

Francois Lacroix breaks McGill University's ban on Sun Myung Moon's and Unificationist's books

The Unification community in Montreal

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Thanks to young Unificationist Francois Lacroix, Unificationist materials, such as Rev. Sun Myung Moon's autobiography, can now be found in McGill's library.

As the result of the efforts of second-generation Unificationists in Montreal, Unificationist texts such as the Divine Principle, Rev. Sun Myung Moon's autobiography *As A Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, *The World Scriptures* and Rev. Hyung Jin Moon's *A Bald Head and a Strawberry* can now be found in McGill University's humanities library.

Unificationist Francois Lacroix, who began his undergraduate studies at McGill in 2010, spearheaded the initiative to have these texts made available at his university. He says that one of the first things he did as a student was search "Sun Myung Moon" and "Unification Church" in McGill's library database.

"To my surprise, I discovered that the university's collection included a selection of critiques and personal accounts of involvement with the church, but that no books about the core teachings were available," Lacroix said. He continued: "Shouldn't an institution such as McGill, one of Canada's most internationally renowned universities, have more to offer on the teachings of the most widespread new religious movements of the twentieth century?"

Lacroix says that he has always been "very open" about his beliefs and that he has "made it a personal goal to uplift the spiritual atmosphere at McGill in whatever way possible." In the three years he's been a university student, he has participated in an interfaith group and connected with the chaplaincy office on campus.

"By participating in dialogue meetings and retreats with students in different faculties and from various religious backgrounds, I discovered that many students are not aware of our movement," he said. "By interacting with others on a personal level, I've been able to give a positive first impression, which I think lays a better foundation for the future of our church."



Lacroix enlisted the help of other Unificationist students at McGill to find a place for the pictured texts.

According to Lacroix, two McGill courses recognize the Unification Church: one on economics and another on religions of East Asia.

"Our movement continues to be relevant in today's society, and steps need to be taken toward a more

positive awareness of our teachings,” said Lacroix. “My hope is to improve people’s understanding and break the concepts people have of the Unification Church. Professors, when they see that there’s a promising younger generation of Unificationists, can more easily change their negative views.”

Determined to bring Unification Thought onto campus, Lacroix contacted McGill’s chaplaincy office and inquired about the procedure of providing the library with Unificationist materials. Despite discovering that in the past McGill had a Cult Information Center, that blocked some Unificationist activity at the university, Lacroix was able to establish a good relationship with the chaplain and his request was received positively. He was told that if McGill was lacking in literature about a particular religion, the university would be more than happy to fill the gap. In an effort to expedite the process, Lacroix then contacted nearly a dozen fellow Unificationist students at McGill and asked them to submit requests for the material as well. After two months, the books were finally placed on the shelves.

“I really wanted good literature about our church to be accessible at McGill because McGill is a world-class university,” said Lacroix. “Now, the first books that will come up when someone searches for material related to our movement are Rev. Moon’s autobiography and the Divine Principle. It’s a small initiative, but everything starts somewhere. The Unificationist movement is all over the world. If everyone takes that small step forward, things can build up very fast. In a way, it’s a huge shift that has the power to change the way others perceive our movement and beliefs.”