

Glaswegian Pauline McCarthy who married in mass Moonie wedding ties the knot again in Viking ceremony

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A SCOT who married a stranger in a mass Moonie wedding has tied the knot again – and this time it was a Viking ceremony.

Glaswegian Pauline McCarthy was one of 60,000 members of the Unification Church who got married in Seoul, South Korea, in 1992.

She had met Icelandic husband Thorsteinn Thorsteinsson just four days before the ceremony.

Pauline moved to Iceland with her husband within weeks and she went on to have two sons.

But she became disillusioned with the Moonies and left the church in 1998. Her marriage ended after several years.

Pauline now has a new husband and she couldn't be happier.

She got married again two years ago – with the groom in a kilt and her in a traditional Icelandic dress.

And the couple added another twist by having a Viking ceremony.



It was an unusual wedding – but Pauline isn't one to follow convention.

She grew up in Whiteinch and worked at Stobhill Hospital before she was drawn to the Moonies.

She grew up seeing the bitter sectarian divisions in Glasgow and said the Unification Church's message of harmony appealed to her. Pauline, 52, said: "I'd see adults saying to kids to pick up stones and throw them.

"As a small child, I couldn't understand why, if we believe in the same God.

"That was the thing that attracted me to the Unification Church because I was so disaffected by the disunity in Glasgow.

"The camaraderie was wonderful. We were getting up at five o'clock in the morning and working hard, hard, hard – maybe 18 hours a day – and giving our money to the church. We thought we were saving the world.

"We felt we were making a better world. But it turned out we were just making a better world for Rev Moon, the Unification Church leader."

There was no one thing that drove Pauline from the church – she had simply had enough.

She added: "It was absolute obedience. It was horrible. It was getting weirder and weirder and that's one of the reasons I left.

"But I don't have any bitterness at all because I met so many wonderful people."

The initial years after the wedding did not go smoothly. Pauline got rheumatoid arthritis while pregnant with her first son, who was born with health problems. There were other health problems for the family, but Pauline says she always reminded herself that there were people worse off in the world.



In the years before her wedding, Pauline had been involved in volunteering projects in orphanages and community projects in Bulgaria, Thailand and Russia with the Moonies.

She has continued to be active in volunteering since. Pauline runs the Society of New Icelanders, an expat association, and she has held art exhibitions for immigrants to the country and set up an acting troupe made up of immigrants.

Last year, the president of Iceland presented her with the “Everyday Hero of 2012” prize for her work.

Pauline, who now works in the tourist industry, said: “My whole life, I have sacrificed for other people and never sought recognition. And to actually get recognition was really moving.

“Helping people is just normal for me – that’s what my parents and grandparents did for me.”

Pauline, whose sons are 19 and 15, says her life has been colorful – but she wouldn’t have it any other way.

She added: “I’m an unusual person. You only live once, so why not do it? I would be so bored having a nine to five job and getting drunk on a Saturday night.

“I always compared my life to juggling balls. I believe the universe has opportunities for us and we can decide what fork in the road to take.

“What’s the point in being scared? Life could be so dull if you’re scared to do something new.”

Pauline would love to hear from friends from “the old days” and welcomes anyone to email her.