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Dan Hutcherson

### **My Testimony into Sanctuary: An Open Letter to Young Unficationists**

I find myself in an interesting situation. At nearly thirty years old – I clearly remember the time of True Father’s passing. It was the summer that I can point to, for starting my unintended spiritual journey. I was old enough to be aware of the church politics going on behind the scenes, and I also happened to accept the role of pastor in my local community the very day of True Father’s passing. Looking back, the hand of providence was very clear for me. But I didn’t know it clearly until I decided to take a step of faith, follow my conscience, and walk away from Family Fed in order to support the Sanctuary movement. This past year I’ve gone through what I expect will be a similar transformative process for many of you in the future. For me at least, it was a period of self-righteous denial, depression, acceptance, study, and ultimately – true freedom and full responsibility.

My life of faith started in earnest this year, but I had to battle my own demons – particularly those related to religion and peer pressure. I write this testimony to share a young person to young person viewpoint, which isn’t being shared except by a few of us. I’m not worried about the older generation in the movement. They have what they want in terms of faith and truth. But it’s the younger generation’s future that worries me. I write this because if you take the problems in the movement seriously, and look through the drama to find God, then you can be further along in your own life of faith than I was at your age. Things now are clear for me in hindsight, but they were not at all clear as I was going through them.

I cannot say that I’m any different than any of you. As the oldest, active second generation in my state, I grew up in Family Fed like everyone else. Like a “good” Moonie, I helped out with pretty much every church event that came along. My mom was state leader for a long time, so I naturally was at a church event long before it started and well after it finished. I did all the Service for Peace activities, I started the local W.A.I.T. team, I went to Cheong Pyeong multiple times, I did all the holy ceremonies, I coordinated youth activities, I gave lectures at workshops, I staffed Divine Principle seminars, I went to the matching by True Father, I tithed 10% from my job, and I eventually I became pastor of my community. I didn’t mind though, as I grew up in a fantastic family and surrounded with great friends. We did many fun things together and I loved the camaraderie.

But now I'm an adult and my life of faith (and lack of) is my own direct responsibility. I'm at a point in my life that, if my friends don't understand, or if a future employer reads this letter online, that's totally okay. If they judge me negatively for it, then, that's on them. I've spent my entire life under the illusion that I was a freethinking young person, but I actually was just being implicitly compliant to the religion that I was born into.

Truth be told, I probably would be an atheist had it not been for my parents and the church's systematic, logical, and chronological view of the purpose of life, fall of man, and history. I was more agnostic in that I loosely believed in God, but I didn't actually know God personally. My transition to join Sanctuary was an amazing and terrifying detoxification process. For the first time in my life, I felt God deeply and sorrowfully, and I realized that all my good deeds for the church had nothing – absolutely nothing – to do with my life of faith. I had inadvertently paired my entire life of faith to the Unification *religion*, and I think that's exactly where most people are at today.

### **Summer of 2012**

My personal, spiritual journey started in Cheong Pyeong back in 2012 while my wife and I were in the 40-day collegiate workshop. I cannot remember much else, but two things the lecturer said at that workshop that clearly got my attention were: "I'm a Christian" and "You cannot be given rights you already have."

I obviously know that we believe in Jesus, but I generally blew both Jesus and the Christians off as prehistoric, compared to our own superior enlightened theology. There was even a part of me that strongly rejected the Bible as obsolete. But hearing him state, "I'm a Christian" – so bluntly – gave me a gut-check I am very grateful for today. I realized then that True Father was a radical Christian and any Moonie who denies Jesus also inadvertently denies True Father. I spent the next couple years becoming more open-minded toward the Bible and its secrets – that only True Father's words can unlock. Even today, I can barely listen to any other kind of music but Christian music, as the rest of the music industry has become totally secularized.

I had never really thought about civil rights before that workshop, but the examples the lecturer used at the workshop showed how the Israelites – just like Adam and Eve – in parallel, were given God's direct blessing. But then the Israelites chose to allow unprincipled religious, economic, and political influence into their society, which promptly devolved their society back into slavery, after being freed into the wilderness. I spent the next two or three years reading political philosophy in a search for a divine political truth – I didn't know I was looking for.

I came home from Cheong Pyeong that summer accepting the duties of pastor at my local church. I planned to “build the walls” upon the foundation the first-generation had laid by changing the direction of my community from the ritualistic, duty-driven, self-righteous spirit I thought we were exuding, to a life-breathing spirit of freedom and fellowship that I thought we were missing. If no one wanted to be a door greeter, if no one wanted to work with ministers, if no one wanted to tithe or even come to church – I told them: No problem! I naturally loved freedom. I thought each person and family should only need to contribute in the areas they were inspired to serve. And I thought there was no point trying to hold things together out of obligation and duty alone.

### **Pastoral Duties and My Sermon**

Since I became pastor right after the downfall of Lovin’ Life Ministries, I thought it was the perfect time to finally have local autonomy. Hyung Jin Nim had just come to America and was talking 'freedom and local governance.' That totally made sense to me, so my community promptly went to work setting up our own charter. I was excited about the new changes toward real freedom and responsibility on a local level. But then it felt like overnight – he was just let go from his position(s) due to “immaturity.” I remember being disappointed and thinking: “That was odd since he was clearly appointed by True Father as the spiritual heir to the entire movement. True Father didn’t seem to mind.” I was unfazed though, as I had a sense of local community to build.

Having grown up in the church, I easily saw the church’s overabundance of top-down directives and the implicit guilt-tripping tactics often used. I made a determination to separate my community the best I could from that coercive spirit. I wanted to be the shield to protect my community from influences they didn’t actually want. I dutifully forwarded all district, national, and worldwide communication to my community but I assumed no response simply meant no interest and I left it at that. I wanted my community to be free to be themselves, for better or worse.

In the three years I was pastor, I only gave one full sermon the entire time. It was an important one for me though, as it came on a midnight inspiration and it was shared with emotion that I rarely express. My sermon centered on Noah and his sons. I shared how Noah’s building of the ark paralleled with the first generation’s creation of Family Fed. I wanted to and tried hard to honor and recognize them for the foundation of faith they offered after many years of thankless sacrifice. But I also shared how there is a parallel with the younger generation – potentially

succeeding or failing in foundation of substance based on our response to seeing our parents now 'naked and drunk' after True Father's death. It was obvious to me that it was time to leave behind the 'religious ark' and its formation stage mindset, but I didn't want to disrespect the very people who have *literally* died financially broke, unappreciated, and scorned by the entire world. I warned all the young people to not repeat the same mistakes of Noah's sons.

## **Breaking the Silence**

When Hyung Jin Nin first released his *Breaking the Silence* video in early 2015 everything changed for my community. No longer was there a sense of community-level focus but there was also now a "background search" by many members, including my parents, about what was happening on the national and worldwide level. *I* didn't have that search within myself.

I naturally assumed the church controversy was yet another example of church politics, and I had come to really hate all forms of politics. By this time, I had found God to be real – intellectually at least – by seeing through the charade of our political (archangelic) world. I had the realization that True Father wasn't a left-wing liberal or a right-wing conservative – he was a radical libertarian. But no one seemed to get that but me!

I couldn't see through this church issue, though. There was way too much heavy emotion around it. And as a self-righteous individual, I defaulted to the very same dismissive routine I see many people in Family Fed still carrying out. I simply wasn't listening – and every point could be countered because I already had my decision made. I already had my opinions about everything and this was just another of many church issues to ignore. My parents however – were on an internal and spiritual search – for what God wanted them to do.

My parents – particularly my mother – consumed everything that could be found about the controversy and from all sides. They weren't interested in just going with the flow because it was comfortable – they were very diligent in trying to find God's viewpoint. If Hak Ja Han really wasn't united with True Father to be True Mother – they thought that was kind of a big deal. If there was a difference in the two Blessings – then they thought that was also a big deal. They had personal conditions set up and looked into every piece of news that came out for over the next eight months. They did their homework. And I did nothing. Actually, I loosely criticized them during this time period. I thought it was all a waste of time. And I had the self-inflating idea that I actually knew what was going on. I flat-out wasn't impressed with either side. I'm sure you can relate.

## **Hell and My Conscience**

All was still rather routine at our local church until mid-October 2015. My parents visited the Sanctuary Church location and really felt the spirit of True Father there. They felt real freedom and real love in the room – feelings that are now nearly universally gone in Family Fed. Their level of conviction upon returning home was absolute and ironclad. I was totally shocked. From the enlightened viewpoint I gave myself – I had just witnessed my parents become the black sheep in the “Moonie cult.” I saw them get criticized tremendously for their decision to support the Sanctuary Church. But I also saw them digest it all and respond with a level of heart only God can give.

The next two or three months are hard to describe.

I went through self-centered hell. I had an internal rage that I never felt before. I felt totally depressed and I would go to sleep frustrated and conflicted. I pretty much dismissed my parents emotionally the entire time. I was totally sick of church propaganda and church politics. I would drive home from work yelling as loud as I could just to get that emotion out of myself. My wife says that I pretty much disappeared emotionally during this time. And I’m not exactly an emotional person to begin with. I was also a horrible example of an elder brother to my younger siblings.

Do I support Sanctuary with my parents? Do I try to unconvince them out of Sanctuary? Do my parents really think we all need to be re-Blessed? How can True Mother not be one with True Father? How can you even determine that? Is it really possible the entire worldwide foundation True Father built, could be taken by Satan? Was this my moment – like Noah’s sons? What would my friends think, if they knew about my parents? What would my friends think, if I actually supported my parents? What kind of propaganda was all this religious garbage anyway? How could God be this divisive? Why couldn’t they just love each other? Why couldn’t there just be a cease-fire?

But the back of my mind was moving.

I had many dreams during this time period, but I now only remember one clearly, as its meaning was simple and unquestionable. There were three people in the dream: myself, my father, and one other person. This man, Welborn Rozier, was the person I respected most in the church over matters related to the Divine Principle. He had passed away before all the church controversy came to a head in my community. A younger version of him was smiling and sitting on a long

brick wall in the top-left portion of my dream. In the bottom-right portion, it was just me and my dad vehemently arguing. I knew exactly what was meant by the dream: he was showing me I was in the midway position – as represented by that brick wall. I also could feel him saying that he wanted me to remember all the lectures he sacrificially gave. He was reminding me it was all about the parent-child relationship and lineage – particularly that of father-son.

During this time period, I also had what I can only describe as a week where I saw through my spiritual senses. It seemed like all sex-related things were enhanced or sharper in focus. In all reality, it wasn't any different than any other time. But I seemed to be particularly aware and sensitive to the sexual jokes, sexual clothing, sexual discussions, sexual advertisements, sexual movies, and sexual music all around me. I also noticed the level of implicit and explicit acceptance of these harmful sexual influences in the second generation. I really didn't see much of a difference between America's matching culture and dating. We even had a discussion at a workshop whether a talk on 'Pure Love' was acceptable or not for middle schoolers. Thank God for the only first generation in the meeting reminding us that we might be the only people in their lives telling them the truth about love and sex. I left that week humbled and saddened about our future outlook as young people in the Family Fed organization.

We young people really don't know anything; I still don't know anything. We just think we do, because we've been in the church our entire life. But have we really experienced the heart of God? Do we really care what God's viewpoint is? Again – do we really care?

### **The Heart of God and Blessing**

With the cloud of my parent's decision hanging over me – it felt like a perfect storm of events in my life. I couldn't help but break down in tears on several occasions. I saw the horrible future of our church, nation, and the world. I felt God's sorrow. I felt the tremendous pain of realizing that every foundation God has created has been lost. I kept coming back to the phrase: Pride comes before the fall. Did we really have the total arrogance to think that we will be any different? I realized how arrogant I was and I was truly sorry. My conscience was totally clear in pointing me toward supporting Sanctuary. I took that step of faith against all of my infinite, shallow and external reasons.

I didn't know a single person on the Sanctuary side. I didn't understand the whole dispute surrounding the Blessings. I hadn't even watched a single Sanctuary sermon. I didn't like being part of the controversy. But I knew what I had to do at a very profound, deep and unexplainable level. There simply wasn't anything left for me in Family Fed – except for external influences.

I resigned as pastor from my local community, and my wife and I went through the Blessing to return to True Father's authority. About half way through the Blessing I felt a tremendous amount of weight lift from the back of my head. My mind, my heart and my life have not been the same since. It's like my mindset changed. My "listening" of church disputes changed. I started recognizing who was defending their own entrenched, comfortable, personal opinions and who was fighting for a greater application of the entire Divine Principle (particularly lineage).

### **Looking Forward**

It has been over eight months since I took that step of faith to follow my conscience. I now believe even more passionately about the existence of God, the Divine Principle, and the value and importance of the only thing that makes us unique in the world – the Blessing. I have felt one-by-one every fear or hesitation of Sanctuary turn into a pleasant surprise. To me, Sanctuary is the church I grew up in and it certainly is the church I always wanted. But it took me to change my listening and my heart to even see that. I had to be willing to leave everything I thought I knew behind.

I can honestly say absolutely none of my understanding of the Divine Principle, True Father, or True Parents has changed as compared to four years ago. In fact, the opposite has occurred. It is now much clearer for me – and it is all real. If you cannot understand how that is possible with the controversy surrounding "True Mother," then it is because you are not listening to what is beyond the noise and chatter. It is the same analogy as when we talk to Christians about Jesus' mission and the cross – they aren't listening! They are unnecessarily reacting to their fears. You will undoubtedly also experience those same fears just as I did. But push past them, be humble, listen with your original mind and conscience and don't make a big story about having to redo the Blessing. Take that step of faith.

The older Family Fed members are stuck in religion, but it's the religion they helped create, so they don't notice. The religious ark has become very comfortable, but this is their 'naked moment.' I know you can feel something isn't right and the divisions breaking out within Family Fed are only going to get worse. The disunity is a direct result of the missing vertical relationship and it has been missing for a long time. What are you going to do? Take the months you need to process what God is desiring in your life. This is your life, your life of faith and most importantly your lineage on the line. Respect your parents and love them. But take stands for a higher application of the Divine Principle after making your own informed and intentional choice. If you do that, I can respect you, even if I disagree with your ultimate decision.

I am eternally grateful for my parents. As young people, before we really can “build the walls” upon the first generation’s foundation, we first have to be serious about what foundation we are actually inheriting. I want a real life of faith and I want real freedom in that faith. Hyung Jin Nim is every bit the caring, truth-speaking, freedom-loving firebrand his father is. I have become very grateful for him speaking the truth, even knowing the entire world will falsely accuse him. The various directions our movement will go in the future are ultimately mutually exclusive and the choice you make is ultimately only yours. In the meantime, you know where I stand.

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Editor's note: This submitted testimony was given minor editing for punctuation and minor points of grammar and/or style.