

The Eye of a Needle

My Life of Faith
Henry Masters



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My thanks also go to my long-time friend, Alec Herzer, and his son, Une, for the skill with which they prepared the artwork.

My love and gratitude are extended to my parents; my wife, Avril; our children and grandchildren, without whom there would be no book.

I dedicate this book to:

**Reverend and Mrs Sun Myung Moon,
Our True Parents.**

*Henry Masters
Stanton Fitzwarren
Spring 2010*

Foreword

From his Wiltshire childhood to boat building in Alabama to missionary work in Cuba and his eventual return home, the life-story that Henry Masters shares in this autobiography is an extraordinary tale of an extraordinary life. It makes a profoundly moving read, and it is a privilege to be given such simple and telling access to one man's life, steering a way through life's oceans by the power of faith.

Henry Masters sees this life as being played out in three significant stages, and you will note that he has arranged this single volume in three 'books'. We all know that bittersweet feeling of having opened a new book and become absorbed in its pages and the magnificent ride that it provides only to have to close it for the final time when the story ends. We may wonder, for a moment, whether anything of its like will come again. This book, *The Eye of a Needle*, gives the reader that experience three times.

I am very glad that in Book One, Henry has written the history of his family background, childhood and life prior to the great development and catalyst for change that befell his family - meeting the Unification Church and Sun Myung Moon. It is a fascinating piece of social history peppered with beautiful observances that allow one to grasp something notoriously elusive: Englishness. You know it when it charms your senses.

There is much that I recognize in this story - from all three books; it has many resonances with my life and

upbringing in England and my church life abroad. My father, too, was an architect. He interrupted his studies, as Henry did, to join the Royal Engineers and was sent to India and Burma. My own father encouraged me, when I announced that I wanted to interrupt my architecture studies (yes, I did that too - but in this case to join the Unification Church), by saying that he was asked at my age to go and fight the Japanese but that, hopefully, I would do something more positive and worthwhile. These words were uttered with a certain prescience as, six months later, I found myself in Japan as a missionary.

I met the Unification Movement in 1975 and soon got to learn about the Masters family and their role in the development of the Church in Britain, but I did not have the pleasure of getting to know them personally until several years later. In meeting the Movement, I felt that I had been led by God to people of God - there was a purity and genuineness about these 'brothers and sisters', and a love amongst them, that I was overjoyed at finding. Henry and Avril exemplify these precious qualities embodied by so many who have been drawn to follow and support the work of Rev and Mrs Moon, the True Parents.

On joining the Movement, I was shocked to find that there were parents and relatives of adult members who strongly opposed their loved-ones' involvement, to the extent of disinheriting them. Some even bought the services of 'de-programmers', faith-breakers (a thuggish trade still not roundly condemned by the British press) hired to force them to leave the Church. We should remember that this was the prevailing pattern in the 70s and early 80s: young adults joining as full-time missionaries, and parents opposing them, urged on by the self-righteous and exploitative crusading of the British

press. So, set against this background, Henry and Avril's commitment to join the Church through their daughter was very much counter to this pattern; the gift of their substantial inheritance was exceptional (a gift that goes on giving, incidentally), and their consistent standard of loyalty and devotion was, and is, extraordinary. It is Henry's nature to mention these things in only the most polite and unassuming way (as in the title's reference to Mark 10:25), so I feel it is my job to insert a bit of gritty realism here, for which I make no apology.

Every time I think of Henry and Avril, and especially when I set eyes on Henry with his gentle, constant air of calm, I wonder how they could survive life in the Unification Movement. It can only be because of their exceptional personal qualities and their very real faith. The camel would not go through the eye of the needle, so the man made himself poor in order to gain a life of great spiritual wealth.

There is much in Book Two and Book Three that any Unificationist will recognise, although few will have been involved with such pioneering design and engineering tasks as Henry and his colleagues; and there is much that they will be able to read between the lines. The Unification Church life and culture through its pioneering years has developed its own peculiar ways of doing things - some justified, others perhaps a little idiosyncratic - the same way that a family survives its eccentric relatives: by faith, hope, and love, for the most part. By no means can everyone survive this, however, and it has been a particularly difficult course, it has to be said, for many of those married couples who met the Movement.

Surrounded by young, single members who might

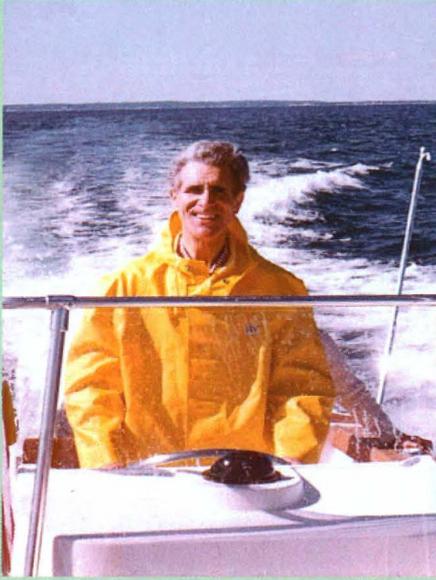
have lacked empathy, and superiors who, quite possibly, may have acted on occasion in a 'superior' way, Henry and Avril must have endured so much. If you listen carefully as you read, those blanks between the words and lines will speak to you. I wish I could, by offering my sincere apologies and deepest respect, wipe out the pain of any and every mistreatment they may have suffered, however small.

The Eye of a Needle will be an eye-opener to those observers intrigued to know more about Sun Myung Moon and at least one great concern of his: how to harness the potential of the world's oceans.

This, I believe, is an important document. It will be so, certainly, to the Masters family in present and future generations; it is also important for the Unificationist community worldwide. For those of us who, like Henry and Avril, look to Rev and Mrs Moon as fulfilling a messianic role, as 'True Parents', it is a wonderful lesson in why we are here and why we should remain grateful to the end. Even for the general reader it stands as an extraordinary testament to living a life of faith - what it means to live a life of sacrifice, devotion and of 'putting God first'.

Henry ends by noting some profound patterns that reveal the hand of God at work, the closing of circles both in his own life and in the particular providence of God of which he has been a part. It is as if, in entering the final stages of his long and productive life, a great wisdom has settled upon him, that by having kept a steady line through all the trees he can finally see the wood in all its majestic glory. And in sight of the wood, a place to retire, a coming home. Thank you, Henry.

David Hanna



The Eye of a Needle

In telling his own life story, architect Henry Masters recounts the history of his English country ancestors and how he came to inherit a Wiltshire estate. This was later to be given away when, through their eldest daughter, his family decided to embark on a spiritual path together. This new direction led him to turn his architectural skills to a whole new area, that of boat design and manufacture. All this took place under the direct guidance and inspiration of the founder of the new religious movement they had joined, the Rev Dr Sun Myung Moon.

These ventures took him to various parts of the United States and Korea. Not everything was plain sailing, for sure, but in a third phase of very active retirement, Henry and his wife, Avril, took up a path of spiritual leadership in Florida and Cuba, until returning back full circle to live on the Wiltshire farm they had left so many years before. Told in his own words, this compelling account will enlighten as many people as it will surprise.

