Golden Age Newsletter March 2025

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz March 5, 2025



Golden Age Newsletter

March 5, 2025

Hello Goldies, Welcome to the new look! It's all the same content with a simpler format. We hope you enjoy!

This month features Brian Sabourin's Personal Discovery, a Unification Thought article, one on being critical without judging, another about the Korean spirit and lastly Christine's take on sweet deprivation!

This Month's Message



Photo credit: Brian Sabourin

Resolving the God Question – A Story of Personal Discovery

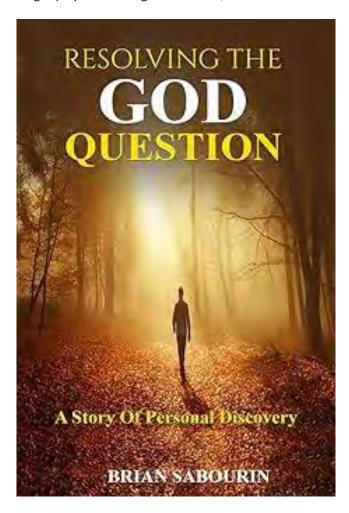
by Brian Sabourin

Reviewed by John Hessell

How much has your religious faith been tested? Do you win the battle of your conviction through more of an intellectual or spiritual course? How much does the logic of your belief and the power of your personal experience hold up to others who may challenge both your mind and your heart with criticism and disdain?

Brian Sabourin has faced this kind of challenge on a greater level than anyone I know. Pushed to the point of near mental breakdown, he endured weeks of physical abuse and mental torture by hired "deprogrammers" to have him disavow his belief in Father Moon and the Divine Principle. Through soul–searching prayer and biblical study, Brian was able to rediscover his faith, fighting through the prejudice and conventional faith of his parents, family, psychiatrists and even hired thugs who kidnapped and held him in a secluded cabin, deprived of food and sleep in order to "break" him.

Through it all, Brian continued to search for the true living God, and God's will for his life. His battle through those early years of doubt and discovery led to a life of devotion, teaching, marriage, family and experiences that continue to reaffirm his faith. I could deeply relate to many of the battles he faced. For anyone leading a religious life, I strongly recommend you join him on the personal journey, he shares in his autobiography *Resolving the God Question*.



This book is available at Amazon.com.

To open the link, please click here. Amazon













Unification Thoughts

The Law of Turning

Unification Thoughts, March 2025

There's been so much happening in America since the end of last year that I'd been wondering for quite a while now how to make sense of it from the point of view of Godism. And then, early one morning, it came to me: the Unification Thought *Theory of History*! Specifically, the section on "Changes in History".

I remember that it impressed me because of its very clear and concise summary of the way God actually works in history. As a person who'd become a bit skeptical in college, I related a little better to philosophy than to doctrine...

To read more, please click here!



Photo credit: Anne Marie Maylar

How to Keep a Critical Mind Without Judgement

by Anne Marie Maylar

A critical mind was designed by our Heavenly Parent to make sure we are able to distinguish good from bad and also to be able to create. Without a critical mind we cannot create. A critical mind in conjunction with creativity and curiosity allows us to learn and accomplish many things; it was never meant to bring judgment towards someone else.

My own testimony can help explain what I mean.

To read more, please click here!

Testimonies, Thoughts and Tributes



Photo credit: Michael Downey

Korean Spirit

by Michael Downey

Recently a woman remarked to me that she hoped the nation would return to the essential Korean spirit. Of course, I immediately asked her what that spirit was. She was not sure and we agreed to think about it and she would get back to me. To me, it was something that was worth thinking about.

She also thought about it and, when she did get back to me, she had an interesting perspective. She said the essential spirit of Korea was the spirit of Goguryeo.



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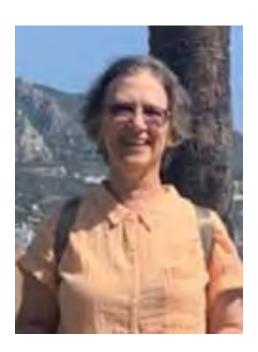
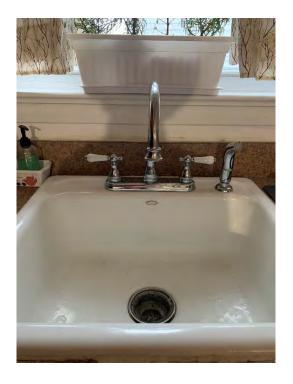


Photo credit: Christine Libon

Sweet Deprivation

By Christine Libon

Going through various challenges has enabled me to have an intensified sense of gratitude. First, there were the cockroaches due to the lack of caulking around the kitchen sink/plumbing/cabinet. Before the issue was remedied. I refused to prepare any food in the kitchen. When I was finally convinced that I had reclaimed dominion of the kitchen, it was such a relief.



But then, the leak under the kitchen faucet suddenly became worse. It was so bad that I had to place a sponge touching the pipe (no container could fit close enough) to catch the water. Each time I used the faucet I had to wring out the sponge and empty the container. And still some drips found an escape route. "Just get it fixed!" you may think. Yes, except that the landlord contracted one of the horrendous viruses going around, and neither he nor we wanted that anywhere near us. So, two more weeks passed until the celebratory day when we got our precious new faucet.

To me, simple as it may seem, it's the most beautiful faucet in the world. I reflected on how some people in other nations routinely survive without access to fresh running water. I again felt so grateful to have this simple luxury that is often taken for granted.

Still one of the dreaded viruses found its way into my system (probably Norovirus — you do not want it!). After some days, weighing three pounds less, I felt immense gratitude at being able to eat a bit of soft white rice, take larger sips of liquids, and progress to eating foods on the BRAT diet list.

Looking back over my life, there are numerous things for which I am extremely grateful, — my faithful and caring husband of nearly four decades is definitely a big one •

Bulletin Board



Photo credit: Carol Pobanz

The Golden Age Newsletter began as a small Clifton Senior newsletter about 3 years ago.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Purpose: The Golden Age newsletter has been created as a means to keep our elder community connected to one another. Articles are not in any way meant to proselytize or push a point of view.

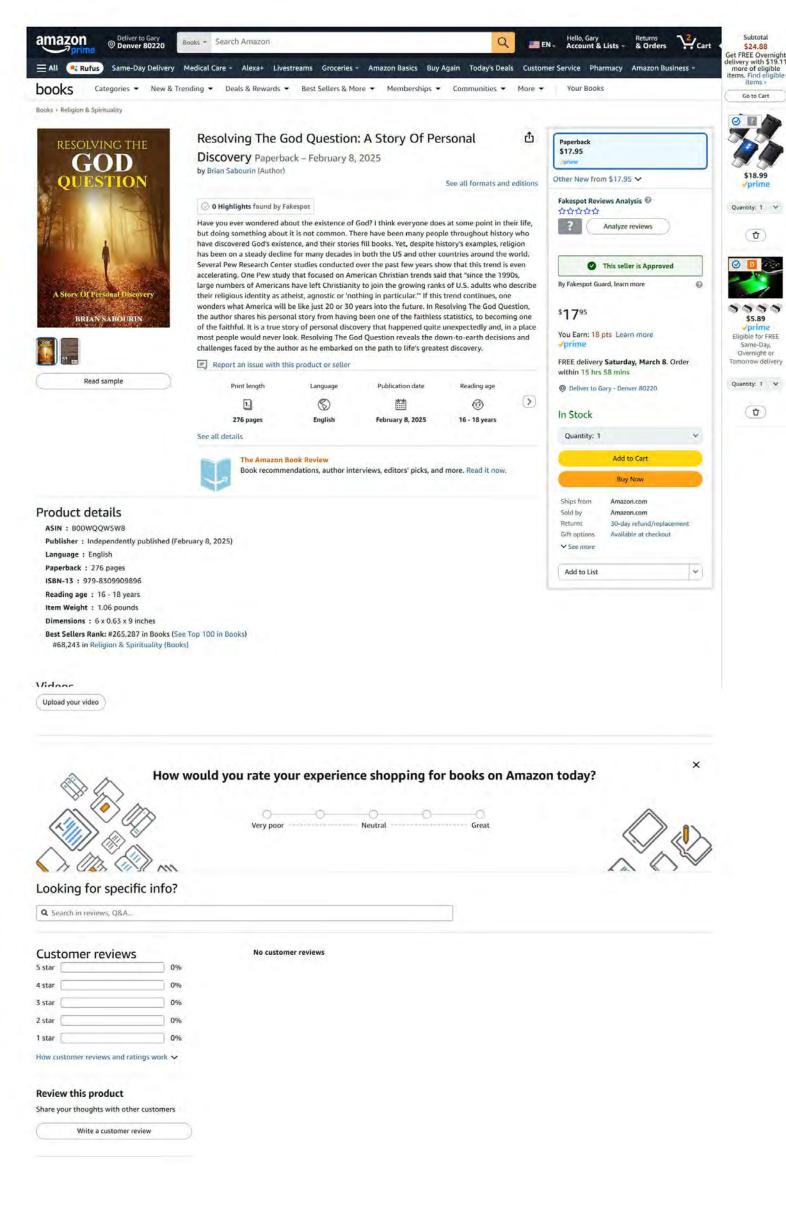
It is a place to share God's Love - what is positive in our life as a result of finding our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Motto: "This is the Dawning of our New Age" - We are always in the process of redefining ourselves as we grow older and as we add experiences to our lives. Therefore, we must consider how God can use us even when we may be decreasing in our physical capabilities.

The e-newsletter is broken down into eight sections:

- 1. A Featured Message of Inspiration Helping others to feel hope and inspiration for the establishment of CIG.
- 2. "Unification Thoughts" any educational article on the "Fifth Realm of Heart"- Grandparents' heart
- 3. History Byte A short article on a positive memory, a funny or affectionate story about experiences in the church with True Parents or with brothers and sisters or an article about the development/experience of helping to develop one of True Parents' providential projects or events.
- 4. Arts and Culture A sharing about one's talents, hobbies or interests and how this relates to sharing God's love (to family, community, nation or world).
- 5. Tributes and Testimonies a personal testimony of one or more life learning experiences or a Tribute to a spouse, friend, or leader
- 6. Health An article that relates to health (physical or mental), possibly providing a link to an article you think might be interesting or important to other seniors.
- 7. I Love being a Grandparent stories about grandparenting or about things to do with grandchildren
- 8. Recipe Preferably a healthy recipe along with 2–3 paragraphs about what makes it a good or memorable recipe.
- 9. Book Review report on a book that inspires thoughts toward a world of peace
- 10. Bulletin board reports on personal activities, or request help on a project

Did someone forward this to you? Subscribe to the Golden Age Newsletter here!





The Law of Turning

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There's been so much happening in America since the end of last year that I'd been wondering for quite a while now how to make sense of it from the point of view of Godism. And then, early one morning, it came to me: the Unification Thought *Theory of History!* Specifically, the section on "Changes in History".

I remember that it impressed me because of its very clear and concise summary of the way God actually works in history. As a person who'd become a bit skeptical in college, I related a little better to philosophy than to doctrine. I'm not proud of it, but that was/is my reality. So I found that section in the Theory of History relatable and persuasive.

The most succinct summary of this law is that God restores fallen history by turning it towards the direction of goodness. Before that becomes necessary however, societies develop via the original Law of Give and Receive (between subject and object). But when complacency and corruption set in and a society declines, it is time for course-correction. The original law is then suspended and the Law of Turning is enacted, with two—or if necessary, with three—processes.

First, by the Law of Separation, God calls an Abel figure out from the prevailing society who opposes its failings and its central person.

Second, this new Abel figure attracts adherents, forms an opposition and the Law of Repulsion (subject vs. subject) plays out. If the Abel-side prevails—ideally through dialog (i.e., non-violent) means—history turns in the desired direction of restoration.

The optional third process is engaged when the evil side holds the position of power. In that case, the leaders on the Abel-side would endure suffering according to the Law of Indemnity. There are numerous religious examples; Jesus and Gandhi are but two. For just one secular example, consider the situations of England and the United States at the start of WW2: they were both unprepared and so their populations had to sacrifice and work 24/7 to produce the arms they needed to catch up and turn the tide of the war. As these examples demonstrate, the results of such conditions may take some time to appear, but they eventually bring about the submission of the evil side. History can then turn further towards restoration.

The conclusion of this sequence of turns in world events would be the end of fallen history and its restoration. The much simplified figure from the New Essentials of Unification Thought is here:

*In history, there are of course many more than four turnings.

I suspect that for experts in The Principle, this explanation of historical change could be dismissed as a restatement of the obvious. But for me, it fulfilled one of Unification Thought's purposes: to make The Principle clearer. If not for Unification Thought, I'd not have been able to fully accept The Principle—and especially its critical conclusion of when, how and where.

Of note, there's a small, indirect acknowledgement that *armed conflict* has sometimes been a necessary last resort. It's in the last paragraph of that section, which reads:

Restoration is achieved through the struggle between good and evil, but this does not necessarily refer to military conflict involving armed forces. If the evil side obediently surrenders to the good side, then it is possible for peaceful social change to be accomplished.

- New Essentials of Unification Thought, IV. Changes in History, p.366

Clearly, diplomacy and negotiation are the optimal ways to resolve differences between peoples and nations. If those fail however and the Abel-side is attacked, then armed resistance has its place. The obvious examples of this in *The Principle* are last century's horrific World Wars. Unfortunately, the desperate diplomatic efforts to avoid both wars ended in failure.

And though it's not explicitly mentioned, it's clearly advantageous if the Abelside is martially formidable. That reality can effectively discourage violent attack and thus actually encourage the resolution of differences through diplomacy and negotiation. (On a personal note, it was this idea that helped me understand why Abonim originally hoped that UTS grads would have black belts.)

Mercifully, this less-than-ideal need for martial strength isn't supposed to last forever. The Theory of History concludes with this visionary passage of hope:

In fact, the final struggle for putting an end to the struggle between good and evil, namely, the struggle through which the Messiah completely subjugates Satan, will be carried out peacefully, even if it is called a "struggle."... In this way, history has been changing, following the two directions of development and restoration. Development will continue forever, whereas restoration will come to an end when the original ideal world is finally restored, after which the ideal world of peace and true love will continue forever.

- New Essentials of Unification Thought, IV. Changes in History, p.366

I earnestly hope that, as current events play out, we will be able to keep in mind this perspective. History has not always conformed to the outcomes or timelines we prefer, but the ways of Heaven don't always do that. Many incidents in the Bible, as well as chapters in The Principle, show this. But in the longer term, with hindsight, it can become more apparent that the laws of Heaven were at work after all.

Frequently Asked Questions

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How to Keep a Critical Mind Without Judgement

by Anne Marie Maylar



A critical mind was designed by our Heavenly Parent to make sure we are able to distinguish good from bad and also to be able to create. Without a critical mind we cannot create. A critical mind in conjunction with creativity and curiosity allows us to learn and accomplish many things; it was never meant to bring judgment towards someone else.

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Why should we not judge or/and criticize?

My own testimony can help explain what I mean.

Not too long ago, I was told that I am a very competitive person, that I like to win. As soon as I heard this, my whole being rejected the statement, because I know deep in my heart that it is incorrect.

I do not appreciate any sports where teams or individuals are facing each other and only one is going to receive the honor and the privilege to win. I do not like the fact that the efforts of all the other teams or participants are ignored and dismissed as if they had never been there. I do not like the hurt that the "losers" feel. I like the kind of sport where the individual competes with himself or herself – but otherwise, competition for me, at this time in our history, is truly not good. Someday, it will be different and everyone will be on the stage, everyone will be honored, respected, appreciated and celebrated for the efforts that were made, even the person or the team who came last.

So, to come back to my competitiveness, no, I don't compete, and I don't even try to. I do the same with arguments. I don't argue. If someone is strongly arguing about something, I do not participate in the discussion. I am certain about my own opinion and do not feel the need to defend it, so I don't argue, I just wait. When I write something and publish it, like this paper for example, I am doing it because I believe I have something to offer. But it is not my job to convince the reader to agree with me. It is my responsibility to share, and it is the responsibility of the reader to ponder on the sharing and do his or her own research.

My central figure once told me, "Anne-Marie, you are always *very sure* about what you say." Yes, I am, but I am not stubborn and I have updated my own opinions quite a few times due to the input of someone else.

Just a few days ago, I was reflecting, once again, about the statement of my supposed "competitiveness" and how wrong it was, even though the people who were very adamant about it do know me very well. So, as I reflected on my own opinion about the people I care, love, and know, I became aware that I, too, need to apply the same careful thoughts about what I think of them, because what I have deduced about their personality may very well be wrong.

With gratitude, always,

Anne-Marie

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Korean Spirit

by Michael Downey

Recently a woman remarked to me that she hoped the nation would return to the essential Korean spirit. Of course, I immediately asked her what that spirit was. She was not sure and we agreed to think about it and she would get back to me. To me, it was something that was worth thinking about.

She also thought about it and, when she did get back to me, she had an interesting perspective. She said the essential spirit of Korea was the spirit of Goguryeo. Now that's going into the distant past but I could relate to it right away.

I vividly recall seeing a tomb painting from that distant era that depicted horsemen on the hunt. They obviously were experts at riding and archery. The saying goes in the American West. The other term that comes to mind is "reckless abandon."

The expression is actually "play with reckless abandon." Of course, it originates with football and means to disregard and abandon everything else, including life and limb, to make the yardage, the catch, or cross the goal line. It's a single-mindedness that is considered a virtue in not only sports but in successful people in all aspects of life.

In the words of the legendary University of Alabama football coach Bear Bryant, "I want my boys to be agile, mobile, and hostile." All pronounced in a southern accent so they rhyme. Is this the essential Korean spirit? Maybe. It resonates with me.

However, other people had slightly different takes on the question. Among the things mentioned were the intense competition and comparison with others, the tendency or ability to unite in a crisis, the *ppalli-ppalli* culture, and the almost untranslatable into English – *jeong*, *han* and *hwa* or anger.

leand is a word that might mean something like affection but in fact I've come untranslatable into English – jeong, han and hwa or anger.

Jeong is a word that might mean something like affection but, in fact, I've come to understand that it means much more. It may describe the state of a relationship that is unbreakable – unbreakable because it is bound by common experiences of love, hate, familiarity and contempt. It could describe an old married couple that have lived together for a long time or people who have lived

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Han is often translated as resentment but that doesn't cover it. I would say that han is resentment over unfulfilled desire. Folks are filled with desires big and small, legitimate or not, and also reasonable or not. The bigger and more basic the desire is, if one is blocked from achieving it, then surely the resentment goes much deeper.

Just about everyone has heard of the kimchi temper. Maybe you have been on the receiving end of it. They say that Koreans have a tendency to fly off the handle but I don't think such a tendency is exclusively a Korean thing, so I'll put this one aside.

Several people also mentioned that Koreans have an uncanny ability to unite and make one mind, and act as one when the chips are down. During the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, common people responded to the national financial emergency by digging deep and donating gold and other personal valuables to the national government.

Some cited the 2002 FIFA World Cup and the over-the-top support in the streets for the national team. Not long ago I heard a top-level North Korean diplomat who had defected to the South answer a question about what might happen if the Kim Jong-Un regime was suddenly deposed.

He replied that there might be chaos temporarily but, as soon as a new leadership emerged, the people would quickly unite around it. I'm not so sure I can believe that.

The other thing that was discussed was the spirit of Hwarangdo, or Flowering Knights of the Silla Kingdom. This highly patriotic stance, including training in both the military and cultural arts, connotes the highest ideals of selfless loyal youth. They may have been also affiliated with a women's group with the same ideals known as Wonhwa.

From the same time period comes the term "Hongik Ingan". This term can refer to a person, or group of high-minded people, who lives for the sake of others. The origin of this concept may be in the old text, the "Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms" (Samguk Yusa). I hope to do more research to track down not only the origin of this term but also its usage yesteryear and today.

As an American who has lived in Korea for 20 years, I've formed some impressions of the Korean people. The following is an excerpt from a novel set in Korea that I am pushing to finish. As I am wont to do, I've put some of my own impressions into the mouth of a fictitious character. In this case, it is an elderly professor endeavoring to explain about Korean people to a visiting foreigner.

"Two things you need to remember about these stubborn, proud Korean people. In many ways they are the product of a dangerous environment. From early times until today they have had to bend with the prevailing winds and at the same time stay true to their destiny. The other thing is they always fight among themselves.

"At this point the old professor seemed to backtrack a little. "The root lies somewhere in the long history of the Korean people. In many ways it may lie in an accident of geography. Who knows why, but the Korean people have lived on this period of the p

this perimsula, weaged between much larger and more aggressive nations, for thousands of years.

"Invaded, occupied and preyed upon countless times, they have survived with intense pride in being Korean. Pride in their unique language, culture and history is a thread that runs deep in Korean people no matter where they live, north, south, east, west, at home, or abroad.

"While nurturing this pride, survival demanded that Koreans often had to defer to the geopolitical realities that continually swept through East Asia and the world. This seems to have produced a deep inferiority complex running just as deep as Korean pride. Here lies the dilemma at the very heart of the Korean soul, an absolute belief in all things Korean and at the same time bowing to the powers that be, at least temporarily.

"What a people think of themselves is surely important for their national identity. What an outsider thinks also may be helpful. What is more important than what people believe about themselves is how they act. This is just my two cents.

Michael P. Downey (mpdowney308@gmail.com) is an author and teacher living in South Korea. In his free time he is a human rights activist primarily working with refugees from North Korea. As a volunteer English teacher and speech coach (with Teach North Korean Refugees) he is endeavoring to give them a voice by assisting them in telling their stories.

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