaged in the communist movement, so I understood their materialistic view of history. When I heard the Principle of Restoration, I realized that it was the Unificationist view of history and decided to join the church.



Teaching via hypothesis

Through joining the church, I was able to answer the various questions I had peripherally, but I was unable to fully solve problems with the Divine Principle only. Hence, I would go to Father and directly ask him questions. When several people were in the room Father would speak to everyone and occasionally what he said would answer my questions. Many members had difficulty understanding when

he spoke ideologically, but usually I was able to understand. When I asked a question, he would sometimes explain in detail to me exclusively.

What moved me deeply was not just that he perfectly and explicitly solved life's difficult questions but that he bore boundless compassionate love toward all people on earth, as well as many historical righteous people and prophets. I did not see Father as I did any worldly human being. This person had a repository of wisdom and was a holy man who possessed boundless compassionate love. He was the Messiah who had come to save human beings as God in the flesh. Therefore, deep in my heart, I had determined to systematize this person's ideology and spread it to the world, primarily as a means to testify to the world that he was the Messiah. Since many other people in the world would have questions as I had, I thought they should be saved quickly.



I noted many things during the early stages of the Unification Church; one in particular was that Father would never command someone individually. This was deeply impressive. If he wanted to command Kim so-and-so or Lee so-and-so to do something, he would speak to everyone at a meeting or a service where many were present and say what Unification Church members must do. Commanding someone directly would mean he had personally intervened. Because we are still imperfect, he could not directly intervene in human beings' lives in the imperfect stage. On the practical side alone, if Father directly commanded a member and the person responded accordingly, that would be fine, but if the member did not, an indelible condition would attach to the person for that member's entire life for not having followed Heaven's command. Even though, as they say, if one repents, the future will be better, the error for not obeying Heaven's command would remain on his spiritual résumé. Thus, I realized that Father did not directly interfere for the member's sake. If he wanted to give a direct command, he would use hypothetical expressions. I will give an example.

A university professor who joined the church would brag to show off his excellence. One night, Father filled a glass with flour and poured water into it. Of course, the water all spilled out. Everyone asked why Father had done this. They thought it strange. If something is in a container, you can no longer put anything else in it. Similarly, if you want to receive truth you must empty your mind completely. If you hold on to your own knowledge without emptying your mind, no matter how wonderful Heaven's truth is, it will not go in. Had Father told us this, hearing it directly would have been good, but if we did not respond to it, a condition would arise. Thus, he expressed it abstractly by allowing water to overflow a glass filled with flour.

Father often used hypothetical, conditional expressions. He would explain what would happen if someone did something. For instance, he commanded a Mr. Kim by saying that if Mr. Kim went out witnessing, he would achieve amazing results.

When I met that Mr. Kim later, I told him I did not understand why Father had expressed it like that. He responded that it had been a command to go witnessing. At that moment, I came to a realization. By speaking abstractly about a possibility, Father was conveying his determination: This will happen, so prepare! I am giving this example to cast light on the fact that I did not realize at first that Father had issued commands in such a way even about Unification Thought.



Father acted with purpose

In 1958, when Father came through the city of Gunsan, where I joined the church, he spoke to about seven or eight people about how the era of Unificationism and of Unification Thought was coming. Though other people heard the speech, it made the deepest impression on my mind because I had particular interest in Unification Thought. From then on, I believed that such an era would come, but being in a local church, I naturally thought that executive members in Seoul would unite and work hard under Father's guidance and establish this new era. I never imagined that this era of Unificationism and of Unification Thought had anything to do with me. In other words, I realized too late that Father had commanded me using hypothetical expressions.

For about six years after I joined the church, Father never mentioned a single word about anticommunism or gaining victory over communism. Thus, I only thought of Father as a purely Christian leader who came to save humanity. I never dreamed he was an anticommunist leader and a leader seeking to win over communism.

He had never said one word about anticommunism. Thus, no need arose for me to tell anybody I had been in the communist movement, so I never did. I did not think about it at all. I merely devoted my life to faith, in a state where I had forgotten past experiences completely.

Then in 1960, Father commanded many members to give testimonies at his birthday celebration. I prayed inside, "Please do not make me give a testimony!" Listening to other people's testimonies is quite beneficial and necessary, but giving my own testimony made me feel as if I were bragging about myself. The morning passed and I relaxed, but when we met again in the afternoon, Father suddenly called on me to give a testimony about a twenty-one-day fast. I thought, "Even prayers are no good!" as I approached the podium.

I had done the fast from December 1, 1959, at a member's recommendation, so that I could experience God's heart. At the time, Father would sometimes say in his sermons that if we did not experience God's heart it would be hard for us to go to heaven. Therefore, many people told me that if such a critical person as me did not fast and pray, especially to offer prayers challenging God to reveal himself, experiencing God's heart would be difficult. Out of desperation, I took decisive action and fasted. On the night of the last day, I was able to experience a small part God's heart and wept bitterly for God's pitiful state of endless sadness and suffering to save human beings with his infinite love. I gained a little understanding of why Father wept so much. This was the thrust of my testimony.

That night, Father called me to the front again. This time he commanded me to give a testimony about my being in the communist movement. I had no choice but to give a brief testimony, but wondered how he

knew, when I had told no one. I also wondered why he had me give that testimony, since Father never did anything unrelated to the providence.

Until then, I had been researching many things about Father. I knew he never spoke nor acted carelessly. He always spoke on matters related to leading the members or God's will. I concluded that Father did not speak of or act on meaningless things unrelated to the providence. The fact that he had me give a testimony had providential import. I could not help wondering what that was. I had never told anyone that I had been part of the communist movement as a student. How did Father know? He suddenly commanded me to give a testimony on the communist movement so there must be a providential reason. What was the providential reason he had asked me to speak? I could not solve this for a long time.

Gradual realizations



Two years later, in 1962, at midnight when Father's birthday began, he started to speak. Sometime between 1:00 and 2:00 AM, he brought the thirty-six-couple blessing group together and said, "From now on leaders must learn to win over communist theory." For the first time, the shocking realization came to me that Father was anti-communist and desired communism's defeat.

I wondered, was hating communists acceptable for religious people? According to the Principle, in the end democracy and communism must fight to resolve Abel and Cain's antagonistic relationship. Father, who was to practice God's love on earth, would love even the communists. However, for God's providence to unfold on earth, he must fight communism even against his will. For that reason, loving communists and fighting against communist theory were separate issues.

I went to bed after staying up almost all night. When I woke, President Eu called me to say, "The only person who can do the things that Father

spoke of last night is you, because you have experience with the communist movement." At that moment, I realized why Father had me give that testimony. By indirectly commanding me, he had criticized communism and he had let others know of my experiences.



In this way, Father guided us to realize our own personal portion of the overall responsibility by speaking generally, never by commanding us personally. That was also the style of the providence at the time. Father first had me give the testimony, and then said we should gain the ability to win over communists. On that basis, I understood my role through President Eu. However, Father had spoken publically to thirty-six couples; he had not given me a personal command. President Eu, the one in charge, had heard what Father said and thought someone should take the lead in response to that command. The problem was whom to choose. In the end, he felt guided to choose a specific person.

I finally realized why Father had me give a testimony two years previously and understood for the first time what he had meant when he spoke four years earlier, in 1958, about the impending age of Unification Thought and what he was now commanding me to do. I didn't realize until later that his speaking hypothetically about the coming age of Unification Thought had caused me to feel a personal sense of responsibility and a realization that establishing a theory of Unification Thought and working for victory over communism were my missions.