

I Have an Issue with That!

Andrew Wilson
November 7, 2017



Saint Augustine by Philippe de Champaigne, 1650

The other night, I felt Rev. Moon say to me, "My son marrying me off — I have an issue with that!" To which I thought, "That's for sure!"

Many Unificationists have heard about the goings on in the breakaway Sanctuary Church, where on September 23, their leader, Hyung-jin Moon, decreed True Mother divorced from True Father and then proceeded to "marry" True Father to Mrs. Hyun-shil Kang.

Mrs. Kang, who in December last year joined Sanctuary Church, has the distinction of being the first disciple Rev. Moon made in Busan after he finished writing *Wolli Wonbon*. Further, True Parents had blessed her to St. Augustine in 1998.

The strangeness and irregularity of this event is beyond question. We have heard of children wanting to divorce their parents. But this is even stranger: the youngest son, who claims authority from his deceased father and has a quarrel with his mother, divorces his parents

from one another. Then he weds his deceased father to a follower who is submissive to his will.

His motive is to establish his claim to be his parents' sole heir, and it is quite convenient for him if his mother is out of the way. That the parents whom this son are divorcing are the True Parents, who in the past stated publicly he was to succeed them as leader of the church, is the theological overlay providing Sanctuary supporters with a justification for this deed. Yet it only makes this human farce more unsettling.



Andrew Wilson

Like all members of FFWPU, I can testify that Mrs. Moon remains devoted to her husband and never ceases striving to fulfill the goals that God asked him to achieve during his lifetime. I have ample reason to believe that the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind are eternally one, love each other deeply, and that God fully participates in their love.

Furthermore, it is the bedrock of FFWPU theology that the eternal oneness of True Parents is the core and foundation for God's Kingdom to be established throughout heaven and earth, and without that oneness there is no Kingdom. Also, the eternal oneness of True Parents is the basis of the Blessing that has defined our lives and affords all of us the hope that we as Blessed Couples can become eternal citizens of God's Kingdom.

Accordingly, I do not believe God endorses what Rev. and Mrs. Moon's youngest son has done. From what I see, the ceremony he performed to join Father and Mrs. Kang has no validity whatsoever in heaven. It does not touch True Father, whose loving oneness with True Mother is rock-solid. It does not change who True Parents are and ever will be. It is nothing more than a fantasy play by a child indulging in wish fulfillment. Members of Sanctuary Church, including Mrs. Kang, who went along with this fantasy are merely indulging that child.

There are more serious issues though, such as what happens to St. Augustine. I'm sure he takes his Blessing to Mrs. Kang very seriously. In life he was a devoted Christian of the highest caliber, who laid the cornerstone of Christian theology. When he learned of the advent of True Parents, he received them with joy. We can read, for example, his pledge of loyalty to Rev. Moon in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Saints' Testimonies to the True Parents* (2002).

After True Parents blessed St. Augustine to Mrs. Kang in 1998, he channeled through Young Soon Kim in *St. Augustine's Confessions from the Spiritual World* (2000) a series of correspondences with her. In his first message to her on March 20, 2000, he expressed his heart of gratitude to True Parents, his joy to be married to such a woman who was one of the first disciples, and what he took as the meaning of their life together:

"Although I have many shortcomings, let us honor our True Parents' wishes and work hard

together in a cooperation of the spiritual and physical worlds in order to restore Catholicism and Protestantism... Although I myself did not have the privilege of receiving the True Parents on earth, you have had the joy of serving the True Parents, and what woman could be more blessed than this! However, am I not also blessed, to have become the husband of a blessed woman?"

He continued by stating his determination to follow and serve True Parents:

"I truthfully love, believe in, and follow God and True Parents and am willing to give my life to carry out all their orders. Doing so is my life itself. To speak more frankly, God is my parent, my life, and the whole of my being. It is indescribably painful that I have not been able to serve the Parents of Heaven and Earth on earth. But the Parents of Heaven and Earth have given me the grace of the Blessing, which is more precious than my life, and how can I be able to express my gratitude in words!"

He also spoke about his gratitude for receiving the Blessing and being blessed to such a precious person as Mrs. Kang:

"Since I have received such a great and uncommon blessing, I have made a determination to live for the purpose of repaying the True Parents' grace. I have heard about the value of the Blessing through the Unification Principle, and firmly believe that it is truly a marvelous grace and that the greatest tragedy of humanity is the loss of the Blessing. In this sense, I am sincerely grateful that through the Blessing I have received you, Lady Kang, who worked hard and accumulated great merits in your life on earth, while I feel so sorry about my unworthiness."



Early members Hyun-shil Kang (right) and Sae-hyeon Ok in front of the first Seoul Church, informally known as the House of Three Gates, in 1954

For Mrs. Kang's part, quite often True Father asked her to give her testimony about what it is like to be married to St. Augustine. That True Father would choose her as the exemplary person to speak about what a spiritual world–physical world blessing was like indicates she shared much about their relationship to him privately. At a leaders' conference in January 2000, she said:

"Father is asking me to reveal all the secrets. You know we have to go through the 3-day ceremony and the 40-day period. During the 3-day ceremony, I could vividly feel he was with me and that Father was not lying. Father has been telling us the truth. At that time, I again realized that Father emphasized how real it is for us to have relationship with a spirit person."

Again, in a speech in January 2005, True Father called on Mrs. Kang and said, "Please talk about Augustine!" She replied, "How can I explain? It is hot love. From morning to night I am discussing with him. I can talk to him all the time. We have a hot love relationship."

How must St. Augustine grieve that his wife has left him for another man, a man whom she loves more

than him? He thought himself truly blessed to be with Mrs. Kang. He had been devoting his heart to her and preparing for the day of their joyful meeting once she ascended. Now that she has betrayed him and demonstrated her infidelity, what is he to think of her? It matters not that she will never actually possess the object of her new desire; her wayward heart is on display for all, and for Augustine, to see.

I understand that Hyung-jin Moon ceremonially withdrew St. Augustine from his marriage to Mrs. Kang and then blessed him to another sister. Yet, I would not be surprised if, like Rev. Moon, he too has an issue with being married off like that. Would St. Augustine really treat his marriage to Mrs. Kang so lightly? He must now be in a quandary about how he can relate with her, and if he is a devout believer who values the Blessing above anything else, they will have some serious fence-mending to do.

I believe True Father has an issue with Sanctuary Church's lack of respect for the Blessing and the value of marriage. When FFWPU members join the Sanctuary Church their previous Blessing is not recognized, which can plunge their families into the hell of broken marriages and estranged children if the other spouse refuses to follow the Sanctuary Church path. In other words, faith is more valuable than marriage. This was the case for marriages in the fallen world, but it contradicts the value of the Blessing established by True Parents.

True Parent's Blessing is on a higher level than faith. Hence, it is available to people of all faiths; Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, even people of conscience can receive True Parents' Blessing and enter this realm. The Blessing as doorway to the eternal presence of God in the family is the very core of salvation. Blessed families are God's eternal treasures; they are the citizens of God's eternal kingdom. Heavenly Parent is pained to see these children whom He has blessed torn apart over a Moon family power struggle of little consequence in the eternal scheme of things.

Here we see the corruption of true family values, even to the extent that divorce is now something that can be solemnized in a holy ceremony. The read-out of a list of True Mother's purported crimes to justify the divorce reminds me of the Jewish practice of the *get*, a bill of divorce, which Jesus condemned in Matthew 19 when he said, "What God has joined together, let no man pull asunder." The rabbis wrote an entire book of the Talmud arguing about what were valid grounds for a husband to divorce his wife, but in Matthew 19, Jesus allowed only one valid ground for divorce: unchastity. Yet, True Mother was never unfaithful or unchaste.

Should anyone who bears the name of a Unificationist teach that it is legitimate for a husband to divorce his wife if she gets angry with him? Or if she disagrees with him on matters of money, or the inheritance for their children? Sanctuary Church's acceptance and even celebration of this particular divorce makes a mockery of True Parents' effort to establish the value of fidelity in marriage as a bedrock value of human society.

Why is the pain and heartbreak of Augustine also an issue for True Father? There is, of course, chagrin that his family has wronged this champion of faith. But on a larger level, it is a setback to his mission to unite Christianity. True Father came to this earth with the mission to unite Christianity, and by dint of his faith and suffering through unbearable indemnity conditions, he succeeded on a foundational level. He won the support of the great champions of the Christian faith like St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Luther.

Was it easy for these leading Christians to pledge allegiance to True Father and testify to him in *A Cloud of Witnesses*? Just as millions of Christians on earth continue to reject the Divine Principle and disbelieve that Rev. Moon is the Lord of the Second Advent, there must be millions of middling and lower-level Christians in the spirit world who think likewise. They are skeptical and even horrified that someone of the stature of St. Augustine became a Moonie, a heretic in their eyes.

Augustine put his faith on the line before these Christians and accepted the Blessing with Mrs. Kang. Now, they must be mocking him, to see him so wronged by the woman and movement that he pledged himself to. How deeply embarrassing it must be to True Father to see this exemplary Christian who had put his faith in him be made a mockery by his youngest son. It is a black mark on Rev. Moon's effort to unite Christianity, a goal which St. Augustine still shares.

I believe this too will pass because True Parents' foundation is settled for all time. St. Augustine will find a way forward in his life with God — with or without Mrs. Kang. Despite this aberration, the noble efforts of countless Unificationists who are faithful to True Parents and strive to live a Principled life will keep hope alive for unification and the realization of God's Ideal.

Dr. Andrew Wilson is Professor of Scriptural Studies at Unification Theological Seminary. He edited World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts and World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon.