

## **From the Unification Church to the Unification Movement, 1994-1999: Five Years of Dramatic Changes**

**By Massimo Introvigne - An expanded version of this paper will be part of Massimo Introvigne's book "The Unification Church", to be published in the series "Studies in Contemporary Religion" by Signature Books**

The Unification Church, founded by Reverend Sun Myung Moon in 1954, has gone through such changes between 1994-1999 that one may even wonder whether it still exists as a church or has converted itself into a somewhat different "Unification movement". The mid-1990s have seen significant changes for Reverend Moon's organization. On May 1, 1994, the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity was celebrated in Seoul. According to the Reverend Moon, this event represented the attainment of a fundamental stage in his movement's history, which permitted him to declare the conclusion of the "cycle" of the Unification Church as such. He then inaugurated the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) which combined all the organizations the Reverend Moon had created. The Reverend Moon affirmed that the "course" of religion was finished and that, with the beginning of the new "era of the family", God will now meet humankind in the family. At this time it was declared that it was necessary to campaign for the purification of love and the sanctification of the family. Thus other religious organizations which possess similar ethical standards will be invited to participate in this umbrella organization. The Unification Church will continue, in order to support the religious functions of its members, as the Unification Family Church, one of the many religious organizations within the FFWPU. With these changes, one may wonder what are the implications for the future of the Unification Church as a religious organization.

At the level of the canonical texts, a color-coded version of Wolli Kangron (the "exposition of the Divine Principle"), was published on September 30, 1994, and became the primary standard reference until November 1, 1997. At that latter date the Reverend Moon began the tradition of Hoon Dok Hae, including a daily study session in the morning, for which excerpts from his sermons were prepared, and regarded as "complementary expression of the Completed Testament Word," together with the Wolli Kangron.

Another relevant change saw the Reverend and Mrs. Moon shift the focus of their activity from North America to South America. In numerous speeches the Reverend Moon referred to North America as the equivalent of the Protestant North Europe and Latin America of the Catholic Southern Europe. The Reverend Moon claims to support the "greater unification" of the Americas before attention can shift towards Europe and Africa. There has been greater missionary activity in Latin America and considerable financial investment in Uruguay. This has alarmed the Catholic church in some countries. There have been campaigns in the Latin American media, for example, to ban foreign Unificationist missionaries.

One the most significant Unificationist projects in Latin America is the New Hope Farm Project, now called New Hope East Garden. Referred to locally as paradise on earth, the meeting point of the Miranda and Prata rivers captured the imagination of the Reverend and Mrs. Moon, when they were fishing in the untamed forest west of Brazil, as a "Garden of Eden." At the center of the South American continent, one area may indeed appear as an untouched paradise, while another is deforested and polluted. The New Hope East Garden Project aims to provide both moral and formal education for residents and visitors, culminating in long-distance learning

projects operated in cooperation with the University of Bridgeport in the United States. The University of Bridgeport was rescued from severe financial troubles by the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA) in 1992 in return for majority shareholding. Since then \$100 million has been spent on the University of Bridgeport. Since PWPA is funded by the International Cultural Foundation (ICF) which was established by Rev. Moon to promote academic, scientific, and cultural activities, the University of Bridgeport has been often referred to in the press as "controlled by Rev. Moon". According to Rev. Moon's projects, the University of Bridgeport should become an important component, together with the Sun Moon University in South Korea, of the proposed World University Foundation. This is conceived as a network of universities which will allow students to study at several universities either by distance learning or by changing their residency. Another project initiated at the University of Bridgeport, on November 21, 1998, is the Health and Science Centre whose aim is to incorporate all types of Eastern and Western medicine, both orthodox and alternative, in one institution.)

The New Hope East Garden hopes to diversify land use from ranching to a variety of crops in thirty-three areas around the state. The development of fish farms, the reclamation of flora and fauna, reforestation, and a wider mix of crops accompanied by agricultural research and skills education are seen as the means to revitalize the misuse of this fertile land. Having invested \$25 million and bought 7.5 million acres of land, according to Cesar Zeduski, spokesman for the project, the New Hope East Garden is developing across the state with the rapid construction of buildings. Dr. Tyler Hendricks, the U.S. president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, wrote that "Rev. Sun Myung Moon views the New Hope East Garden as the zero (i.e., beginning) point for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. There are millions of empty square miles between Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires and Campo Grande. They are verdant, luxuriant plains and hills and valleys. They await the loving and strong hand of a true owner, who can make them abundant for the sake of a hungry world." (quoted in Alex Bellos, "Moon's Last Stand," Guardian's Saturday Review(London), September 26, 1998). It is unclear to what extent members may be called to immigrate to Mato Grosso do Sul. "Blessed families" have been asked to attend a forty-day workshop at the New Hope East Garden and have their photograph taken with the Reverend and Mrs. Moon as one qualification for "registration for Heaven." Two conferences on "Preservation and Sustainable Development in the Pantanal" have been organized in 1999 and a Web site has been opened on this subject ([www.pantanal.org](http://www.pantanal.org)).

Another important development has been the repentance movement at Chung Pyung Workshop Centre in South Korea. Chung Pyung had long been a holy ground for the Unification Church, but since 1995 workshops began to liberate Unificationists from evil spirits. Mrs. Moon's deceased mother, called Dae Mo Nim (Great Mother) by Unificationists, is said to cooperate from the spiritual world with a medium, Mrs. Hyo Nam Kim, who leads the workshops. With the assistance of angels, many spirits are said to be encouraged to leave Unificationists' bodies and go to the spiritual world for a Divine Principle workshop led by Heung Jin Moon, the Reverend and Mrs. Moon's son who died in a car crash in 1984. By the beginning of 1999, over 300 three-day workshops and thirty forty-day workshops have taken place and more than 250,000 members have participated. There are a number of testimonies of miraculous physical healing as well as people claiming to have seen angels or the liberation of resentful spirits from their bodies. A further development has been the claim of liberation and then education and Blessing of ancestors which has become a regular feature of both the Chung Pyung seminars and Mrs Hyo Nam Kim's visits to other nations. Up until September 1999 the liberation ceremonies were exclusively directed at the first seven generations of members' ancestors on the father's side, with plans for further ceremonies later to liberate up to 120 generations. There are indications that liberation ceremonies for the ancestors on the Mother's side will be available soon. For blessed members who have had children who have died there is an occasional ceremony to make a connection to their child in the spirit world, where they can grow and mature up to the level at which they can be matched and blessed.

The Chung Pyung Workshop Centre is also where a Unificationist temple is to be built holding 10,000 people. This is to be opened on the Reverend Moon's 80th birthday on 10 February 2000. It is seen by Unificationists as providentially significant in relation to King Solomon's temple. The fact that it is being built by the voluntary donations of those participating in the workshops at Chung Pyung is also seen as significant.

Through the Chung Pyung Workshops, a new type of "blessing" has been initiated. The "Heaven and Earth Blessing" is said to allow the spirit of a spouse who has died to return to live with the widower who remains on

the earth. According to speeches by Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak and Mrs. Hyo Nam Kim, the liberation of resentful spirits has been followed by their education and then "blessing" in the spiritual world. Billions of spirits are said to have been "blessed." The spirit world seems paramount among the Reverend Moon's most recent concerns. The messages of deceased Unificationist leader San Hung Lee from the spirit world (see Sang Hun Lee, *Life in the Spirit World and on Earth*, recorded by Young Soon Kim, New York: Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, 1998) - texts which has achieved a quasi-canonical status in the Unification movement - are, in this respect, "integral to a providential event. The fifth chapter [of the book containing Lee's messages] is a record of Lee's interviews, at Rev. Moon's request, with mostly infamous personages--Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, etc. Within a month of that communication, at the blessing of 120 million couples on June 30, 1998, these same personages were blessed as the representatives of all wicked people, thereby opening the gate for the 'liberation of Hell'" (Andrew Wilson, "Visions of the Spirit World: Sang Hun Lee's 'Life in the Spirit World and on Earth' Compared with Other Spiritualist Accounts," *Journal of Unification Studies* 2 (1998): 123-47, at 123).

Beginning in 1995, the Reverend Moon brought many senior Korean leaders of the Unification Church to forty-day workshops at Chung Pyung. At the conclusion, the Reverend Moon initiated what he called National Messiahship. Each nation is to be led by a group of four families: one from Korea, one from Japan, one from America or Great Britain or France, and one from Germany or Austria or Italy. Elder couples, who volunteered to participate after attending the workshop in Chung Pyung, chose their country by lottery. They were told to live in that country from that time on and to encourage their descendants also to live there to restore it for God. This has become a major change in the structure of the Unification movement.

The year 1998 saw less pleasant developments for the Unification movement. As a result of the Asian economic crisis, but also of internal mismanagement, a number of businesses of the Tong Il group in Korea collapsed under massive debts. Nansook Hong, the divorced wife of the Reverend and Mrs. Moon's elder son Hyo Jin Moon, penned a book, *In the Shadow of the Moons: My Life in Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Family* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1998) ghost-written by Eileen McNamara, a journalist from the *Boston Globe* who had published a number of critical stories about Unificationism. The book depicts Nansook's fourteen years of marriage with Hyo Jin as plagued by her husband's drug use, adultery, and in the end physical violence. Although at the end of bitter divorce proceedings, one cannot expect either party to be truly objective, Hong's tale of abuse is credible, and the Unification Church had acknowledged Hyo Jin's personal problems well before publication of the book (Hyo Jin was "reblessed" to a new wife, Yun Ah Choi, on February 5, 1999, in Seoul, the first instance of "reblessing" among the "True Children" of the Reverend and Mrs. Moon). More serious was Hong's charge that, while promoting family values in their teachings, the Reverend and Mrs. Moon lost control of their own family, as evidenced by Hyo Jin's addiction problems and by the fact that other "True Children" left or became inactive in the church (sadly, another "true child" committed suicide by jumping out of an hotel window in Reno, Nevada, later in 1999). The Reverend and Mrs. Moon have admitted responsibility for the problems of some of their children, stating that the task of their worldwide ministry demanded the sacrifice of their family. Nansook's book offers a bitter portrait of Mrs. Moon, and accuses the Reverend Moon of sexual misconduct during his life, including fathering an illegitimate child. The Unification Church answered that the Reverend Moon "never violated the Principle nor violated his responsibility as the messianic protector of True Love," noting also that "Father [i.e., Rev. Moon] has taught extensively about the complicated biblical and providential history of the restoration of blood lineage, including the role of such providential figures as Jacob (Rachel and Leah and servants), Tamar (and her father-in-law, Judah) and others in fulfilling conditions in this area" (HSA-UWC North America Family Church, "Questions and Answers About Nan Sook Hong's Book," by Rev. Joong Hyun Pak, Continental Director, and Dr. Tyler Hendricks, President, October 3, 1998). Other figures such as Abraham (Sarah and Hagar) and King David (Bethsheba) have also been mentioned. This "complicated history" includes the Reverend Moon and his family, whose life - the church implies - cannot be judged by ordinary human standards. This, the church insists, does not in any way give permission to members to violate their blessing and the Divine Principle's fundamental standard of one man and one woman for eternity. Regardless, a number of members have been deeply disturbed by Hong's book.

The Hong book also revived earlier controversies associated with the late Chung Hwa Pak, one of Rev. Moon's first disciples, who had caused considerable controversy by confirming accusations of sexual immorality in the Rev. Moon's early career in a text widely circulated by critics (and later published in Japanese) called *The*

*Tragedy of the Six Marys*. Park, who had left the Unification Church, claimed that Rev. Moon practiced during the church's early years sex rituals with, among others, six married female disciples ("the six Marys") who were to have prepared the way for the virgin who would marry him and become the True Mother. The church vehemently denied the allegations, and was able to rely on earlier Korean court rulings where critics who made similar accusations had been found guilty of defamation and libel. Park eventually returned to the fold and, shortly before dying, recanted all the accusations in a second text he authored in 1995, called *The Apostate*.

The issue of succession is now of fundamental importance. The Reverend Moon will be eighty years old (by Korean age calculations, he turned eighty in 1999) in 2000. Mrs. Moon is fifty-seven years old. Since 1992 she has taken a more visible role, particularly in three world speaking tours in 1992, 1993, and 1999. Mrs. Moon has also spoken on Capitol Hill, at the United Nations, and in other parliaments around the world. Her relative youth and the respect with which she is held by the membership may be a point of stability for the Unification movement. The ceremony to inaugurate the Reverend and Mrs. Moon's third son, Hyun Jin Moon, as vice president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification International (FFWPUI) on July 19, 1998, as well as his responsibility to educate the "second generation," denotes him as the successor. Hyun Jin Moon had represented the Republic of Korea in the Olympic equestrian event in 1988 and 1992. He graduated from the Harvard Business School with an M.B.A. in 1998. The Reverend Moon joked during his address that he is criticized for having "failed in business ventures, but now I have a son with an M.B.A. who will be successful in business." Hyun Jin Moon's blessing to Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak's (the Reverend Moon's assistant and former president of the FFWPUI) daughter, Jun Sook Kwak, is also a significant point of continuity.

A new organization was inaugurated on February 6, 1999, in Seoul. The Inter-religious and International Federation for World Peace's mission is "to implement a system through which the highest expressions of religious wisdom are brought to the table at which the world's most serious and urgent problems are being addressed ... by creating a council of religious leaders within the framework of the United Nations." The Reverend Moon sees the IIFWP as a body which will campaign to recreate the United Nations as a truly bicameral institution. Since 1999, the IIFWP has been the sponsor of the Hoon Dok Hae (Gathering for Reading and Learning) Conferences for invited academics, religious leaders and politicians, devoted to a reconsideration of Reverend Moon's thought and career. On June 15, 1999, Rev. Sun Jo Hwang became the new president of FFWPUI, replacing Rev Chung Hwan Kwak who became the president of the Inter-religious and International Federation for World Peace. Rev Sun Jo Hwang, who was a Professor of Theology at the Unificationist Sun Moon University, is a relatively young leader who participated in the Blessing of 1982. He believes in the Internet as a missionary tool, and has promoted a Web site based in Korea (<http://www.tongil.or.kr>). He has also promoted the use of live Internet audio or video to show important ceremonies.

In 1999 three important "Declarations" were released. They illustrate the increasing importance of numerology and dispensationalism in Rev. Moon's thinking. A "Jeol" is a Holy Day Commemoration in the Unification movement. Rev. and Mrs Moon gave a special benediction at 9 minutes and 9 seconds past 9 o'clock in the morning of September 9, 1999. Moon's age being 79, the number 9 appeared 9 times, and the day was celebrated as "9.9 Jeol". Number 9 previously "belonged" to Satan and was an evil number, but the 9.9 Jeol ceremony rescued it for God, allowing also the liberation of many souls in the spirit world. 9.9 Jeol was regarded as a connecting point between the "Declaration Day of the Realm of Cosmic Sabbath for Parents of Heaven and Earth" on 7.8 Jeol and the "Proclamation of the Celebration of Cosmic Victory". The 7.8 Jeol had been previously celebrated at 7 seconds and 7 minutes past 7:00 A.M. on July 7, 1997. 7.8 Jeol was declared as the day inaugurating the events capable of re-creating the original world under God's sovereignty. Rev. Moon proclaimed 3.10 Jeol at 10 minutes past 10:00A.M. on September 10, 1999. With 3.10 Jeol, all numbers from 1-10 have been restored as Heaven's numbers. This is an event of great eschatological significance, since God can now restore "the original world of creation by numbers". The new leader of the Unification movement, Rev. Sun Jo Hwang, seems to concentrate his message, after the problems and controversies of 1998, on the cosmic significance of the dates of 7.8 Jeol, 9.9 Jeol and 3.10 Jeol.

The re-organization of the Unification movement and mystical numerology have also affected the main activity associated by the general public with the Rev. Moon, i.e. mass marriages. In 1994, when the Reverend Moon established the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, his idea was also to organize all blessed

couples who are not members of the Unification Church. Subsequent to the 1995 mass "blessing," there was a declaration that 3.6 million couples would be "blessed" in 1997. The main ceremony took place in John F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington, D.C., on November 29, 1997. The process of blessing on that occasion differed from previous blessings in two important aspects. First, any couple who had already received the blessing was allowed to officiate in blessing other couples, whereas previously it had been almost exclusively the position of the Reverend and Mrs. Moon to officiate. Second, the Holy Wine (or Nectar) and Holy Water Ceremony (traditionally not held on the same day as the blessing) could have been administered well in advance of the main ceremony. These "pre-blessings" of the Holy Wine and Holy Water ceremonies were subsequently completed by the Blessing Prayer of the Reverend and Mrs. Moon on 29 November. The 3.6 million couples blessing was declared fulfilled on July 15, 1997, with an announcement that the blessing on November 29, 1997, would total 39.6 million couples. This blessing included a large proportion of couples from other faiths. The ceremony in Washington, D.C., included six "co-officiators" from other faiths, including controversial minister Louis Farrakhan from the Nation of Islam. The Blessing ceremony in Seoul on February 7, 1999 also featured seven co-officiators including Orthodox Rabbi Virgil Kranz (Chairman of the American Jewish Assembly), controversial Catholic Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo and the General Superintendent of the Church of God in Christ (a large African American Pentecostal denomination), Rev. T.L. Barrett. On June 13, 1998, an earlier blessing ceremony centered in Madison Square Garden in New York City took place for 120 million couples worldwide. In the stadium more than 2,000 couples were joined together for the first time. The blessing ceremonies culminated a campaign around the world to revive a "marriage culture." The majority of couples receiving the Reverend and Mrs. Moon's blessing were not Unificationists but had agreed to recommit to the following four vows:

1. To become a true man or woman who practices sexual purity and lives for the sake of others;
2. To become a true husband or wife who respects True Parents' example and establishes an eternal family which brings joy to God;
3. To become a parent who educates their children to follow the tradition of true love for the sake of the family and world; and
4. To create an ideal family which contributes to world peace.

From June 13, 1998, to February 7, 1999, Unificationist sources claim that 240 million couples were "blessed." This added to previous blessings represented the earlier-than-expected fulfillment of the 360 million couples blessed during a three-year period which the Reverend Moon had hoped to accomplish by 2000. The figures are disputed by critics and obviously difficult to verify. One way of reconciling the differences is to note that many thousands were given the Holy Wine and Holy Water at tables in public places without understanding the significance of the act. In Japan and other countries, giving out "holy candy" was also widely practiced. The majority of these people did not participate in formal blessing ceremonies, yet were counted by the church among the blessed. The blessing in Seoul Olympic Stadium touched 40,000 couples. It was viewed in 185 different countries either by satellite or through the Internet. Some 150,000 couples were matched and blessed worldwide. For the first time, other Elders of the church assisted the Reverend and Mrs. Moon.

The process of matching couples is now being increasingly delegated by Rev. Moon to elder members of the movement. While Rev. Moon continues to match the "second generation" couples (i.e. children of previous Blessings), the new "first generation" matching candidates are "pre-matched" by either National or Continental Blessing Committees composed of these elder members and those leaders that know the candidates personally. With the "Declaration of 9.9 Jeol" the "indemnity conditions" previously necessary to receive the Blessing have been eliminated. In the past these conditions including a 7-day fasting, "witnessing 3 spiritual children" (i.e. each candidate for the Blessing should have converted three new members) and having served a 3-year mission. After the "Declaration of 9.9 Jeol" the only remaining condition is a 40-day separation period before starting family life.

Mystical speculation and routinization of charisma are, thus, promoted together as the Unification movement plans for its post-Moon, post-charismatic phase.

**"De la Iglesia de la Unificación al movimiento de la Unificación, 1994/1999: cinco años de dramáticos cambios" - por Massimo Introvigne**

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