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**KOREA’S TONG-IL MOVEMENT**

**by Ch’oi Syn-duk**

I present here a brief picture of the Tong-il Church from the sociological point of view. I wrote a booklet entitled “A Comparative Study on the New Religious Groups in Korea” last year, which compared the Tong-il Church and Elder Park’s “Olive-Tree” Church with two established churches. (I used two kinds of Presbyterians for comparison.) This paper is a refinement of that work. Many reports have been made about these two religious bodies. There is, however, no one who really knows about their leaders, organizations, beliefs and practices. We have seen many families which have been destroyed, leaving unhappy husbands, sorrowful parents and miserable children because of these new religious movements. The purpose of this research is to help in the solution of these problems of disorganization of homes, and to make a scientific study about these groups, without emotional or biased opinions.

I. History of the Leader and the Church

The founder of the Tong-il Church or the Holy Spirit Association is Moon Sun-myung. He was born at Chongju, P’yong’an Puk-do, on January 6, 1920. He finished high school in Seoul and completed his college work at Waseda College, Japan, majoring in the study of electricity. In those days he was reputed by his friends to be a well-behaved student and a very devout Christian.

As to his family life, he once married an attractive and passionate Korean girl, who, however had had little education. She gave birth to his son, who is now a senior at Kyunghee attached High School. However, she did not understand the mission of her husband, Mr. Moon, and once she even had him placed under arrest. Finally they were divorced.

After his divorce, he fathered a son who is now in the second year of elementary school. The mother is unknown. In [page 102**]** 1960, at the age of forty-one, Mr. Moon married a girl eighteen years old. She was a student at Sung-jung Girls High School in Seoul. She was not only pretty and graceful but also fitted the principle of restoration held by Moon’s church more than anyone else. Their marriage is called the Feast of the Lamb by the people of the Tong-il church, and it has a very significant religious meaning. After the marriage ceremony, the bride was to be called the Mother of the Universe, or the True Mother, and was given the right to receive deep bows from believers. Up to this time only Mr. Moon had the right to receive the deep bows. After some time the Holy Mother delivered a daughter, who is now five years old, and a son, who is now three years old. These two children are regarded as sinless children by the church members. Thus, Mr. Moon is the father of four children from three different mothers.

Before Moon’s marriage believers, male as well as female, who longed to meet him and talk with him could easily arrange to be with him in the living room of a home attached to the church, staying until very late. They used to talk, sing and laugh without realizing how fast the night went, until after one or two o’clock in the morning. They called this their period of direct association with the master. Its purpose was to educate and train the believers, that is, to “restore” them. After the Feast of the Lamb, however, their course of restoration had to be changed. Now it is a period of family with family association. That is why ordinary believers cannot communicate with Moon directly but only through specially admitted people.

It is said that Mr. Moon received special revelations from God at the age of sixteen. In 1945, right after the liberation from Japan (his age was 27 years), he felt keenly the necessity of reforming the existing churches, and established an independent church in Pyongyang. In 1948, he was accused by the ministers of the existing churches, through sixty-four letters to the communist authorities, of disturbing the social order, and was put into Hungnam Prison. On October 14, 1950, he was released by the troops when our national army marched into Hungnam. He then came down to Pusan with two followers.

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He arrived at Pusan on January 27, 1951 and began to spread his teaching. In December, 1953 he happened to meet Mr. Yu Hyo-won (who is now the executive director of the church). They had a great deal in common and were so pleased with their mutual understanding that they tried to establish a church. Finally on May 1, 1954, they announced the establishment of their church under the name of the Holy Spirit Association for Unification of World Christianity located at 391 Puk Hak Dong, Seoul. In July, 1955, several senior members and four leaders as well as Mr. Moon were imprisoned under an accusation of injuring public morals. (This matter was reported in papers and journals.) However, on October 14, three months later, they were released as innocent by the decision of the Seoul District Court. On May 31, they received registered certification as a legal social organization. Thus they were no longer regarded by the government as a heretical religious group disturbing the social order.

The church’s statistics as of January 1964 are given as follows: The total number of churches is 891, and the number of believers has reached 32, 491. In Japan, there are 59 churches and 2,450 believers. In the United States, Miss Kim Young- woon (an ex-professor at Ewha) was the one mainly responsible for spreading the new faith. (She went to the United States under the status of a student at Oregon State University in 1959.) She came back to Korea in 1964, but she left Korea again last January. In addition to Miss Kim, a Mr. Kim Sang-chul who used to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been preaching in Oregon and more recently in Berkeley, California. Another worker for the Tong-il Church in America is Colonel Park Bo-hee who used to be assistant to the Military Attache at the Republic of Korea Embassy in Washington, D.C. He is now discharged from the service and is working in an organization for the promotion of American-Korean goodwill. These three missionaries had established more than twenty churches in the United States as of July, 1964, in Oregon, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington D.C., Berkeley, etc.

Members of these American churches invited Mr. Moon to [page 104**]** the United States, and he set out on his trip on January 28, 1965, accompanied by several attendants such as Miss Kim Young-woon, Mrs, Ch’oe Won-pok, and Mr. Park Bo-hee. In preparation for the trip he had studied English for several years. He stayed in the U.S. for seferal months travelling around the country. In July Mr. Moon left America and traveled around the world, visiting forty countries and reaching Korea again on October 10, 1965. This trip to the U.S. seems to have been a profitable one since he encouraged the believers in America and appointed sole districts for them and also had opportunity of interviewing ex-president Eisenhower. The American church members were stimulated by the meeting with their Master, Moon. They think it is fascinating to have a living Lord with them. They are preparing to dispatch missionaries to twelve different countries within this year. Some American missionaries have already gone to such countries as Austrialia, Arabia, England, Brazil, Japan, etc.

II. Organization of the Church

The organization of the Tong-il church is so systematic that one thinks of communists. They pose as “heavenly communists.” Their headquarters is located in Seoul. Mr. Yoo Hyo-won is the executive head of the Holy Spirit Association. Under his leadership is: (1) The administrative section, which deals with general affairs, cultural affairs, rural districts, and business affairs; (2) the student secton, which includes departments for middle school students, nigh school students, young children, and Sunday school students; and the national network. There are provincial heads, “Kun” or district heads, “Myon” or sub-district heads, “Li” or village heads, and individual evangelists. Thus the Tong-il faith has been spread throughout the country to every small village.

Seoul is on the provicial level, and its organization is as follows: it consists of three districts. The first district is the Youth Division, the second district is the Men’s Division, and the third district is the Women’s Division. The Youth Division in turn is subdivided into two areas, a girls, division and a boys, division. Then each sub-division is divided into three groups. For the boys, [page 105**]** Seoul National University students take the lead, and for the girls Ewha University students take the lead. The second and the third districts are divided into three areas respectively, and each of these areas is subdivided into three groups. One group consists of about twelve persons. One area consists of 36 persons and one district consists of 108.

Special emphasis is put on youth in the Tong-il Church. They don’t expect much fron those above forty. Old people over forty, they think, should regard themselves as the sacrifices offered on the altar to bring the kingdom of heaven on earth through Mr. Moon.

There is a communication system formed between the members so that they can act immedaitely in matters which concern them all, such as passing on information, acting on Moon’s direction or responding to some urgent notice by the church. Each group in its respective district has its own weekly meeting, and has many activities besides studying their principles.

Training Meetings for Orientation

They have several peculiar practices of their own: In order to provide many evangelists for the church, they frequently hold training meetings. A national meeting is usually held for forty days. During this period they have the participatns master their principles and do many drills. They lodge them together for that period, as in the military service, so that they can learn to endure all the difficulties they will have to face, mentally as well as physically, while doing their evangelistic work.

*Evangelistic Activity*. They set aside special evangelistic periods for organized proselytizing, twice a year. The first term is in the summer for forty days from July 20 to the end of August, and the other is in the winter for forty days from December to the end of January. Nearly all members of the Seoul church who can read the Korean alphabet participate in this activity. Their destinations are settled by drawing lots. All the costs for this evangelistic work are borne by the participants, individually- [page106**]** When they go out they teach the children the Korean alphabet and mathematics as well as their church principles. They work hard with the farmers and help the villagers in any way they can. Because they are not a financial drain on the farmers, but help them with sincerity, many of them are welcomed by the rural administrators as well as by the people. Also, there are some over-seer preachers who go around to advise and assist the evangelists in their work. They associate with the village administrators, such as Yi-chang, and the head of the police station, winning their cooperation. The Tong-il Church is growing more rapidly in the rural areas than in Seoul.

*The Church Guard*. The Tong-il Church where Moon lives is guarded by two believers every night. They do not sleep. Each of the three districts takes the responsibility of guarding the church for ten days each. The reason for the guard, so they are taught, is to defend this sacred Church from Satan who already controls the rest of the world, and who, liking darkness, is more likely to come at night.

*Celebrations*. They used to hold celebrations on Moon’s birthday, and on the day he came out of prison, the day he was released as innocent from Seoul District Court, the last day of the year, etc. But after his marriage the celebrations have been limited to such days as Moon’s birthday, which is *January 6th* of the Lunar year; Moon’s wedding day, the *Lunar March 1st* which is called the Day of Parents; and *June 1st* which is called the Day of the Universe, referring to the redemption of the universe from Satan’s control; *October 1st*, the Day of Children which is a Thanksgiving day for them; and also Moon’s two children’s birthdays, etc. Christmas is not so meaningful to them; besides, they believe the date of December 25th is not the correct one, but that January 3rd is the correct date of Christ’s birth.

*Joint Weddings*. They have had several joint wedding ceremonies. From the time of the establishment of the church in 1954 until 1960 (when Moon got married) no believers were permitted to get married. Not surprisingly, this rule was relaxed after Moon’s own marriage. A joint wedding of three couples [page 107**]** was the first Tong-il wedding ceremony after Moon’s wedding. The second ceremony was for 36 couples, the third for 72 couples, and the fourth (and last so far) was for 124 couples. They expect to hold another mass wedding ceremony soon. These marriages have been arranged by Moon and the leaders of the church. Of course the mates are found only within the church. The mass wedding ceremonies have always been presided over by Moon and performed by him. He and his wife bless the marriages. Those who are blessed at their weddings are intended to be, and in fact they swear to be, the nucleus of the church and to fulfill their obligations to the church.

*Examination on the principles*. They give occasional examinations on the principles of doctrine of the church. These are held throughout the country on the divisional level, the district level, the church level and the national level. Anyone who wants to be recognized in the Tong-il church must pass all kinds of examinations, besides making evangelistic contributions.

III. Their Beliefs

*God, the Father*. “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27) From this scripture they conclude that God has the dual characteristics of both male and female, and of subject and object in himself. Yet God is a masculine character to his creation, therefore he is called the father of mankind in the scriptures.

God is, of course, an everlasting and absolute being who created the universe.

*Jesus Christ*. Jesus is God’s only beloved son. He came to this world in Adam’s place, in other words, he is the second Adam. The fall of men into sin was brought about by the first Adam and Eve, therefore the restroration of men must be made by the Second Adam and Eve. Man could have been restored to his original perfection by being grafted both spiritually and bodily into Jesus. But owing to Christ’s physical death on the cross, only the spiritual grafting into Jesus became possible and [page 108**]** spiritual salvation alone was achieved. This means that he failed in physically grafting us into himself. In order to restore man’s original state of perfection in spirit and in body there had to be a Second Advent.

Jesus therefore did not accomplish the mission actually in-tended for him: the restoration of man both in spirit and body, and of the whole universe. He accomplished only half of his mission; he achieved for man only spiritual salvation. Whoever believes in him is saved spiritually and goes to Paradise, but his, body still remains under Satanic dominion; therefore, his spirit belongs to God while his body is under Satan’s domination. It was after he saw the impossibility of fulfilling his original mission that Jesus began to preach about his return. The purpose of the Second Advent is to fulfill the rest of the physical salvation.

Who then is he who comes at the second advent? It is the one who was worthy of the “wedding feast of the Lamb.” And who is he? It is Moon, with his wife in their Tong-il church. The second advent is already fulfilled on earth.

Moon, therefore, is superior to Jesus Christ, because he fulfilled the mission which Jesus could not accomplish. Jesus is no longer one of the Trimity, the Holy Son, because of his failure in his original mission. But Moon Sun-Myong in the Tong-il church has taken his place. Thus Moon is not only the founder of the church but also he is the Messiah of the Second Advent, one of the Trinity, a living God.

*The Holy Spirit*. If Adam and Eve had not fallen, they could have become the ideal parents of mankind. Because of their fall, however, men have become illegitimate children and have no true parents in God’s sight. They have the devil as their father, as Jesus said in John 8 :44 : “Your father is the devil and you choose to carry out your father’s desires”. Therefore, before the restoration of all mankind, one true father must be restored. As God created one man, Adam, from whom he made a woman, Eve, he restores one man first, and he extends the work gradually until the entire restoration is accomplished. The Divine Word became flesh for the second time in order that Adam might be [page 109**]** restored, and Jesus was thus a true father of mankind. (Isaiah 9:6)

The fall was brought about by the first Adam and Eve, therefore restoration must be made by a Second Adam and Eve. But who is the Second Eve? If Jesus was the true father, who was the true mother? It was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in Eve’s place and cleanses sins which originated from the first Eve. Since the Holy Spirit is a Mother Spirit, the Spirit moves man’s heart and regenerates sinners. No one can stand before Jesus as a bride until he receives the Holy Spirit. No one can believe in Jesus as the true father until the Holy Spirit fills him. Thus he is born again by receiving new life through the love of the true parents, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

However, being the spiritual parent (as mentioned above) was not enough. Jesus should also have taken a bride physically in Eve’s place, in order to fulfill his original mission physically too. But because of his early death on the cross he was unable to have the blessed marriage, which God first intended for Adam and Eve.

There is, however, a man who achieved the blessed marriage, the Feast of the Lamb, in order to fulfill the part wherein Jesus had failed. It is Moon. We have seen that Moon is the Second Advent, superior to Jesus. His bride then takes the place of the Holy Spirit.

The Nucleus of the Principles (of Belief)

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. (Genesis 1:27-28)

God created Adam and Eve so they might become perfect and produce sinless children, and that they might dominate the whole universe, responding to God’s love with the umost beauty beauty and dory. In other words a God-centered family, a God-centered couple and God-centered parents and children make [page 110**]** up the basic unit of mankind.

However Genesis 3:6 tells that Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which was forbidden. This sin was passed on to their children, and it is still inherited by us today. It is, of course, no sin to eat fruit. Therefore the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil should not be interpreted literally but symbolically. Genesis 3:7 says that after they ate the fruit they felt ashamed, and sewed fig leaves together and made aprons in order to concerl their lower parts. It is human nature to conceal what is wrong. The eating of the fruit, therefore, represents in allegory that Adam and Eve had unlawful and immoral sexual relations which God had forbidden. The fallen Archangel tempted Eve to adultery. She, in turn, tempted Adam. Since their sin was adultery, it tainted their, blood, and veneration after generation inherited the sin through their blood. Thus the descendants of Adam be- came the children of Satan. Thus people have been subjected to Satan’s dominion and have become Satan-centered couples and Satan-centered parents of Satan-centered children, Since that time, 6,000 years ago, God has been working for cosmic restoration. Every time, however, his will has been delayed and not yet fulfilled because of man’s rebellion against him.

Now is the time to complete the providence of restoration. The Lord of the Second Advent is to come again in the status of the True Parent of man. He will overcome Satan to save all men physically as well as spiritually so that they will become as brothers and sisters in a cosmic divine family which will establish, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

IV. Motivation for Attending This Church

*Direct Motivation*. My research on the *Comparative Study of New Religious Groups* shows the following elements of motivation in Tong-il Church believers:

1. They believe their church is superior to others. Their principles are logical. They have many experiences of divine revelation. They believe that this church is the only road for the salvation [page 111**]** of the Korean people who are suffering from poverty and misery.

2. They are disgusted with the traditional churches, because of the disputes and divisions in these churches, and because their doctrines seem illogical.

*Indirect Motivation*. In my research I asked people 16 questions in multiple choice form in regard to their beliefs. In the traditional churches, the answers given were relatively varied with, at the most, 60% uniformity in response, though the response to most questions showed even less uniformity. On the other hand in the Tong-il Church, the uniformity of response to nearly all questions was 100%; that is, everyone agreed with what their leader had thought. And in Elder Park’s Church, the uniformity of response ranged from 80%—100% .

This indicates that the members of the traditional churches, even though they were selectively chosen from senior members (deacons, deaconesses, etc.) are very unsure about what they believe. If their belief is so vague, it will not be very effective when they need spiritual strength. Since they they are not sure what they believe in, they go to church only as a matter of form.

Some Unique Characteristics of the Tong-il Church.

(1). *This church is built around Mr. Moon*. To his followers he is the True Father, the Lord of the Second Advent, the Holy Son. Their beliefs as well as their practices are Moon-centered> as is explained in the foregoing description of beliefs. Of all the churches called Christian in Korea, the Tong-il is most removed from the established churches in matters of belief.

(2). *They value mystical experience very highly*

The prefatory note of the first printed copy of the *Divine Principle* says that the Principles were revealed by God to Mr. Moon over a period of twenty years. God constantly opened Moon’s spirtitual eyes and he was able to communicate with God himself, or the Lord Jesus, and was able to talk to other saints in Paradise. On accepting these Principles many have [page 112**]** received the baptism of the Holy Spirti, healing from sickness, speaking in tongues, prophecy, visions, and voices from God. Some are able to communicate with the Lord Jesus.

They regard dreams as significant. Believers talk about their dreams and ask Moon to interpretet them or try to measure the stauts of their faith in proportion to the significance of Mr. Moon’s role in their dreams.

They also take witches and fortunetellers seriously. These witches and fortunetellers, even though possessed by wicked spirits, may perceive Moon more correctly than people in other established churches. Just as men who were possessed by devils in Jesus’ time shouted “You son of God” when they saw Jesus, so today witches and fortunetellers testify concerning who Moon really is.

(3). *They pay a minimum of attention to the function of social integration*. They regard the existing world as under the dominion of Satan. They believe that the people are descendants of Satan. If one’s marriage was performed according to the customs of the existing social order, the relationship of husband and wife should not be maintained any more if possible. One should not love his parents more than he loves Moon. For Jesus said in Matt. 10:37 “No man is worthy of me who cares more for father or mother than for me; no man is worthy of me whe cares more for son or daughter..........” People are to establish the Kindgom of heaven on earth only through Moon’s blessing. They will be concerned with the social order wholeheartedly only in the world of the new kingdom.

(4). *They emphasize cultural characteristics*.

The beliefs of the Tong-il church are of such a nature as to encourage believers and cause them to be proud of being Koreans. For Korea is now an underdeveloped and wretched country financially as well as politically. It is, however, to be the highest honored country by producing the Lord of the Second Advent. Referring to Revelations 7 :2—4, one who has the seal of the living God will come forth from the East. The Lord of the Second Advent will appear from the East, especially from a na tion [page 113**]** which has been tried by unmerited sufferings and persecutions for a long period in history. Much innocent blood will be shed there. For God has not been relieved from divine grief and has not had rest from the labor of restoration. Jesus was a universal sacrifice on the altar of the Jewish nation. Likewise the Lord of the Second Advent will be a cosmic sacrifice and his nation will become a universal altar, therefore the nation will be divided into two sections, symbolizing Cain and Abel. Since six thousand years of human history will come to a conclusion at this point, this nation will become the ideal Fatherland of mankind. There will be a time when all Western people will envy the people of such a nation, and they will also have difficulty in learning their language.

(5). *Their systematic organization*.

Their organization has been described already. The hierarchical order of the church, the rapidity of its communication, the members’ devotion to Master Moon, and their zeal for the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth are quite astounding. In such a systematic society, if there is anyone who neglects his duty to the church, he will have difficulty in keeping up with others. Some dropouts have been caused by such heavy requirements from each member of the church. One can easily see that there are in that church many college students or graduates whose devotion to the work of the church is more of a social nature, saving people from poverty of powerlessness, than of a religious nature.

(Note to second Edition: This is an account of the early history of the “Unification Church” which has achieved considerable international attention during subsequent years.)