

Possibilities for the Unification Movement -- An NGO perspective

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I was born in Japan in 1981, the fourth of five children. My father is the national messiah of Honduras. I loved my mother, but she died when I was twelve. When I was fifteen, my father went to Honduras.

My oldest brother and sister were studying overseas. We who remained had to survive by ourselves. I took a part-time job for living expenses and school fees. We sometimes did not have money for electricity, water or food. This is not an extreme example; many of our members in Japan have been living like this.

With no mother on earth, and no father in my country, I had only one

thing -- pride in my parents. I deeply respected them, because they loved each other centered on God even after my mother's death. My parents' beliefs were true beliefs. That the blessing by True Parents is true marriage was my conviction from the substantial experience of my family life. Nevertheless, I had doubts. My first question was, Does God exist? My second question was, What should I do with my life?

Insight and answers

When I was seventeen, I found an answer in prayer. God is here. God loves me. God is my father. Every member here has experienced meeting God through True Parents. That is the core value of our movement and the common sense of our community.

Later, while reading the Divine Principle, I found a sentence about John the Baptist, "Since Jesus came to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, he was more in need of one leader who could guide a thousand than a thousand who would follow a leader." This answered my second question. I should become someone that can lead thousands rather than be one follower among many.

Aiming high

My school grades were bad and people said it was impossible, but I was determined to study at Tokyo University. I quit my job. I studied for more than fourteen hours every day. A year later, God brought me to Tokyo University, where I was a World CARP-Japan member. After graduation, I studied Unification Theology at Sun Moon University and at the Unification Theological Seminary in the United States. I also worked for a short time in Japan as a Junior STF staff member; I created a study program and study workshops for second-generation Unificationists to become leaders with faith and ability.

I then studied at Harvard Graduate School of Education. In my Harvard application essay, I wrote about Sun Moon University, UTS and my teaching experiences with Jr. STF. They accepted me and acknowledged my experience and my vision. After graduation from Harvard, I started to work at the Nippon Foundation.

Broad interaction with society

I am now trying to expand my vision in order to reach thousands of people in society. I have published eight books about learning and work skills.

Some were bestsellers. I try to include both the essence of Divine Principle and my vision in my books. I also manage a blog and write many articles on education, family policy and leadership development for major online media as well as journals and newspapers. Hundreds of thousands of people are reading my articles every month. So, I now have some influence.

I do not hide my beliefs. When you search for my name on the internet, "Unification Church" arises as the first suggested keyword. The simple strategy I have learned from my thirty-three years of life applies to

all our members:

Achieve outstanding results in society and good performance in school and the workforce centered on God.

Do not hide your belief in God and the Unification Church.

Be proud of your identity as a blessed family member.

Raise your voice proactively in society, to your friends, neighbors and relatives -- to all people.

Current work

I am the manager of the International Network Team at one of the largest NGOs in Japan and in Asia. The foundation works in education, public health and social welfare in more than a hundred countries. The founder was a highly influential figure among Japanese politicians. He was also the first honorary president of the Federation for Victory over Communism (VOC). He was supportive of the unification movement in the early period.

He died in the 1990s. His third son, with whom I work closely, is the foundation's chairman.



A page from our movement's history

In early 1960s, meeting our cheerful young members energized the founder of the foundation to support our movement. He first met Father in February 1965. In June 1967, he met with Father to prepare for the Asia Federation for Victory over Communism in Yamanashi Prefecture. In April 1968, we founded the International Federation for VOC. The founder was an honorary president.

In the 1970s, he introduced the Unification Church and VOC to many politicians including former prime ministers Kishi and Fukuda.

When Mr. Kishi (Japan's prime minister 1957–1960) visited our church in Shibuya, he said, "He [the founder of the foundation] sympathizes with the Unification Church and hopes to strengthen this movement. He told me that Unification Church young people are truly pure, and he said that he expects them to develop and to take on important missions to save Japan in the future." This hints at the unification movement's possibilities. God is always preparing an influential figure, able to lead thousands of others. We have to find a figure of this caliber.

At the Nippon Foundation, I am now working with various NGOs, political leaders, governments, academics, media outlets and a variety of UN organizations to promote public health, education, social welfare and human rights. I have had many meetings with presidents, prime ministers and ministers of

many countries in my work. I believe these efforts will connect to world peace and God's providence in the future.

The unification movement's strengths

Not being a staff member of any Unification Church organization, I do not know our movement in detail. Nevertheless, please allow me to share my views on aspects of the unification movement. I would like to try a simple analysis of our movement's strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of an international NGO.

Family values

True marriage and true family values through the blessing are our most important core values and strengths. The birthrate among blessed couples is high while birthrates in Japan, Korea and many developed countries are minuscule and decreasing, which is becoming a serious problem for those countries' sustainability. We also stress family values -- "absolute sex" and absolute love between husband and wife. Conversely, the divorce rate in the general society is high and increasing and nobody can stop family breakdown.



Our younger generations

We have good education programs for youth, such as Jr. STF and CARP, although these are not perfect. On the other hand, the number of young members in other religions is decreasing. Providing young members religious education is difficult for them.

Our inter-religious movement

We have been promoting dialogue between various religions, while the world faces a serious clash of civilizations, religion-based terrorism, and inter-religious conflicts. This might be an opportunity for the unification movement to uniquely contribute to the international society.

Our expansive and diverse foundation

We have a global foundation of blessed members and missionaries and broad networks of political, economic, education, artistic and mediarelated organizations. With strategic utilization, we could do something great.

Our movement's weaknesses

We also have serious internal weaknesses that we should address in order to develop our movement. Society has labeled us a "cult." We lack openness and transparency: People do not know who we are or what we think and do. Thus, they fear us. We are dealing with lawsuits over donations and other issues. We have not unified but are fighting and criticizing one another.

Our approach to the situation

These weaknesses are deeply serious. We should not ignore them. Without overcoming them, we cannot further develop. The strategy I suggest we should take is simple -- strengthen the strengths and overcome the weaknesses.

To overcome the weaknesses, we should maintain compliance with the law. We should be authentic. We should sincerely explain our movement and vision to society. We should be transparent and open ourselves.

We should unify all our members. On that basis, we can strengthen our strengths. Our first strength is our family values.

We have to try to become a "true" Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, promoting family values -- absolute sex, true love between husband and wife, parents and children and brothers and sisters and in relationships with relatives. We have to strengthen these core values.

On that basis, we will be able to resolve family breakdowns, high divorce rates, low birthrates and child abuse in society. We can also propose concrete family policies to academics, NGOs and research institutions and utilize mass media and social media for family campaigns.

Secondly, we should invest our resources in raising second- and third-generation members to become leaders that can lead thousands of people. We should maximize youthful energy and talent to move prominent figures in society as in the example of what occurred in the early days of our church. Encourage all members of blessed families to raise their voices in society, and strategically nurture second-generation members in important fields, such as politics, government, law, academia, the media and NGOs with a combination of faith-based and secular education.

A proposal

Let me share an example of a plan for your consideration. If we could send many second-generation members from various countries, every year, to top universities, we might have four hundred altogether per year. Those students should interact. Later, they should also attend Sun Moon University as I did. From a pool of thousands of professionals within ten years, centering on perhaps a hundred such leaders that had posts in the unification movement, we could have the same number of government officials, local or national politicians, university professors, journalists, NGO leaders, lawyers and businesspeople in each country. This human resource pool would be a strong foundation for our movement.

Our third point of strength is promoting inter-religious dialogue. We could organize side events at UN conferences, cooperating with faith-based NGOs in order to realize an Abel-UN.

We could publish a series of articles on religions and faith-based NGOs in *Sekai Nippo*, the *Segye Times* and the *Washington Times*. We could establish a program of inter-religious leadership at Sun Moon University and other universities and seminaries.

In the fight for religious freedom, we can utilize our experience in approaching the UN Human Rights Council and human rights NGOs on the issue of the abduction and confinement of our members. We could cooperate with other religions that face human rights violations due to their beliefs.

Regarding our fourth strength, we can utilize our worldwide foundation and our organizations' involvement in a wide variety of fields.

-- Strengthen blessed families' membership and ownership of the unification movement organizations, such as the Family Federation, the Women's Federation, the Youth Federation, CARP, VOC and UPF.

-- Promote missionary work, studies abroad with blessed host families and host churches, international exchange programs among members, internship and volunteer work at unification movement organizations.

-- Cooperate with NGOs and organizations by participating in other organizations' events, have continuous dialogue, and invite prominent figures and experts to our conferences and initiatives.

These are four recommendations for development of the unification movement from the perspective of my professional experience at an international NGO.

My conclusion for VISION 2020

To build the kingdom of heaven on earth, we need to find, nurture and empower leaders that can lead thousands of people. We need to connect these leaders beyond their fields, organizations and countries in order to have a collective influence. We should strengthen our strengths and overcome our weaknesses. Let us be united as one. Let us become one family under God. Then, God will strengthen us, help us and dwell with us.