

HSA-UWC: A Brief History

Joy Schmidt [Pople]
May 1974



Mass wedding ceremony of 777 couples performed in Seoul, Korea on October 21, 1970 by Reverend Moon

The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity was founded by Reverend Sun Myung Moon, who was born on January 6, 1920 (by lunar calendar). He was born at 2221 Sangsa-Ri, Tukeun-Myun, Jungjoo- Gun, Pyunganbuk-Do province in what is now North Korea.

On Easter when Reverend Moon was 16, he received a revelation from Jesus about his mission for the fulfillment of God's will.

Until Korea was liberated from the Japanese occupation in 1945, he spent time in silent internal preparation, dedicating himself completely to a spiritual search for truth.

Reverend Moon went to Pyongyang on June 6, 1946, which was then under the Soviet military government, to pursue his mission in response to the revelation he had received. He gave lectures on the essence of faith-faith which must be centered on God's purpose of creation. Many devout and dedicated Christians gathered around him. When this group grew to a considerable number, he was accused by the pastors and elders of the established churches and in 1948 imprisoned by the Communist regime. He was accused of being heretic and of speaking against Communist government policy.

He was in a prison camp doing hard labor for two years and eight months. Then the Allied and ROK armies liberated that area. So on October 14, 1950, he was able to leave for South Korea. Reverend Moon fled the Communists and reached Pusan on January 27, 1951. There he continued to lecture and witness the one word of God while gaining a livelihood as a dock laborer. Within a few years he had founded two churches: one in Pusan and one in Taegu.

Reverend Sun Myung Moon officially founded the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (Unification Church) in Seoul on May 1, 1954.

College students and many adults responded positively to the movement so that in the same year the Sung Wha Christian Students Association, the Sung Wha Young Men's Association, and the Sung Wha Monthly came into being. An examination system was begun in 1955 to test a member's competence in teaching the Divine Principle.

The association gained internal strength through organizational structure and promoted missionary work in the Seoul area. In 1957 all members in Korea fasted simultaneously for seven days.

Immediately 120 groups of two missionaries each were dispatched to cities and towns throughout South Korea for forty days. As a result, thirty new churches were established.

During the seven years from 1960 to 1967, Unification Church members regularly left their usual homes and families twice a year. In the summer, the Divine Principle would be taught all over the country.

In the winter, general education would be taught to uneducated country people. As a result of these "summer witness" and "winter enlightenment" activities, more than 700 churches were founded and general level of education was raised.

In 1963, the Holy Spirit Association was granted foundational juridical authorization with the Korean government. In 1970, the church became a member of the Korean Religious Conference. This Conference has members of eight world religions, including Buddhism and Confucianism.

On August 15, 1957 the first creed of HSA was published, Commentary on the Divine Principle. In 1966 "Discourse on the Divine Principle" replaced the previous work.

From April 11, 1960 until the present there have been several joint weddings. Groups of couples participated in the joint wedding ceremonies in order to symbolize the unification of families into one church and unification of nations into one international brotherhood. These ceremonies have involved 3, 36, 72, 124, 430, and 777 couples.

Since 1967 Seoul officials of HSA-UWC have visited Japanese members, and members from Japan have come to Korea, uniting in the anti-Communist ideology to realize a universalism which can rise above the barriers of race and nation.

Cooperation between the Korean and Japanese churches and the love between their members is an example of how God's love can win, even in a case of longstanding previous hostility. Both Korean and Japanese church members have mutually supported each other and helped each other to a better understanding of God. This trend points towards a future in which all countries can unite, whatever their previous ways, to one world centered on God's will.

The church sent missionaries to Japan and to the United States between 1958-61. Then in 1965, Reverend Moon made a series of visits to forty countries over ten months. He encouraged and inspired all Unified Family members and blessed 120 "holy grounds," places of meeting and prayer.

In the spring of 1969, Rev. Moon made a second world tour to 21 countries, accompanied by his wife and by the late President Hyo-Won Eu. There was a joint wedding of 43 couples from nine countries-a step towards the realization of a unified, universal family society.

In the spring of 1972 Reverend Moon completed his third world tour, accompanied by his wife and Mr. Young-Whi Kim, present Unification Church president.