

CELEBRATE THE FAMILY:
The Case for Blessed Marriage Education

We celebrated the institution of marriage yesterday with the Wedding of Sjoerd and Sammi. This morning I'd like to reflect with you on the institution of marriage, the Blessing and the Family – really to celebrate the family and also examine the value and need for marriage education.

I will surmise that when men and women marry, they harbor within their hearts the greatest hope and desire to experience and maintain an enduring relationship that will enrich their lives with love, harmony, happiness and joyfulness. Further, that they harbor within their hearts the great hope that they can establish a family that flows from and is imbued with that love and vibrancy. Such a hope is embodied in the following clip from the movie, “The Princess Bride” entitled “Mawwage” (<http://necessityproclivityanddelight.wordpress.com/2006/11/15/the-princess-bride-mawwia...> access 5/28/09).

“Mawwiage. Mawwiage is what bwings us togethew today. Mawwiage, that bwessed awwangement, that dweam within a dwean. And wove, twue wove, wiww fowwow you fowevah and evah...so tweasuwe youw wove.

But let us look squarely into the real experience of marriage today, an institution that is more like the following nursery rhyme:

“There was a little girl, who had a little curl, right in the middle of her forehead. And when she was good she was very very good and when she was bad, she was horrid.”

The following statistics published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2005). (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/divroce.htm> access 5/28/09)

- The number of marriages: 2,230,000
- Marriage rate: 7.5 per 1000 total population
- Divorce rate: 3.6 per 1,000 population (46 reporting States and D.C.)
- Which works out to a 48% divorce rate

The US Department of Justice *Office of Justice Programs – Bureau of Justice Statistics published the following statistics (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/fvs.htm> accessed 5/28/09):

“Compares family and non-family violence statistics from victimization through the different stages of the justice system. Family violence is defined as all types of violent crime committed by an offender who is related to the victim and includes spouse abuse, parental violence against a child and violence among other family members. Non-family relationships used for comparison include boyfriends and girlfriend, friends and acquaintances, and strangers. Data are drawn from

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victimization surveys, official police statistics, State and Federal court statistics and surveys of inmates in state prisons and local jails.”

- Family violence accounted for 11% of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002.
- About 22% of murders in 2002 were family murders
- Of the nearly 500,000 men and women in State prisons for a violent crime in 1997, 15% were there for a violent crime against a family member.

We're familiar with the headline grabbers related to such crimes. Take the recent case of Chris Coleman of Columbia, MO currently charged with murdering his wife Sheri and their two sons, ages 9 and 11. Then there are the cases of Scott Peterson or Mark Hacking.

I came across the following snippet online <http://ummali03.multiply.com/journal/item/548> - accessed 5/31/2009)

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to “honour” thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, “Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?” Without missing a beat one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered. “Thou shall not kill.”

Its scenarios and statistics such as the proceeding that compelled the California Healthy Marriages Coalition to produce the following document: Why Marriage Matters in America : (I will sample just a portion of the text -

“Why Marriage Matters in America: **Marital Success - Social Health** / better health-physical & mental; less injury, illness, disability; longer Life; children physically healthier; children emotionally healthier; lower infant mortality; lower child abuse; lower STD rates – **Marital Failure – Social Health**/higher teen alcohol/drug rates; more domestic violence; more sexual assault; teens more sexually active; teens more likely to smoke; teens more likely to use drugs; greater overall violence; high stepparent/other sexual abuse; greater depression; higher rates of suicide.”

We then are compelled to wonder, why and how did we get to be in such a dilemma? As we will see, the problem began with the realm of love, it is the realm of love that is still fraught with troubles and the undoing of that situation will necessarily center upon love. So, come with me on a brief journey to arrive at a more substantial comprehension of just what specific institution of marriage I would like to celebrate and support through a comprehensive course of education.

Let us start with the understanding that each individual is indeed the product of history, a concept containing a great amount of common sense. In this perspective I would define history, in particular human history, as the totality of or the substantial flow and convergence of human actions coupled with all internal realities that were enacted within the realm of time and space; the what, where, who and why of all human life from the level of the individual to the that of the

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world, from the beginning of human life to our current age. The “American Heritage Dictionary” defines history as “A narrative of events; a story; chronicle: A chronological record of events, as of the life or development of a people, country, or institution, as of the life or development of a people, country, or institution.” (P 625). Surely we can easily understand that each individual, what each of us calls our “I”, exists as a result of the lives and actions of our parents, grandparents and ancestors. We can also understand that those trail of events that have occurred within the specific nation of our birth, further played out within the larger community of nations, impacted and continues to impact our lives in such arenas as the opportunities or lacks thereof available to each of us or the social and material environments that may or may not be available. However, the greatness of the Divine Principle is perhaps best encapsulated in the understanding that each individual at his or her core is actually the product of the history of the **providence of restoration**. Such an understanding provides an underlying spiritual skeletal root, structure and meaning to what could easily and on the surface be perceived as random chains of events. Such an understanding is grounded upon the acknowledgement that in the early days of humanity’s existence there occurred a series of events that have come to be called the fall from grace or the original sin. Divine Principle clearly elucidates that this fall was none other than an illicit sexual union between the first woman (Eve) and the Archangel known as Lucifer and then a premature sexual relationship between this first woman (Eve) and the first man (Adam). (Divine Principle, pgs 58 – 61) Further, that this original sin occurred sometime in the midst of Adam and Eve’s growth period after they had achieved puberty. The Principle revelation explains that the point of their fall was approximately at the top of the Growth Stage (ie: based on a schematic growth pattern of Formation stage (7 yrs), Growth stage (7 yrs) and Completion stage (7 yrs) followed by individual Perfection/Completion and entrance into the Direct Dominion of God). The result of these most foul deeds was that the linear progression of the human race was initiated based on events not intended or hoped for by our Creator and that further carried the footprint of those first evil actions because all subsequent human players were imbued with a pseudo human nature grounded in those actions called the fallen nature, in addition to their original, God-given human nature. The result of such a cocktail of evil was that human activity continued to sink further and further to continually new lows of debasement and corruption as time and history progressed. It is also important to grasp the fact that the fall, in effect, set a spiritual barrier or ceiling past which humanity’s spiritual growth could not progress, as it could not be penetrated, or that barrier effectively halted and limited the forward momentum of humanity’s advancement towards the achievement of perfection or the realization of the First Blessing, to be spiritually fruitful or mature. This is the meaning of the following passage in Genesis 3: 24:

“He drove out the man; and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”

It is into this really messy situation that the wind of God’s Hope appears to shake up the situation. Now, I would like to point out that this process of restoration entails two providential courses required for complete restoration whose finally convergence marks the opportunity for restoration to make a quantum leap forward. Or it is in the blending of humanity’s efforts to prepare a landing pad for their salvation through the efforts of providential central figures AND

the most amazing hope for humanity – God’s chosen Messiah - that the fulfillment of the providence of restoration takes place. There is the course of the Messiah to appear and bring salvation to humanity and there is the historical restoration course of humanity, which culminates in their meeting the Messiah and receiving His salvation. There is the course which fallen humanity, including all past saints, prophets and significant providential figures such as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses walked to prepare a foundation and reception for the Messiah and there is also the course of the Messiah who acts upon that foundation, which includes a providence to absorb and complete the missions of past prophets and saints, especially those who modeled the course of the coming Messiah (see Part II, Chapter 2, Moses and Jesus in the Providence of Restoration, pages 225 -267).

So in fact, the fulfillment of historical victory occurs when the culmination of fallen humanities efforts **meet with God’s salvation providence**, which is spearheaded through His chosen Messiah. Now, though these are two distinct courses entailing two distinct arenas of responsibility, in fact since the Messiah absolutely represents God’s Heart/Love and Wisdom/Truth, we can understand that at His coming, He will reveal and encompass a comprehensive understanding of fallen humanity’s historical and imminent course through the new truth brought in order to support and empower those walking that course of restoration. In plain words, he will tell us how we got to the point of meeting him, what we should do to make the most of that meeting and what we must be doing going forward from that most significant encounter.

What I want us to focus on is that if we desire to solve all problems occurring in the realms of love we need to solve the deeper root of humanities sinfulness. We have come to the point in our journey where humanity has laid a Foundation for the Messiah and the Messiah, having gone his own preparatory course, now meets fallen humanity on that foundation. What happens next is absolutely an expression of God’s magnificent Grace. *Primarily we need to grasp that the process, called Salvation, entails a transition of lineage, specifically the change of a humanity descended as the result of the fallen actions of the Archangel, Adam and Eve imbued with fallen nature to a lineage issuing from an Adam and Eve who have fulfilled the first blessing and been given the approval of God to multiply His lineage and be the true progenitors of a Godly and good human race. The process of transition, known as engrafting or rebirth, is the only method by which fallen humanity can be saved or separated from the original sin and become part of the true, pure lineage and family of God.* It personifies Grace and is offered to humankind through the process of rebirth/Blessing, a unique ministry residing only in the persons of the True Parents, the returning Adam and Eve, whereby they are able to accomplish a metamorphosis of descendancy from a fallen lineage to an original lineage, or to eradicate the existence of a fallen lineage, *or the content of salvation is not a general elimination of sin emanating from some sacrificial action resulting in the absorption of humanity’s sinfulness, but rather the elimination of the fallen lineage that emanated from the original sin.* This is a crucial truth to grasp, that the root of sin is not simply the past and most abhorrent evil actions that were done but rather that those actions resulted in a substantial transformation in humanity’s lineage. We must be very clear here; the cure must target, be specifically tailored and designed to undo the specific sickness/disease. An absolute solution to humanity’s problem of sinfulness cannot be

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found in a change in action/behavior or even in the Messiah's right actions, even if He offers a personal sacrifice on behalf of humanity to resolve or absorb their sins. The only true solution must target the root of the problem or it must fix the corrupted human lineage. Also, since the problem began with the realm of conjugal love, the cure to the lineage occurs connected within the realm of conjugal love – hence the salvation of humanity's lineage through the Blessing occurs concurrent with the institution of Marriage. Here is the formula; since the fall occurred through the disobedience of Adam and Eve to God's Commandment and their committing the sin of the misuse of love with the Archangel and with each other, a new Adam and Eve must appear who obey God's Commandment, do not misuse love and further receive God's Blessing upon their marriage/union, thereby initiating the good, pure, original, Godly lineage and who then, through a ceremony and process called rebirth, extend the opportunity for entrance into that lineage to all descendants of the fallen Adam and Eve, or all fallen humanity. The pivotal key is that Salvation is centered on the transformation of putrid, poisonous and impure Love to pure, transformed and Godly Love and a muddled lineage including both goodness and sinfulness must be engrafted onto a lineage that has no connection to the original sin and totally is in alignment with God's Will and Love.

Now, let me briefly introduce the revolutionary concept of life after rebirth - The course after rebirth, the path that ensues from that point, transports "saved" humanity into uncharted territory, or the walking of trails that were never before trodden because honestly, such an opportunity was not previously available to any of the descendants of fallen Adam and Eve. I am speaking about the life and existence that would have been pioneered by Adam and Eve if they had not fallen and had been able to substantiate a life, society and world based on the Three Blessings. It follows, then, that from the granting of the Grace of rebirth/the Blessing, the mission of the Messiah then morphs, since He and His Bride are not only saviors but are fundamentally and essentially the victorious and un-fallen Adam and Eve, and thus they can now stand as the models and guides to the now saved humanity - teaching, instructing and modeling the true way for humanity to develop and live. Since they also inherit the position of the true ancestors of the lineage of God, they thus stand as the true ancestors and therefore the True Parents of humanity. This way of life for saved humanity is not explained in detail within the Divine Principle, but rather is done in vague and visionary terms, since the Divine Principle's purpose is to bring humanity to the point of receiving the Messiah and then preparing for rebirth/blessing. For detailed instructions related to life after blessing, humanity must look to the guidance, writings, speeches and examples of the True Parents.

So now I believe you catch a glimmer through this brief panoramic vista I have attempted to impart to you through our journey or what **I am taking about** when I say lets celebrate, nurture, educate and accomplish the incredible sacrament of Marriage & Blessing. The blended reality of Marriage and Blessing is a complete package which includes rebirth and the subsequent opportunity for an ideal expression of marriage – a multifaceted, multidimensional, magnificent outpouring of opportunity to unshackle love and let it explode and unfold to its fullest potential. It represents an opportunity for humanity to finally realize a social experience that fulfills the following words – True Family Gateway to Heaven – Family Federation for World Peace, pg 67:

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“Love has the power to create everything. The one who is born as the center of the whole universe by receiving all the love of the universe is none other than I. The highest purpose of Life is to be born through love, be raised in love, live by love, and to leave love behind. The most valuable thing to do is to fulfill, in the family, the rules of love that lie at the center of the universe. (Blessed Family – 1063, 1978.9.21)

Now, this Marriage/Blessing gateway and opportunity, with all its complexities, is not something that we should attempt to transverse or figure out by trial and error or intuition. We need wise counsel or an instructions manual would certainly be useful!!! This is where **Marriage and Blessing** Education should come into the picture and be an integral party of the process, from cradle to grave.

Let's talk about the Purpose of Education:

From Dr. Martin Luther King Jr (Morehouse College Student Paper, The Maroon Tiger, in 1947) (<http://www.drmartinlutherkingjr.com/thepurposeofeducation.htm>: - Accessed 5/28/09)

“We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living.”

From Khalid Baig “The Real Purpose of Education”<http://www.albalagh.net/education/education2.shtml> - accessed 5/28/2009

“To bring home the pivotal but forgotten role of education we need to recall that there is a fundamental difference between human beings and animals. Instincts and physical needs alone can bring ants, bees, or herds of beasts together to live in a perfectly functioning animal society. Human beings do not function that way. They are not constrained by nature to follow only those ways that are necessary for the harmonious operation of their society. If they are to form a viable, thriving society, they must choose to do so. What drives that choice is the sharing of common goals, beliefs, values and outlook on life. Without a common framework binding its members, a human society cannot continue to exist; it will disintegrate and be absorbed by other societies. Further, the society must ensure that the common ground will continue to hold from generation to generation. This is the *real* purpose of education. The education system of a society produces the citizens and leaders needed for the smooth operation of that society, now and into the future. Its state of health or sickness translates directly into the health or sickness of the society that it is meant to serve.”

Unification Thought (from the Study Guide published by Unification Thought Institute, 1974, pg 55) speaks about the purpose of education starts with three points or purposes:

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“The first point is a resemblance to God, the second point, the three blessings, and the third point, the growth period” (pg 55)

And also speaks of the idea to education in order to realize the perfection of individuality, the family and dominion over creation (Unification Thought, 1974).

What are some methods that can be used in this process? Unification Thought speaks about education of heart, moral standard and technique (Unification Thought, 1974).

I hope your getting the picture that Education is not only about facts and figures, skill gaining and technical training but, instead, is about culture and character building, conceptual vision conveying and moral/ethical mores imbuing.

So, what and where can we find such resources that could be used to realize such purposes as culture building and the sharing of emotional/spiritual/heartistic insights in relationship to Marriage and Blessing? Just a sidebar; I am concerned that my clarion call for a consistent investment in the realm of Blessing/Marriage not be construed to apply only to those members who are currently blessed. Not at all! This type of study would benefit all individuals even those not currently dwelling in the realm of matrimonial bliss. In fact, such a course of study can help single people to prepare themselves in mind and spirit so that when they do enter those hallowed halls of Blessing, they will have the optimum chance to create a successful Blessed Marriage and family. I would even hope that age appropriate material would emerge and be developed from within the current community of Blessed Central Families that could support such a progression of understanding and wisdom.

I would suggest that one way we could study about marriage would be through the use of Marriage Education material or that we learn from those who have invested tremendous cognitive and experiential efforts in this arena.

Further, I would suggest that we must utilize material specifically tailored and designed to provide and address the unique content and course of the Blessing or we must be careful to not neglect a course of study on this enormously revolutionary and quantum-leaping wisdom. Such a course of study must be geared to comprehend the very complex and unique dimensions of this sacrament of restoration and recreation. I am so overjoyed to share with you that we are so enormously blessed to have a great body of material that does just that. Over the 40 plus years of their ministry, the True Parents have provided us with a bounty of transcribed speeches on the Blessing that comes to us on the foundation of lives lived that totally reflect the greatness and challenges of the Blessing. Some of this material can be found in publications such as Cheon Seong Gyeong (especially Books # 3, 5, and 11), and Blessing and Ideal Family, but please, go forth and discover additional resources rooted in the revelations and words of the True Parents. Wonders of Wonders and Miracles of Miracles, as you dig into this material, I guarantee that you will find it actually consists of a comprehensive body of guidance ideally suited to provide an education of the heart, character as well as technique. This material is just what we need to launch a transformation of culture and to foster character development.

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And what methods could we utilize? Let us certainly invite the professional educators among us to provide useful insights into the possible tools and methodologies that could be used to reinforce and provide a quality education in this particular arena.

(Lesson Methodologies: Printable Tool for Teachers (GradeK-12) – accessed 5/28/09
(http://www.teachervision.fen.com/curriculum-planning/teaching-methods/48355.html?for_...)

Lecture, personal reading, Experiential opportunities such as observation, field trips, group discussion, interviewing, brainstorming opportunities, personal restating or rewriting of ideas, taking personal ownership of material studied – hands on, buzz sessions, role-playing, modeling, simulations, projects, assignments and tests.

I would humbly offer the following, non-exhaustive list of suggestions for starter to incorporate study of these two tracks or the Blessing and Marriage, into in your daily life: you could include study on both arenas in your Hoon-Dok-Hae, you should make time to attend programs on Marriage Education and Blessing Education, you could participate in small group meetings focused on Marriage and Blessing Material and participate periodically in intensive marriage skill training opportunities. I will leave the actual strategy to your personal genius; certainly God will use all these avenues and others that may become available to our community of Blessed Central Families. The overriding point is that it is crucial you make the study of this arena a priority, something that you keep on the front burner or neglect in this area will result in wasted opportunity to progress in a most crucial area of your life. I know that there are so many fronts that need to be attended to such as spiritual growth, a variety of skills training and investment, public service, health, financial responsibility to name just a few, but you also must absolutely work at your Marriage/Blessing to allow for and fuel forward going momentum, progress and growth.

My efforts to invest time in this important arena have just resulted in finding so many following gems such as the following from True Family Gateway to Heaven.

“Parents should be the head of the family and teachers should be the head of the educational institutions which represent society. Parents raise you by giving you milk thereby assisting your physical development as well as helping you emotionally. Then what is school for? It is a place where you are trained for your future life in society. If the family is the training ground of the emotions, then school is the experimental training ground for your future social life. But society is not where training ends... (pg 54)

“What kind of ideology is the cosmos-centered ideology? It is the true parent-centered ideology. After all, these are both ideologies upholding parents. This is the ideology of our house, the ideology of our nation, and the ideology of your individual self. Had human beings not fallen, whose ideology would rule the world? It would have been the Adam-centered ideology. This ideology is none other than the way of true parents. It is the ideology of the mother and father. There cannot be an ideology higher than this. Hence the Unification Church should link matters of the heart with heavenly ideology through the way of parents within the boundary of the

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original ideal family. As long as families that have internalized such an ideology remains, the Unification Church will not perish.” (pg 63-64)

Through my personal foray into the study of the Blessing and Marriage, I find that I am continually inspired to delve further into the available wisdoms in these arenas. I have found that my humble efforts to mine the material that is awaiting discovery have resulted in the blossoming of great zeal and passion and a gladdened and richly nourished heart or I find that am excited and compelled to discover even more gems, guidance and inspiration about the Blessing and Marriage as I traverse this path towards True Love. I wish you all the best in your efforts to fulfill your Commission. Study and live well in order that you can successfully build True Families and a truly Godly Society and world.