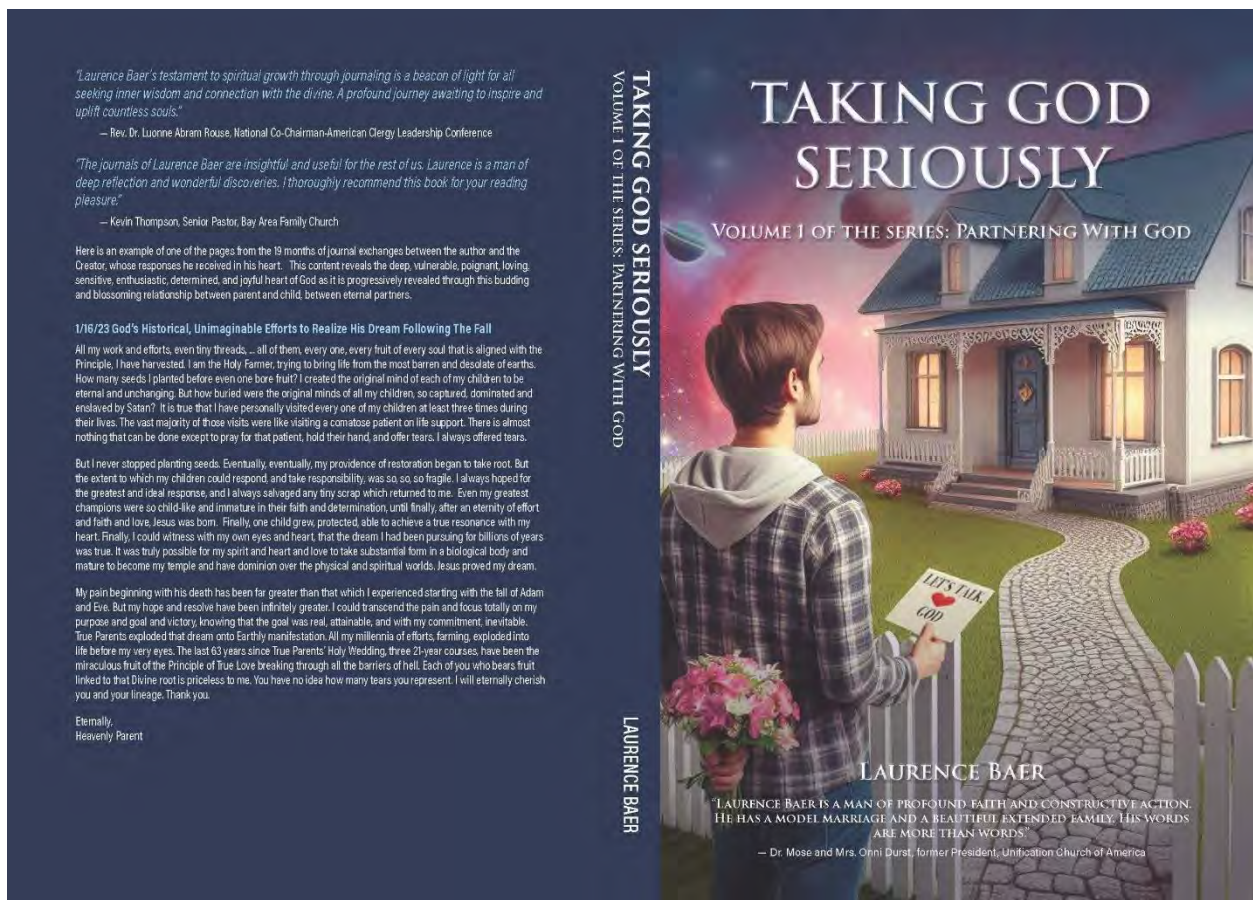


A Forward to *Taking God Seriously*, A New Book by Laurence Baer

Achille Acolatse

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Family Federation For World Peace and Unification, SR2, USA



When Laurence approached me and asked me to write the Forward for this book, my immediate response was, "Sure, I'll do anything for you." It was spontaneous and heartfelt, based on my relationship with Laurence. I am a religious leader. I serve as the Senior Pastor for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification of America's Southeast Region, which consists of nine states including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Having taken the time to immerse myself in the writing of this Forward, which, for me is a great honor, I have come to recognize that it is no simple task. "Taking God Seriously" is a groundbreaking and, I believe, historic work - a profound and deeply moving extended dialogue between our Heavenly Parent and an individual. Each entry has two sides. First Laurence writes a message from his heart to God. And then, God responds. Based on this Forward, it is my sincere hope and wish that you will be able to give your sincere consideration and attention to Laurence's message and that it will inspire you to do the same.

Laurence, in his Introduction, shares his reasons for launching this dialogue, which took seven years from when the idea was first set before him, until he united with that idea and wrote his first entry on July 13, 2022. He was seeking to deepen his personal relationship and communication with God, and through this, to grow spiritually. Our Movement's Founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, have both shared deeply about God from their own personal and intimate communications with Him. And based on those communications, Rev. Moon wrote the Divine Principle and numerous related texts that explain deeply and penetratingly about God's nature and the history of God's providence. Also, in many of Rev. Moon's speeches, he shares intimately about God's heart and hopes and dreams, such as in his wonderful book Twelve Talks, published in 1973.

I know Laurence to be a man of highest integrity, deep faith, and a very broad, inquisitive, and penetrating intellect. I first got to know Laurence in 2019, when I was serving as the Senior Pastor for our Washington, DC church. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon had announced that each couple in our movement should endeavor to share the Marriage Blessing with 430 additional couples, expanding the scope of the grace that could be brought to the world.

Laurence's response was unique. Based on the work he had initiated 21 years earlier, Laurence returned to BWI Airport, and established a Marriage Blessing table there, quickly completing his goal and helping many other couples to fulfill theirs. But he didn't stop there. Realizing that just offering the Blessing was only the start, Laurence organized a monthly educational program at the Washington Times Building, which he funded himself. Laurence and his wife Muriel were among the very first Cheon Bo Victor

couples in America.

Only later did I come to learn more about Laurence's background and history within our movement.

He joined 50 years ago at the age of 21 in Oakland, California, and spent much of his career in the movement working very closely with Dr. and Mrs. Durst on special missions of one kind or another. He did not have a high public profile. For seven years he developed and managed businesses for the Oakland Church, launching building service companies in Los Angeles, Houston, and New York. Many who worked under him went on to take significant responsibilities in the Movement.

Laurence worked for two years on President Durst's senior staff, and then in 1983, he was assigned by Dr. Durst to organize a global conference in Geneva, Switzerland under the chairmanship of Hon. Robert B. Anderson, President Eisenhower's former Treasury Secretary and Eisenhower's first choice to run for President in 1960, rather than Nixon. The weeklong conference included 70 top global political and financial leaders and concluded with a decision to launch the Global Economic Action Institute under the leadership of Dr. Durst and Secretary Anderson. Laurence was selected as the sole staff member working directly with Robert Anderson to create and develop that organization, where he served for 10 years as Executive Assistant to the three Chairmen.

In 1997, Laurence was serving as the Laurel, Maryland Community leader when the providence authorizing members to share the Marriage Blessing first began. At that time, following a deep prayer, he was inspired to meet with the Manager of BWI Airport who assigned to him the only table in the airport designated for outside organizations. Laurence trained and assisted 40 families to fulfill their Blessing goals. Among those families were the Salonens and the Leones. Shortly after that, Neil Salonen hired Laurence to serve as his personal Executive Assistant for Blessing 97 at RFK Stadium and continuing on for 4 years.

Also, during that time, the conditions were set for our members to begin Ancestral Liberations and Blessings centering on the activities of our training center in Cheongpyeong, South Korea. Laurence and Muriel took seriously Rev. Moon's guidance that we must educate and direct our ancestors in the spiritual world following their Blessing.

In late 2020, Dr. Chung Sik Yong was appointed as the Family Federation Continental Leader for North America, and almost immediately began a daily national Zoom call for prayer and study, which he dubbed "Morning Devotion". In addition to doing his extended prayers every morning, Laurence also set a condition to faithfully attend Morning Devotion every day from its beginnings in 2020 until 2027 to support Dr. Yong. He pledged to invest his utmost each morning. He regularly shared his inspirations in the chat and also began offering his music videos. Those became very popular and, for the first time, many in our Movement got to know Laurence.

Laurence is a dedicated man for God's Providence. He has a sincere heart to comfort God's heart by enthusiastically sharing his knowledge of the Divine Principle with the world. Laurence is spiritual and has spent lot of time meditating and seeking insights from God. I encourage you to read this book to learn more about him and his relationship with God.

May God bless and guide each of you, your families, and your endeavors.