

Civil Rights Legends Found their Next Champion in Father Moon

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In 1984, as a student at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) I had the opportunity to go to Chicago and work with Rev. Michael Jenkins as we planned Chicago's very first Interdenominational Conference for Clergy (ICC). This outreach would prove to be the backbone of our Chicago ministerial work for the next 30 years, up to and including this present day.

That summer in 1984, Rev. Jenkins and I worked diligently under the tutelage of Rev. Do Won Kim (Part of the 72 couples) and finally in September, Chicago's first ICC Conference was held in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Now, 30 years later, Chicago continues to hold monthly American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLCL) meetings, usually hosting 200-300 of the most prestigious ministers in the Chicago area, under the guidance of our beloved Archbishop George Augustus Stallings.

What I find amazing is that most of the original ICC ministers continued with us on the spiritual journey through the religious-freedom movement, the American Leadership Conferences (ALC), the pilgrimages to Israel, Japan and Korea, the Original Substance of the Divine Principle (OSDP) conferences and the American Clergy Leadership Conferences.

Dr. King's Dream and Our Chicago Clergy Allies



Rev. M.E. Sardon (right) shakes hands with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As we approach the 60 anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C, two very special ministers in Chicago who worked closely with Dr. King and then later with our True Father ought to be remembered. Both have passed away but are surely still with us in spirit. Rev. M. E. Sardon ascended in 2009, and Rev. A.I. Dunlap in 2012. Their legacy is worth remembering. Rev. Sardon began working with us while we were distributing the cheese that President Reagan freed up for distribution in the early 1980s. Rev. Sardon's ministry was in feeding the poor, so when a Unificationist came knocking on his church door, he was more than happy to partner with us.

Rev. Sardon had been one of the first civil-rights activists in Chicago. He had been an engineer for the army in World War II building bridges so that the infantry could cross the rivers in Italy. However, when he returned to Chicago as a decorated war veteran, he found that a black man could not even get a job driving a bread truck or a beer truck because of the color of his skin. He began an organization called the Crusaders of Justice and began picketing City Hall in Chicago. After the city tried to arrest him, the mayor then offered him a \$50,000-a-year job on the city's aviation board. Interestingly, Rev. Sardon had never even flown in an airplane.

In 1962, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. asked him to come to Albany, Georgia for a civil-rights march. Dr. King advised him to bring \$200 for bail money. Rev. Sardon said that this was one of the hardest things that he ever had to do, succeeding only because Senator Everett Dirksen gave him the money.

Thirty-five years later on September 17, 1987, (the 200th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution), Rev. Sardon was arrested for trespassing in his attempt to lead a group of ministers to meet the publisher of the Chicago Tribune, so as to protest the newspaper's use of the pejorative "Moonie" when referring to members of the Unification Church.

Through the more than 30 years that he worked with us, Rev. Sardon attended just about every Unification Church event. He travelled to Korea, Japan, New York, Houston, Washington, D.C. and Denver. He participated in the Confederation of the Associations for the Unification of the Societies of the Americas (CAUSA), ALC, AFC, Religious Youth Service (RYS) and the Blessing.

Rev. Sardon passed away recently at the age of 97. The last day that I saw him, he shared his life with us, circa 1912-1927 until the doctors told him to stop in order to conserve his voice.

The lasting legacy of Rev. Sardon was his deep love for people and his righteousness in fighting for what was right. He always took care of his flock (all who lived on the streets of the city). That was his true passion. He would walk down the stone stairs to his basement food shelter on his 85-year-old legs and swollen heels, in order to get some food for someone. I remember one particularly difficult day in that hot summer of 1984, as we drove around in our little Plymouth Horizon, I tearfully asked him, “Why is it so difficult.” “Bruce,” he said, “when in all the times that God had made you promises, did he ever say that it would be easy?” Those words ring clear in my mind and my heart to this day. Rev. Sardon was a big man, nearly twice the size of Dr. King, but he had, like Rev. Ralph Abernathy, the heart of being like Mother Moon of our movement. Among his final words, was the advice that “prayer alone is not enough; we have to add fasting and hard work.”

Rev. A.I. Dunlap



Rev. A. I. Dunlap (far right) championed Father and Mother Moon, and had even been jailed for proclaiming them as the Messiah. From left: Bruce Sutchar, an unidentified gentleman, Congressman Philip Crane, Rev. Michael Jenkins and Rev. A.I Dunlap.

Another of the four ministers jailed for defending Father Moon’s name to the Chicago Tribune was Rev. A.I. Dunlap, originally from Wilmington, North Carolina. Rev. Dunlap had been Dr. King’s point man in Danville, Virginia in the 1960’s. In the 1970s he brought his wife and four children to Chicago. He actually lived two blocks away from me in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. The only difference was that, while I could just sign the lease and move in, he had to demonstrate against the landlord who didn’t want to rent his property to a black family.

Rev. Dunlap has an amazing scrap book. The newspaper clippings are on the reverse side of the pages of a wallpaper album—a giant book at a carpet store from which to pick wallpaper. His incarceration for standing up for Father was the 40th such time that he had been arrested for standing up for the rights of all men and women to be considered and treated equally. And just a few years ago when an African-American youth was beaten with baseball bats for the crime of accidentally wandering into a white neighborhood, Rev. Dunlap marched every night for 40 nights from his church to the park where the young man was beaten. Archbishop Ki Hoon Kim, Rev. Jenkins and many from our church community joined him on many of these marches.

In the Dunlap family the kids say that the only time they ever saw their daddy was when he was on television being arrested during another civil-rights demonstration. However, while Mrs. Dunlap worked as a school teacher and then a county health care worker, their four children all each earned Master’s Degrees and are all extremely accomplished in their careers.

Each of these cherished gentlemen has left a lasting impression on every Unificationist who has ever met them. I remember one summer’s night when Rev. Dunlap sang “this little light of mine” for Father and Mother Moon at the Jefferson House in Washington, D.C. around 1:00 a.m. He taught us to always ask, otherwise there can be but one answer. At the risk of being fired, he honored True Parents with a plaque and advertised the presentation in the Chicago newspapers. The plaque currently hangs at on a wall at Chung Pa Dong. Rev. Dunlap was uniquely, one minister who always started his church service on time—at 10:45 a.m. on the dot he began his service by marching in from the rear of the sanctuary. He shared with us often that the reason he was always with us is because Rev. Moon was the one man who truly understood the significance and the sanctity of the family and that he respected all people as equals, whether they were black, white, yellow, red, purple or polka-dotted.