

What Did Rev. Sun Myung Moon Do in the United States?

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July 7, 2014

Weekly Chosun (Korean Major Weekly Magazine)
On-site Coverage: Interviews in New York and Washington D.C., USA

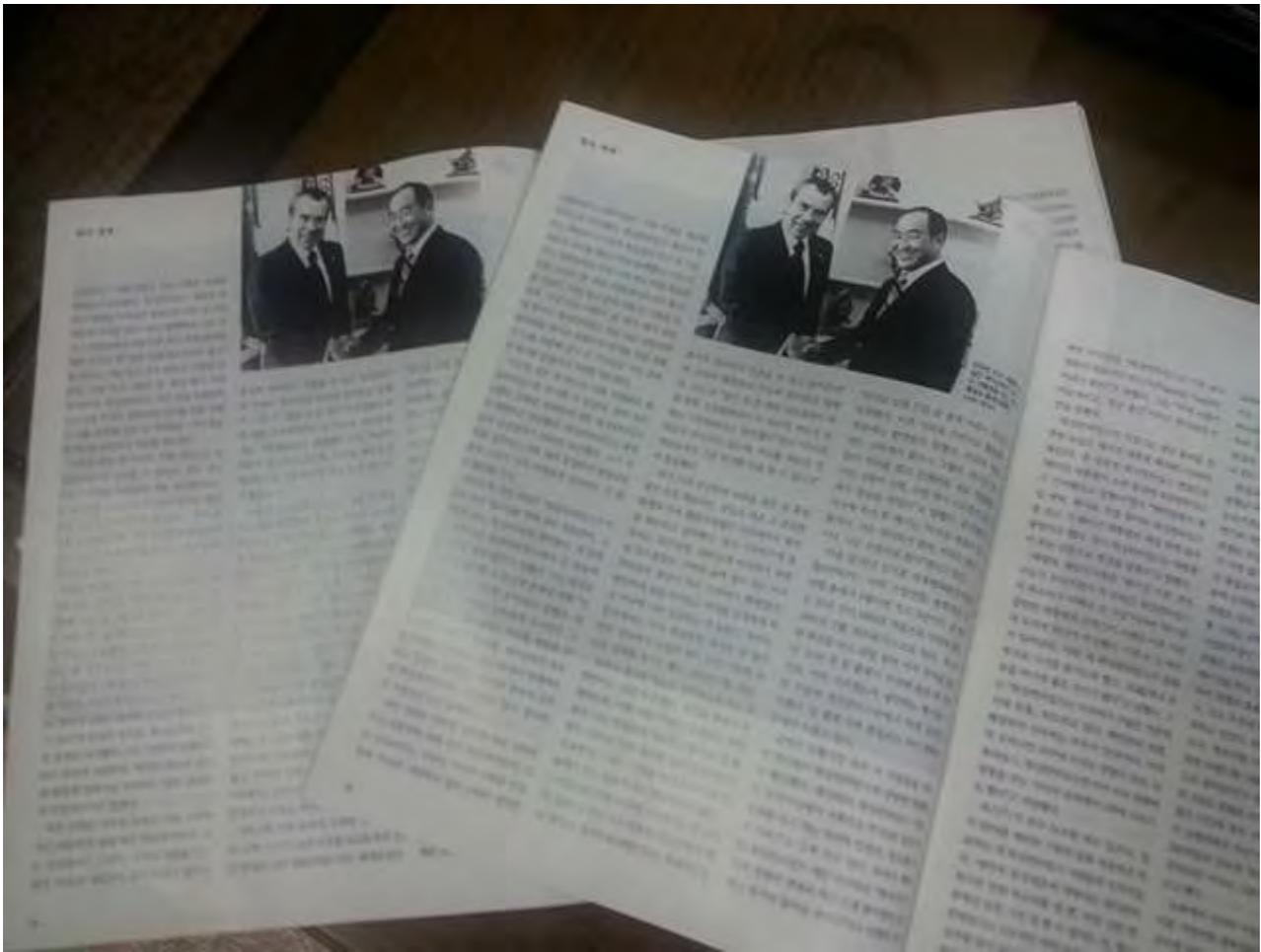


Last June 24th, I visited room 2185 on the first floor of the Rayburn House Office Building located in the U.S. capital, Washington, D.C. It was the office of American Congressman Edward Royce, who is the Chairman of the U. S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs. The Chairman of Foreign Affairs holds the power in the Congress. It is very hard to make a meeting appointment with him. This was the first time I've visited the American Congress. When I entered Chairman Royce's office, I was greeted and ushered into a reception room. Desks on either side of the entrance were situated to greet visitors. Three other rooms surrounded the reception room, which was in the center. On one side was the Congressman's personal office, and on the other was his assistants' office. I didn't go in the remaining room in the center, but I guessed that it might contain furniture for living. An analogue TV, which has completely disappeared from Korea, stood in the corner. Overall, everything was simple.

Chairman Royce's male secretary told me that today's meeting would happen on the premise that it would not be reported. I felt drained. After meeting a few Korean reporters, including myself, Chairman Royce was planning to meet Tae-Yeon Jo, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had come from Korea. On one side of the Chairman's office hung twelve photos. There were photos of him with President Park Geun-Hye and former President Lee Myung-Bak. I did not, however, see a photograph with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. There was a single large central photo among eleven photos, but I didn't recognize the background scenery in it.

Chairman Royce came into the room, and before I even asked he told me, "That's a photo of the Cheonan Warship." I turned to look at the photo once more, and only then recognized the familiar Cheonan Warship split in two. I was curious as to why the Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs would hang a photo of the sinking Cheonan ship on March 26th, 2010. He was busy, but I felt free to ask him about the photo. I had so many questions I wanted to ask: Korea-Japan relations, the American viewpoint on the rising strength of China, the issue on comfort women, etc. Last January 31st, Chairman Royce visited a former comfort woman in Glendale, California. He said, "My father fought in the Atlantic during World War II, my uncle in the Pacific. This is what my uncle told me: 'Japan must apologize to

Korea and America must demand an apology from Japan.' I think that we must not deny the history of Japan."



The Washington Times, owned by the Unification Church, was championed by the conservatives.

There are more Muslim students enrolled in the university run by the Unification Church than originally anticipated.

The businesses continue with impressive funding, even after the passing of Rev. Moon.

It was thanks to *The Washington Times* that an editor of a weekly paper from Seoul was able to meet such an influential person in the U.S. House of Representatives. Today's meeting was arranged by *The Washington Times*. Thomas McDevitt, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the *Times* and Michael Jenkins, an executive of the Unification Church's business in America, had also come. After meeting with Chairman Royce, I also met Matt Salmon (Arizona), who is also a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. After him, I met two other former Congressmen. In all, I met four current and former Congressmen on that day. *The Washington Times* told us that they were able to schedule more interviews with other Congressmen and encouraged myself and the other reporters to join them. We all, however, thought we had gotten enough information from the Congressmen and politely declined.

As one of the most influential media organizations in America, *The Washington Times* cannot be ignored by the congressmen. Their influence with the conservative Republican Party is especially considerable. *The Washington Times* was founded by Rev. Sun-Myung Moon of the Unification Church in 1982. It would have been difficult for Korean reporters to meet an American Congressman if he had not founded the paper and continued to develop it.

Matt Salmon, who is in his sixth term, said that, "*The Washington Times* is extremely important for the conservative voice in America, and I am grateful for the role it has played." About the late Rev. Sun-Myung Moon he said, "I have met him several times. He is an amazing person." Congressman Salmon is fluent in Chinese. On China he says, "China is being rash in southern China," and criticized the land disputes with the Philippines and Vietnam. "The U.S. is dependent on China economically. However, we are worried about their military expansion. We are very concerned about China."

Congressman Salmon spoke very pessimistically about the Democratic U.S. President Barack Obama. He referred to the situation in Syria and Iraq, stating, "If the U.S. does not intervene and a crack is created, China and Russia will push that crack completely." He says it is due to the lack of power in the Obama administration. Additionally, he said, "Not too long ago, Secretary of State John Kerry said in a

Congressional Committee meeting that the U.S. diplomat's priority is global warming...How can the political leader of our diplomacy say such a thing?" He was very upset.

I came to Washington, D.C. and New York in America on an invitation from the Tongil Foundation. America was the stage for Rev. Moon's main projects, and the Unification Church wished to promote these past activities. As I remembered, the Unification Church caused a whirlwind in America in the 70's and 80's. Hippies, addicted to drugs and alcohol, began to change and became a topic of conversation in American society. Their neat clothing and hair as they carried out their mission work was surprising. Rev. Moon even held a mass gathering of hundreds of thousands on the front lawn of Capitol Hill. (September 9, 18)

Personally, it had been a long time since I last visited New York and Washington, D.C., over 15 years, actually. On being invited by the Unification Church, I thought that I might as well go. I didn't know very much about the Unification Church; however, I came to learn through this business trip what Mr. Moon did in America. And based on his American projects, I learned of his goals for South America and the Middle East.

Last June 17th, in New York, I arrived past midnight and met Chang-Shik Yang, Chairman of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). He told me, "Rev. Moon and his family arrived in Washington on December 17th, 1971. Since then, his work has been based in America. At first, he was not welcomed. He came from a country that was receiving aid from the United States. However, when the hippies started to cut their hair and change their outlook on life, people became interested as thousands and then tens of thousands of people did this." Rev. Moon came to America and said, "America is sick. I have come as the doctor. The house of America is on fire. I have come as the firefighter."

The next day, I met with Ki-Hoon Kim, President of the Family Federation of World Peace (FFWPU). He said, "In August, it will have been two years since Rev. Moon passed. He came to America for the first time in 1965, fifty years ago. He entered the country in February of 1965 in San Francisco, and rode a Volkswagen around America for thirty-three days. This weekend, we will hold an event in San Francisco to reflect on his heart and determinations during that time." Since the passing of Rev. Moon, his wife, Dr. Hak-Ja Han Moon has been leading the Unification Church.

As already mentioned, I confirmed *The Washington Times'* considerable influence as we met several congressmen. The *Washington Times* office building is located twenty minutes west of the U.S. Capitol Building, and is easily reached by car. Thomas McDevitt, Chairman of the Board of Directors of *The Washington Times*, said, "The profit and influence of the company has improved considerably in recent years. This year, we are returning to the black." Chairman McDevitt told me that "*The Washington Times* is the representative flagship voice of the American conservative movement. Our future is bright." He also shared his connection to Korea with me, "My wife's name is Soon-Ja Lee, and she is from Jeon Nam."

The prime of *The Washington Times* was around the collapse of the Cold War during the Reagan administration (1981~1989). John Solomon, editor of *The Washington Times*, said, "President Reagan said *The Washington Times* contributed to the Soviet collapse." And that "Everyday a staff member from the White House would come directly to our office to take the day's paper to President Reagan's desk. *The Washington Times* became known as the paper the President reads."

Chairman McDevitt added, "It is true that after the Cold War ended, *The Washington Times'* voice was weak for ten years. However, during the Lewinsky scandal, America experienced a morality crisis. Then 9/11 happened. These things led the culture to shift their attention to *The Washington Times*. It became a crucial turning point at which to promote interreligious projects." He also boasted, "*The Washington Times* is being quoted and reported by numerous media outlets. The circulation for the White House, Congress and the Administration hovers around 10,000. We have a considerable amount of influence over the American opinion leaders. We have even been named third in influencing the U.S. Congress, after *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*."

Although FOX TV argues conservatively, the pundits of *The Washington Times* were aware that in all other cultural fields, they were liberal. For example, only *The Washington Times* argues against same-sex marriage. This issue never surfaces in other newspapers or broadcasts. It appears that *The Washington Times* dug up many of the liberal Obama Administration's mistakes. Larry Beasley, President of the *Times*, says, "We print 44,000 papers. Unlike other American newspapers, we publish four pages of opinion articles every day. The opinion pages influence the public, and is the spine of our paper." Out of 80 reporters in the editorial department, ten are editorial writers.

The legend of the Unification Church is that they hold considerable wealth in both America and Korea. The New Yorker Hotel in New York City is a property of the Unification Church. It is located in Manhattan where 34th Street and 8th Street meet. The New Yorker has been around for 90 years, and has the most rooms in Manhattan. It is currently a four-star hotel. Three of the floors are facilities for Unification Church missions. This was where I stayed when I came to New York. According to Michael Jenkins, head of the Family Federation's business department, when the New Yorker Hotel of Manhattan was purchased in 1975, it was worth five million dollars. However, now it is worth nearly four billion dollars on the market. They invested thirty million dollars in an extensive renovation, and recruited a female businesswoman to raise the efficiency of the hotel. Their focus shifted from missionary work to business efficiency. Ann Peterson, president of the New Yorker Hotel, said, "The hotel was a three-star hotel. However, after the renovations ended, using the world-class hotel chain Wyndham, we became a four-star hotel in May." According to her, there are only six five-star hotels in New York City. As the business in the neighboring areas underwent major developments, the value of the hotel property also went up. Also, when the 230 million-dollar "Hudson Yard Project" finishes, the media group Time Warner will move in.

Ki-Hoon Kim, President of the Family Federation, oversees both the missionary and business operations in New York. He did not disclose to me the profit margins of Unification Church businesses in America, saying that, "Those numbers are not even released internally." However, he did say, "Numerically, we are making an enormous profit." He added, "At the end of this year, *The Washington Times* will come out of the red and will begin making profit next year." Michael Jenkins, who came together with President Kim, explained the fishing industry in the Bering Sea (Ocean Peace Inc.) and the ship repair company (Master Marine). President Kim said there were three deep-sea ships in the Bering Sea at the moment and that "The profit from those ships is larger than the profit of the New Yorker Hotel." The American government granted permission for twenty ships to operate in these waters, and three of those twenty belong to the Unification Church. Tuna and other fish are exported straight to Japan from the ships immediately after they are caught. The fish are not brought to the Seattle headquarters. President Ki-Hoon Kim told me, "Besides these three ships, we have hundreds of medium-sized ships." They also own a large number of Japanese restaurants. "The purpose of the businesses is to support the missionary work of Rev. Moon," said President Kim. There have even been lawsuits surrounding the immense wealth owned by the Unification Church and, after the passing of Rev. Moon, between his sons.

The prime of *The Washington Times* was around the time of the collapse of the Cold War when Ronald Reagan was president. The editor said, "President Reagan said that *The Washington Times* contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union," and that "*The Washington Times* became known as the paper the President reads."

The reason why Rev. Moon moved his base from Korea to the United States in 1971 was because his actions were being restricted in Korea. Things did not go according to his expectations, and he was accused of being a cult leader. He secured a home in Irvington, New York, raised his children there, and was able to begin his projects on a larger scale. The leader of missionary work in the United States is FFWPU President Michael Balcomb. He works under the leadership of President Ki-Hoon Kim. "Rev. Moon's goal was to make America God's champion," he said. Rev. Moon's goals were to rebuild the collapsing values of American society at the time, encourage reconciliation between world religions and solve the dilemma of rampant materialism. UPF Chairman Chang-Shik Yang added, "At first, he was not seen positively, as he came from a nation that received aid from the United States." At the age of 64, Rev. Moon was even incarcerated for a year and a day over tax evasion charges over allegedly underreporting his income by \$162,000 on Federal tax returns.

The Unification Church's interreligious activities were interesting to say the least. I barely knew about these activities. I was curious about why the Unification Church, which began from Christianity, and was perceived by mainstream Christianity as a cult, would spearhead interreligious activities. When I visited the UPF office in Tarrytown, New York, located some distance away from Manhattan, I heard about this field. UPF is a registered NGO in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Secretary General Taj Hamad of UPF told me about an event held in the capitol of Indonesia, Jakarta, right after the 9/11 terror attacks.

"After the 9/11 terror attacks, America was filled with hostility towards Muslims. Rev. Moon said that Islam is not bad. He held a conference between religions, saying that the true Islam must be known. He said, "I will pay for it. Let's hold the conference in the name of Muslims. I approached the former President of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid. As a result, we held a conference in Jakarta two months after the 9/11 attacks." He showed me media from this conference and I noticed that the conference was titled, "Islam and the Future of World Peace," and the conference was held on December 20th to the

23rd, 2001 in Jakarta. It is rare for anyone to open their wallets because most of Christianity held hostile feelings towards Islam and needed to understand them.

Visiting the University of Bridgeport on June 20th was also an interesting experience. Bridgeport holds the largest population in Connecticut. Rev. Moon took on the University in 1992. It takes over 90 minutes to drive from New York City to Bridgeport. Neil Albert Salonen, President of the University, graduated from Cornell's Chemical Engineering Department. He said, "Our university welcomes religious activities from all religions. Asserting a specific religion in America is politically incorrect." He continued, "There are many Muslim students." After the Chinese international students (about 500) the Saudi Arabian students make up the most of our international students. President Salonen said that there are also a little over 200 Hindu students. Hindus are, of course, Indian. The current students population is about 5,000. About 40~50% are Unification Church members. There are about 10 to 20 Korean students.

After the United States, the Unification Church is famous for its activities in South America. A member explained, "America is a Protestant nation and South America is a Catholic region." NGO activities in the Middle East are also an extension of the interreligious activities. They explained that, together with Christianity, the three religions thought to be descendants of Abraham are Judaism and Islam. The aim was to harmonize the three. The Unification Church carried out activities dedicated towards the peaceful coexistence between the Israelites and Palestinians. Now that I think about it, they hold a considerable network here, as well. A few years ago, a KBS reporter was detained and released while covering the Gaza Strip. It was known that the Unification Church held a critical role in releasing the reporter. Their recent interest in the rebellion in Syria and the NGO activities they carried out are also in the same context.

The hosts arranged a meeting in Washington, D.C. with two ministers from Atlanta, Georgia, located in the southern United States. They were Luonne Abram Rouse, who holds the record for being the first black minister of a white church, and Mark Abernathy (54), who works in a black and white mixed church. Some Americans go to church according to their skin color. There are very few locations where they attend services together. Rev. Abernathy showed me a photograph, telling me how in 1997, the white supremacy group, the KKK, came to his church and attacked his father, the head pastor at the time. They tore his clothes and carried a flaming cross to the church yard to conduct a ceremony. The root of racial discrimination in the South is still very deep. Rev. Abernathy, a graduate from the prestigious Georgia Tech University, was selected as the speaker of the year by the National Association for the Advanced Placement of Colored People (NAAPC). He joined Rev. Moon in a fifty-state tour and told me his and Rev. Moon's message of "Break down the walls" was the same. When asked if he wasn't worried about acting together with Mr. Moon, who was known to be a cult leader, he answered, "It is normal for religious leaders to be misunderstood. His vision allowed crazy people like us to come forward."

The Unification Church's international marriages are what make them famous in the media. To outsiders, it seems strange to see so many couples wed internationally together. Why do they arrange international marriages, including marriages between black and white and Korean and Japanese? The leader of Unification Church missions in America, President Michael Balcomb said, "I was also married in the 1982 mass wedding of 6,000 couples. My wife is Japanese." He added, "The 2012 mass wedding in Gapyong, Gyonggi-do was covered by America's ABC and England's Channel 4. The direction of the coverage was whether a marriage between races and tribes would work. I know many people wed in a mass wedding who say that it is better than a traditional marriage."

Thomas Walsh, a representative of UPF International, said, "It is based on the thought the family will change the world and not religion." Rev. Moon considered "exchange marriage" as vital, and encouraged marriage between people of different nations and religions. UPF General Secretary Hamad said, "Rev. Moon suggested marrying with your 'enemy.' We must overcome the divisions and barriers between religions and cultures, but this will not be solved through conferences. It will be solved through the marriage between a man and a woman. I am from Sudan. My wife is from England. England colonized Sudan."

It has been two years since Rev. Moon left this world. What will happen to this Unification Church that he started? American Family Federation President Michael Balcomb, the leader of missionary work in America says, "People say that because the founder died, the organization will not last. I don't agree with this. Look at Christianity. It grew after the death of its founder." He continued, "It took the Mormon Church 120 years to be recognized as a religion. Their congregation expanded during the last 50 years, and by 2010 they had grown so much they had a presidential candidate (Republican Candidate Mitt Romney). It'll take time, but we will grow as a new religion in America."

According to the Broadway musical ticket dealer on the first floor of the New Yorker, the most popular musical in New York's Broadway is "The Book of Mormon." I knew that a Mormon had become well-

known as a presidential candidate, but I didn't know they were popular in the musical arena as well. Now that I think about it, I remember reading in a business book that recently that heads of Mormon corporations were emerging as successful CEOs and executives among American businesses. Just as they did in the past, American white missionaries still approach passersby in Gwanghwamun, Seoul. What about the Unification Church? I can't deny that the work of Rev. Moon in America is impressive. I wonder if there are any other Koreans who left as big a mark as he has in America. Of course, each person is entitled to their own judgments.

Photo Notes:

The south view of Manhattan Island from the Empire State Building in New York, U.S.A. The arrow indicates Freedom Tower, which stands in place of the World Trade Center destroyed on September 11th, 2001. After the 9/11 terror attacks, the late Rev. Moon saw the anti-Muslim atmosphere and thought, "This is not right." Rev. Moon then held an interreligious conference in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Rev. Moon (right) of the Unification Church meeting U.S. President Nixon at the White House in 1974.

Photographs hanging on the wall of U.S. Congressman Edward Royce's office. The large photograph in the middle is of the Cheonan ship split into two.

The New Yorker Hotel owned by the Unification Church is located at 8th and 34th Street in Manhattan, New York, USA (indicated by the arrow) The American mission headquarters is also located here.

The Unification Church catches tuna in the Bering Sea. Located in Seattle, the Ocean Peace Inc. boats haul in a bigger profit than the New Yorker Hotel.