

My experience at being matched by True Parents - Part 3

Sam Harley
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Photo date and location unknown

Resurrection

Some names are left out. Though it may be obvious to some who these people are, it is their story to tell if and when they choose to. I will tell you mine.

When the next matching and blessing came around, Dr Ang asked me if I thought I was ready.

“I think so.”

“What will you do if the same thing happens?”

“If I find out I’m not ready, I’ll just leave the matching. I won’t go.”

He seemed to think this was enough.

Now I had to get plane fare to Korea.

I called my dad up, and told him I was going to a matching in Korea. And that I needed \$1,000 to get there. He got mad.

“Why doesn’t the church pay for it, after all the money you raised for them?”

“Dad, I don’t want to argue, and I’m not asking you. If you don’t want to do it, don’t do it.”

“Ok, I’ll think about it”

I hung up the phone, went to the library and sat in my favorite seat by the window. Stared out. Found myself talking to my mom in the spiritual world. She had ascended the year before. “Mom, you know what this blessing is worth. And you know Dad better than I do. If you go to work on him, persuade him, it’ll be a blessing for you.” I got a warm feeling, as if she was saying “Don’t worry, I’ve got this.”

A couple of hours later, someone said there was a phone message for me. The pink slip in my box said “I’m sending you \$1,200. Hope that’s enough. Let me know if you need more. Have a safe trip. Dad”

I got over my emotional storm by negotiating with myself. There were a lot of doubts and struggles between my intellect, my faith and my wobbly emotions. I had gone through this twice and it hadn't worked. "Look," I said to myself. "It may be that this is true, that God works through Rev Moon and this is an absolute miracle. I know it hasn't worked out for you yet. So we're taking a chance going. And I'll make you this deal: if it turns out that it isn't true, and it's just giant hoax, then I give you full permission to walk right away from it. But if it is true, this is probably the best goddamn thing you could ever do in your life, and we'd better go find out which one it is, don't you think?" That was the deal I made with myself, before I went to Korea for the matching.

I did call my dad up and say "Dad, there's a chance I may get matched to someone from Japan. Would that be a problem for you?" (He fought against the Japanese in Burma in WWII) "No, that wouldn't be a problem."

We flew to Korea, arriving in the night. We boarded a bus, half asleep, and pulled up some time later in the courtyard of a large bottling plant. We got our bags, and trudged upstairs to a room the size of four basketball courts. Like all UC sleeping rooms at the time, it was bare of furniture. Our group from the seminary were one of the first ones there. We laid out our sleeping bags haphazardly in one corner of the room.

When we woke up, there was a group of Japanese brothers sleeping in a tight island in the middle of the room.

The next morning we explored a little. There was a reception area with a large marble hallway. The factory itself was shut down, mostly, while we were there. The bottle plant in the next building was going full tilt, though. We watched an army of glowing brown bottles rattle down the assembly line. The heat toasted our faces as we stood in the January cold.

There was a cafeteria where we had our meals. Workers were laying down felt padding on the floor. This would later become the sisters' quarters. The brothers were given two rooms in a less heated part of the building. There was one room with an open floor, and next to it was a room with pallets of soybean and barley sacks piled 7 or 8 feet high, which we nicknamed the Soybean Suite.

I chose to sleep on top of a pile of barley sacks, knowing that while the open room would be more comfortable, it would soon be full of brothers and you would be stepped on during the night. We scrounged broken down cardboard boxes for padding. Some slept in the corners next to the sacks. The only thing about sleeping in the Soybean Suite was that if you dropped something down between the sacks, you could kiss it goodbye.

There were bathrooms and showers down the hall. The staff had put a row of numbered cardboard boxes along the wall, anticipating everyone neatly placing their clothes in them when they showered. It was a good idea, and it lasted about half a day before brothers started taking the boxes with them back to the Soybean Room.

It was the MaCol bottling plant, and there was a machine at the top of the stairs dispensing MaCol. That also lasted a couple of days, till it ran out of syrup and then dispensed soda water, then just water.

Over the next few days, brothers and sisters would arrive from all over the world: all over Africa, the Philippines, Iran, Brazil, Japan, all parts of Europe. It was quite a scene. Everyone was jetlagged on a different schedule, there was always someone trying to sleep, others stumbling around talking. Many tried to solve linguistic barriers with the time honored technique of talking very loudly.

One particular national group had the habit of appearing at the door, i.e. a sister would come to the brothers' room entrance and shout someone's name 22 times, at which point it was apparent that either a) he was not here, or b) he was sound asleep, which we also wanted to be.

The national characteristics were on full display. In the cafeteria, a group of Brazilian members were singing Up On the Hill (an Oakland song) in Portugese, accompanying themselves with a guitar, plastic cups, bottles and anything else that could make a noise. Paul Werner was walking around telling members who were playing cards "Stop that right now! Throw those away, they are tools of the Devil!" Japanese church leaders, meanwhile, had spent the flight over playing poker.

Mealtimes, which were laid back affairs for the first day or so, became large scale enterprises. As I was joining a long line for one of the rice cookers, a Korean lady came up to me and said something, which I didn't understand, whereupon she placed her hand firmly on my butt and 'guided' me to another line. The meals were varied. Often for breakfast, there would be a noodle salad with cold hot dog slices. There was kimchee, though.

The leaders got together and decided that having this many members idle was asking for trouble, so a workshop was organized. We all gathered, sang several holy songs in ½ the languages on earth, and began to listen to lectures. Nora Spurgin spoke on the value of the Blessing. Someone else gave a Divine Principle lecture. Translators were dotted around the room, with their language group clustered around them.

The spiritual atmosphere of Korea is very prayerful and present. Martin Porter, one of the British leaders, was sitting on the stage and I saw him in an old British army officer's uniform.

President Kim gathered the seminary brothers and sisters and told us what to expect and how to act. "You have to want to be blessed! If Father asks you to come, you come quickly, don't walk slowly. If he asks for volunteers, you jump up. He may ask you questions, sisters. Do you still have your period? How much blood? One cup, two? Don't be surprised! Father will ask."

President Kim had been present at many matchings. The things he said Father would ask, happened almost exactly as he said.

Of course, this being a matching, the air was fairly crackling with anticipation. At some point, and we never knew until the last moment, Father was going to appear and start matching us. Finally, we were told to be ready in an hour. Everyone scrambled to get into their best clothes, and we assembled in a room downstairs.

We got name tags when we came in, our name, age, country. There was a brown dot to add if you had a physical problem, and a green one if you had a history of mental problems. I had to be honest, I got a green dot. Though I was over it now, I had been hospitalized with severe problems when I was 15. We sang some holy songs, again in 5 different languages, then the leaders started to organize us.

Straight lines seemed to matter a lot. They spent a deal of time getting everyone in rows. "Hey you back there!" Paul Werner would point "Get organized!" They had no idea what he meant, but clearly a group of Germans would have.

Next, they lined us up, brothers on one side, sisters on the other, according to education. PHDs, front row, followed by Masters, Bachelors, high school and finally, no high school. Father completely ignored this when he arrived.

But there we were, singing and trying to get ourselves ready. To explain, matchings and blessings were held irregularly and were not scheduled. You waited, and it could be 1 ½ years or 6 years to the next one. You got maybe 10 days notice. So you didn't tend to think "Oh well, maybe next year". This was it, for the indefinite future.

So there I was, in my third matching. The first one, my spouse left the church. The second one, 8 years later, I found out the hard way that I wasn't ready. This was my third, and this was it for me. I was sitting with the college graduates. Then the leaders said "Anyone with green dot, brown dot, you stand in the back."

What? I came all this way to stand here and watch until the end? For the dregs?

What if I get some miserably messed up sister because of that? What if this tanks me? They never asked about these things before. Was this going to always be something to wonder about – what if I had just said nothing and gone in without a green dot? Will it mean I get refused or not even matched?

This was not good. I was tailspinning badly and we were singing, Father was coming soon. I had to do something. I couldn't repeat what happened the last time. David Kim, president of the seminary and my central figure, was up at the front, on the left. I knew I should go up and talk to him. Standing up at that point, with around two thousand people sitting down and singing, would mean everyone's eyes would be on me as I went all the way up to the front and talked to President Kim. Still, I had to do it, or I'd regret it the rest of my life. So I stood up.

I went up to him and he asked me what the matter was. "I'm struggling about this green dot, that I'll get matched badly." I don't really remember what I said. David Kim grabbed both my hands and said "Let's pray". I don't remember what he prayed. What I will always remember was that as he did, it was like the floor, ceiling and walls of my little world fell open and I was filled with God's spirit. I then prayed like I'd never prayed before "God! There's only one thing that matters. My country has a broken, empty heart. I don't care who you match me to, where she's from or what she looks like, but give me someone who can help me heal the broken heart of America!"

I was so on fire, I felt like rather than cower humbly before Father, I could stand up and look him straight in the eye. I went back and stood in the rear, with the green dot group.

Father finally came. He had been matching True Children and second generation, and he had the flu that was going around. When he spoke, I could feel his throat was completely raw. And here he was, around 11 pm, starting a matching session that was probably going to go all night.

“Father says, in the past matchings, many people refused Father’s match and came back in again and again. This time, Father says there is no discussion. When Father matches you, you bow together, accept, and then you can go talk. If you stay in this room, that means you absolutely accept Father’s match. Those who cannot accept this, leave now. (the protocol of the matchings in the past was this: potential matchees assembled in the room. When Father put a couple together, they went into another area to talk to one another. Translators were standing by. If they agreed to the matching, they would go back to the main room and wait until Father was signaled, then they would bow to him together, signifying acceptance. They would then sign the register as a matched couple.) (For this matching, newly matched couples would come together at the side of the room, bow to True Father to signify acceptance, then register as a couple. And then they would say hello)

It was not long after Father started matching that his translator said “Father wants 10 American brothers.” The race was on. From the back of the room, another seminary brother and I made our way to the front, like running backs on a broken play. We lined up, and Father asked the brother next to me how old he was. When he answered, Father said. “Too old!” shaking his head. But he matched the brother. Then he came to me and looked me up and down. I stood tall, chest out, looking right back at him. Father turned and pointed to a sister sitting on the floor about thirty feet away. “How old?” he said.

Mr Abe, the Japanese leader, leaned over to read her tag and said loudly “27!” a second before she said “25”. But Father was already flicking his hands together, indicating we were matched.

She stood up, and we walked to the side of the room, turned and bowed. I was only aware that she was short, and maybe American. The sister with the register book was waiting for us, and we signed our name and country where she pointed. I was signing and reading her name at the same time, and she was peering over my shoulder to see what my name was. This person you had just pledged to marry.

I don’t remember what we said to each other. Probably what’s your name? She said her name, a very Japanese name, but in a distinctly California accent. “Sam Harley” We went down to the café they had, a tiny little place, where there were still a few trays of dinner left. We grabbed a couple and as the tables were all full, she perched on a windowsill to eat and I stood up. It was around 1 a.m.

We soon discovered we had a lot in common. She was a singer and keyboard player in the New Vision Band. I was a trained actor and a writer. We talked some, but it was very late and we were both worn out. We agreed to meet in the morning outside the door to the sisters’ room.

I made my dazed way back to the Soybean Suite, where a voluble black brother from New York named John asked “Did you get matched?” “Yes” “Who to?” “A sister named _____” “_____!?!?” he practically flung his hat out the window “Man! You lucked out! She can sing like a bird!”

So, I climbed up my stack of barley sacks and stretched out in my sleeping bag. I was bone weary from the flight, the anticipation and all the ups and downs of the matching, but I was exhilarated. She was young, she was beautiful, and seemed to have a tender heart. It was as if God had answered all my desires, the ones that I had never had the nerve to say out loud or even expect. Yet God had answered them all the same.

As I tried to sleep, there was an insistent voice singing gospel in my head “God never forgets, He never forgets, every tear you cry” It kept going and going until I had to get my notebook out and write it down.

You may think that you’re forgotten
You may feel that you’re all alone
You may think that you’re a fool
To want to carry on
You may think there is no reason
That you shouldn’t lay down and die
Cause no-one seems to understand
No-one hears your cry

But God never forgets, He never forgets
Every tear you cry
Every teardrop in your eye
Every time you don’t fall down
And you stay on righteous ground
He never forgets

There's all kinds of people laughing at you
On the streets of a lonely town
You're only trying to do right
But the world is dragging you down
And the tears are welling up inside
And you want to lay your burden down
You want to lay your burden down
You know you want to throw it down

But God never forgets, He never forgets
Every tear you cry
Every teardrop in your eye
Every time you don't fall down
And you stay on righteous ground
He never forgets

You may think that you're just wasting your life
Everybody else is having fun
But you're only trying to follow your heart
In a world that's going wrong

But God never forgets, He never forgets
Every tear you cry
Every teardrop in your eye
Every time you don't fall down
And you stay on righteous ground
He never forgets
He never forgets

I told her about it, and gave her the words before I left Korea. She later wrote the song "God Never Forgets" out of them. I don't know if I still have the original words I wrote. These are the ones she used. The voice I heard was a rough-edged, raw gospel voice with a strong beat. Her version is more melodious, flowing and sweet.

The next morning we met, both of us wearing pleated jeans, white knit sweaters and sneakers. She was amazed that we had on identical outfits.

We took a walk round the village, in our parkas. She had her hand in my elbow. We had similar views on the holiness of the performing arts, and a lot of things. We went into a store to get a snack. Some peanuts in a bag and something else. She paid.

Or, more accurately, this is what happened. The Korean lady cashier said the amount in Korean, which neither of us understood. Then she 'wrote' the number on her palm with her finger. Still didn't get it. My new fiance took out some Korean money and put it on the counter. They indicated it wasn't enough. She looked wide-eyed and uncomprehending.

A young Korean man said something to her, obviously that she needed to pay some more. She shrugged innocently. The man reached in his pocket and slammed some coins on the counter, looking disgusted. She picked up the stuff and sauntered out, with a little smile on her face. I was disturbed by this. To me, she had just pissed off one guy, and probably everyone he would tell about the rude American Unificationist.

But, as I had been through one broken blessing, and a matching where I spectacularly crashed and burned, I was deadly afraid to confront her and risk losing another blessing. I said nothing.

I had never heard of her before. As it turns out, most of my friends at the seminary knew her from CARP. And when she and I put our stories together, I figured out that I had been in the audience at least twice when the New Vision Band performed. As a trained actor, I was always analyzing performances. I could remember Mark, the lead guitar player, and Reggie, the male singer, but I didn't remember anything else. And one of those was a Holy Day show when I was King Simon of Legree in a seminary skit, Small House of Uncle Thomas.

I had a picture of the finale song, where I was standing onstage next to Joe Longo and Reggie, and my picture ended there. She had her own picture of the same finale, her standing next to Reggie and Joe Longo, and her picture ended there. I wasn't in her picture and she wasn't in mine. If the people holding the cameras had moved them an inch, we'd have been in each other's picture. It was as if we weren't meant to notice each other yet, or even know about each other.

The one time I did remember was when the seminary held its Open House. I was in charge of the kitchen, and had spent the day mixing cole slaw, supervising the barbecuing of several hundred pounds of chicken, and answering frequent calls for more drinks. It was over 80 degrees and humid, and the drinks were disappearing as fast as we could tear open another packet of powder and mix another bucket. The last item was the ice cream, and amid the festivities, all the volunteers scheduled to serve it had disappeared. We grabbed just enough innocent bystanders to get the ice cream rolling, and finally someone said "It's ok. We've got it now."

I finally could relax. I wandered out of the kitchen, my once white apron dotted with barbeque sauce and bits of cole slaw, drink mix powder up my nose and sweat all over me. Just in time to hear, from the other side of the building, an amplified female voice saying "Wasn't the food great? Let's give the cooks a hand!" "That's nice," I thought, and wandered back inside to start cleaning up.

Despite being in the audience when her band performed at the CARP convention, and being in the same holiday show, this was the only time I remembered hearing her voice before we were matched, and I had no memory of her face. Even though she was a 'famous' CARP member, known to all my friends at the seminary, her existence had been carefully concealed from me until the moment Father flicked his hands to indicate we were matched.

Both of us caught the nasty flu that was going around. When we lined up for the Blessing ceremony a couple of days later, I had a roll of tissue in my suit pocket for her, which she used every few minutes to wipe her runny nose. Mercifully, we lined up inside.

When Father came in to do the Blessing ceremony, he was still tying the belt on his robe, as at home as if we were in his living room on a Saturday morning.

She stayed in Korea, to help distribute the Segye Ilbo newspaper, and I flew back to the seminary. I felt like I had been turned inside out. God had given me the kind of person I would have asked for if I had ever found the nerve to ask. God never forgets.

When we landed in New York, everyone clamored to stop at McDonalds. I didn't have any. I wasn't eager to wash the taste of Korea out of my mouth. What had happened to me was so transforming I didn't want to think about anything else for a while, as I took it in.

I didn't go to the movies for months. Didn't want another story replacing this one. Finally, a couple held a birthday party with door prizes, which included a book of movie tickets. When I won the movie tickets, I took it as God's approval to start going to the flicks again.

It took a lot for us to get together, what with the requirement for three spiritual children, the separation period of three years, and central figures with different ideas as to what our couple should be doing. Not to mention different opinions as to who was or wasn't doing God's will.

Finally, we did start our family and had three wonderful children. The next 18 years were some of the best in my life, the most joyful, as well as some of the most challenging and painful.

The next chapter has yet to be written. It will need to be lived first.