

Why I Support Hyung Jin Nim

A letter to American brothers and sisters from Dr. Richard Panzer, March 8, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This is a challenging time for the Unification Movement. Each one of us is being asked to make serious decisions when there is conflicting and often confusing information from sources that we want to trust. Some of us may be tempted, as I have been, to “wait this one out,” to just focus on our personal or family lives.

To be honest, I often feel like I would like to escape from the human world and just live somewhere like a hermit in the forest, but then I remember that I met the returning Messiah and his bride who revealed the suffering heart of the living God, that each of us is the beloved object of His love, and that we have the privilege of restoring His ideal. Like you, I have tried to follow, making many, many mistakes, but getting up, most of the time, and made effort to do better.

Fast forward to this turbulent time in our history that few of us anticipated, with two stories being told about the current controversy between Hyung Jin Nim and the International Church Headquarters.

One narrative states that Hyung Jin Nim has been a disloyal son who has been disrespectful of True Mother, who has the sole authority as the living representative of True Parents on earth, with the guidance of her trusted advisors, to make whatever changes she feels are necessary after Father’s passing.

The other narrative is that Hyung Jin Nim, as the International President and successor appointed by True Father and Mother in three crowning ceremonies, begged True Mother not to make changes to Father’s words as recorded in the Cheon Seong Gyeong and other key church documents such as the Family Pledge, the Blessing Pledge, the national anthem, etc. When he declined to publicly support these changes, he was replaced as the acting president of the American church. He then moved to Pennsylvania to start a new ministry with the support of his brother Kook Jin Nim, who had also been removed from his responsibility of overseeing church finances and businesses after he insisted on more transparency and accountability at Cheon Pyeong, and warning that failure to do so could endanger True Mother.

Many difficult questions arise. Who is right? Are the changes in the Cheon Seong Gyeong and other core church documents legitimate improvements or an unacceptable altering of True Father’s final words to the world? How can each of us show love and support for True Parents AND for the **whole** True Family? Must I choose one side? If so, how will that affect my faith, my eternal relationship with God and with brothers and sisters I’ve known for decades?

Thinking back to the time in the Fall of 2012 when Hyung Jin Nim came to serve as the acting American president, I remember his first action was to invite church members to meet with him in many cities around the country. In NYC, where I attended, he *listened* for nearly 7 hours to church members' concerns, their anguish and their complaints. I'd never seen any church leader do anything like this.

After that time, he called for more transparency and the establishment of governing church councils in each region and the nation, with the authority to make decisions and to report on church finances to brothers and sisters.

He and Yeon Ah Nim started sharing Father's words about Absolute Sex, and discussed how passages from Jesus' parables in the New Testament affirmed Father's teaching about the value of committed, marital love offered up to God.

I don't know how you reacted to what he was doing, but I felt like this was a long, long overdue *breath of fresh air*. Exactly the kinds of healthy, empowering changes that would inspire brothers and sisters to take more ownership.

And what about "Absolute Sex?" Given the crisis in marriage in virtually every country in the world, isn't this an urgently needed message that leads ultimately to Blessed Marriage? Isn't this a message desperately needed in many communities where ACLC has been active, as well as all of our communities in America?

When I heard that Hyung Jin Nim and Yeon Ah Nim had been told to stop speaking about this, I wondered, "who is ashamed of something that Father spoke about so many times?" *Isn't this couple, who have a powerful joint ministry, a beautiful representation of Father's words?*

Then who is saying they must shut their mouths? Who is issuing memos stating that no member should attend their church services? Who is saying members should not watch videos of their sermons? Who is trying to remove videos of their crowning by True Parents from the Internet?

There is a trend in our church towards formality that is disconcerting to many brothers and sisters I've spoken to. The words to Father's "Blessing of Glory" song have been replaced with flowery phrases of the Cheon Il Guk anthem. How can any poetic verse replace the blood-stained words of hope written by Father in prison? If Father used the term "God" in the Family Pledge that he wrote should we easily replace it with the more honorific term, "the Heavenly Parent(s)?"

Is the underlying intent of this distancing, formal language to reinforce a hierarchy where God can only be approached through "approved and authorized" sources? Authority does not come from flowery phrases or corporate memos that have been reviewed by a team of lawyers. Father taught us that the highest authority was my own God-given conscience. If that is true, we don't need to go to a palace to meet with God, we can meet God even in a cardboard shack, or in a modest church in rural Pennsylvania.

Some are saying that Hyung Jin Nim wants to demote the status of women. If that were so then why would he appoint a woman, Mrs. Erikawa, as the President of the Japanese Church? If that were true, why would his wife, Yeonah Nim, speak her own words nearly every Sunday in their joint ministry? Is there any other church leader you know who shares his pulpit in this way?

The fact that he has been saying that Father's words should not be changed is a testament to his deep convictions. Shouldn't his conscientiousness about this point be something to be grateful for and to admire? Does this diminish Mother's position as a victorious second Eve in any way? I don't think so.

The things that Hyung Jin Nim talks about ring true with me: transparency, self-governance, our responsibility and authority as tribal messiahs, sincere spirituality, unembarrassed pride about Father's teachings, and the overwhelming love and grace of God. More than that, I have strongly felt many times that *Father's spirit is with him!* He represents hope for the future of the Unification Movement. The sooner we embrace him the better.

Like you, my wife Miho and I have been praying for the unity and victory of Mother, Hyung Jin Nim and all of the True Children. How does the exclusion of Hyung Jin Nim from his ordained role help Mother to be more victorious in hers? Can True Mother go everywhere and solve every problem by herself? Doesn't she need her talented and yes, outspoken, sons and daughters to be active in every country in the world shaking things up for God? Of course she does.

What does it mean to be a filial son? Does it always simply mean to follow your parent's directions? If you truly loved someone and believed that their life was in danger, would you simply obey or would you risk your reputation, position and everything you have to protect them?

You may not understand or agree with Hyung Jin Nim's stance, but it would be hard to describe him as taking the easy or convenient course. That at least should merit some respect and prayers that all of this will lead to the good outcome that we all desire.

How could we possibly imagine that we are really supporting Mother if we have not found a way to also support Hyung Jin Nim's success as well? Would she be happy to hear us say, "Mother, you are great, but your sons are failures?" It is not either/or. Doesn't the Principle require that mature Central Blessed families support the victory of the *whole* True Family? That is what I believe and feel God is asking us to do.

In conclusion I would like to share a meditation written by Miho based on a dream she had a few weeks ago:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A deep snow has fallen, making the earth into a pure white "holy ground." I imagine True Parents are praying for world peace and harmony.

We're in the third year since True Father moved to the spirit world. We were running to follow Father's big, wide foot steps. Now I cannot find where his footsteps are... I find myself alone in the forest, but suddenly I find Father standing in front of me with a big, wide smile. He says, "I did not die. Every moment I am with you. Don't feel sad. Pray hard! Father is going to answer your prayers. Open your heart. Look for truth. If you feel that a certain path is a righteous one, keep going. Don't worry."

True Parents' lives were ones of continuous sacrifice. How long do they have to go that painful way? We cannot understand how difficult their lives are.

Abonim, he wanted to talk, but couldn't. He wanted to sit down, but there was no place to sit. His most precious children have to go to the desert. They are standing on Ground Zero. True Parents are watching with tears in their eyes.

(and she continues with this reflection)

I spent many years with the True Family. I saw with my own eyes that True Parents loved, protected and taught us, as their Cain children. They put their own children away in the back. Because of the Principle, they did that.

When I joined the church, I prayed to protect the True Family with my life. We have to protect them until they gain the victory. That is true, isn't it?

More than this, we shouldn't give more sacrifice to our True Mother. She cannot visit her own children? She can't hug and kiss them? That is the greatest sadness for any mother, don't you think so?

Don't you think that the True Children could say, "I love my own mother more than anyone"? I am a True Child. I was born from her womb. I drank my mommy's milk. Nobody can love her more than I do." With tears they could share these words.

Please pray about our responsibility to help the True Family succeed.

After this harsh winter, a warm spring is coming.

In my dream, True Mother was hugging the True Children and kissing their cheeks. Her tears and their tears were like a waterfall, melting a tall, thick wall. Father and Hyo Jin Nim were watching, with many tears as well. This day is coming soon. God showed me that this day is coming soon.

Miho Panzer, 2/23/2015

I believe that it is the heart of everyone here today to support the victory of True Mother and the entire True Family and for that reason I am honored to accept Hyung Jin Nim's appointment of me as American church president. Thank you!