

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Family Federation Earns Anti-Bribery and Compliance with Laws Certifications

Knut Holdhus
May 14, 2026



From the formal [Family Federation](#) meeting on May 14, 2026 to commemorate the awarding of the integrated certification



Family Federation becomes the first religious organization in South Korea to obtain certification for two internationally recognized management standards

On 14th May 2026, reporter Shin Dong-rip of the South Korean online newspaper The Report published an [article](#) announcing that the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), in Korea often referred to as [Unificationism](#), had become the first religious organization in South Korea to obtain integrated certification for two internationally recognized management standards: ISO 37001 and ISO 37301. The development was presented by the [religious organization](#) as a significant milestone in its effort to strengthen transparency, institutional accountability, and public trust at a time when religious organizations in South Korea are increasingly expected to demonstrate high standards of governance and ethical conduct.

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The certifications were awarded for two related but distinct management systems. ISO 37001 is the international standard for anti-bribery management systems. Developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), it provides organizations with a framework to prevent, detect, and address bribery and corruption risks. The standard requires the establishment of internal controls, risk assessments, reporting procedures, compliance oversight, and staff education designed to reduce the possibility of unethical financial or administrative practices. It has been adopted by corporations, public institutions, and non-profit organizations in many countries as part of broader compliance and governance reforms.



Song Yong-cheon addressing the formal [Family Federation](#) meeting on May 14, 2026 to commemorate the awarding of the integrated certification

ISO 37301, meanwhile, concerns compliance management systems. It focuses on ensuring that organizations operate according to applicable laws, regulations, ethical obligations, and internal policies. The standard emphasizes the creation of a systematic compliance culture supported by leadership accountability, continuous monitoring, employee training, and organizational self-assessment. Together, ISO 37001 and ISO 37301 are often viewed as complementary frameworks because both seek to institutionalize integrity, transparency, and responsible governance practices.

According to the [article](#), the [Family Federation](#) held a formal ceremony on 14th May to commemorate the awarding of the integrated certification. Song Yong-cheon (송용천), head of the [religious organization's](#) Korean branch, described the achievement as an important turning point for the [religious community](#). He stated that becoming the first religious body in the country to receive the combined certification reflected the [Family Federation's](#) intention to meet growing social expectations and evolve into a more transparent

institution. He also emphasized the [organization](#)'s commitment to establishing a strong culture of legal and ethical compliance in order to earn greater confidence from society.



Song Yong-cheon here on 1st February 2026

The [report](#) explained that the certification process involved several stages, including organizational analysis, system design and development, staff training, competency evaluations, implementation of management procedures, and formal inspection and auditing. Through these measures, the [organization](#) strengthened its internal control mechanisms and established systems aimed at identifying and preventing potential risks within its operations.

The [article](#) further connected the certification to an [earlier initiative](#) launched in January 2026, titled the "Declaration Ceremony for Compliance Practices to Restore Social Trust." During that [event](#), approximately 300 pastors and officials associated with the [organization](#) publicly pledged adherence to legal and ethical standards. The integrated ISO certification was presented as a concrete outcome of those commitments and as part of a wider effort to align the [organization](#)'s governance

practices with internationally recognized standards.

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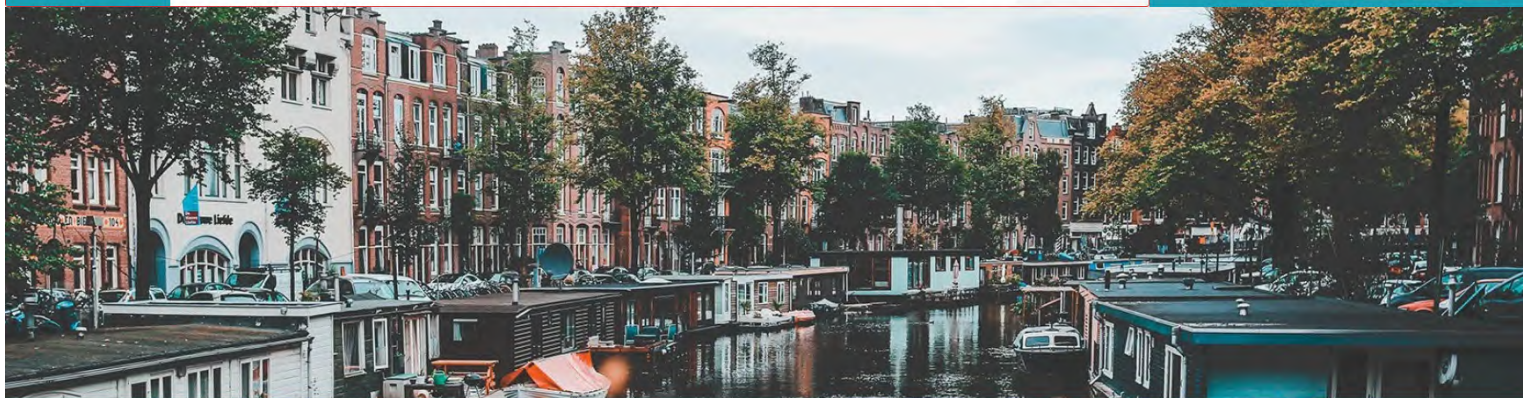
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Religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수). Photo (2025): Segye Ilbo

On 29th April 2026, South Korean religion

journalist Jeong Seong-su (정성수) published a reflective [column](#) in the newspaper [Segye Ilbo](#) commemorating the life of Barbara Jean Harrington (1938-2026), an American missionary supporter whose decades of service in Africa left a profound impression on communities across the continent.

세계일보

The logo of the [Segye Ilbo](#)

Written in a deeply elegiac and devotional tone, the article with the headline “[Carrying Love in Hamburgers, the Sainly Barbara Who Embraced Africa](#)”, portrays Barbara not merely as a charitable worker or entrepreneur, but as a figure of sacrificial faith whose life embodied quiet service, humility, and total dedication to others.

The [column](#) opens with an observation about the rarity of a single individual's death producing grief that transcends national borders and personal relationships. According to the writer, the passing of Barbara Harrington at the age of eighty-eight on 21st April triggered mourning in many African countries, revealing the extraordinary scope of her influence.

The [article](#) notes that even former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan offered words of tribute, an indication that her impact had reached not only ordinary families and missionaries but also prominent public figures. Jeong frames this widespread sorrow as evidence that Barbara's life had become something larger than a private biography; it had entered the realm of moral and spiritual history.



Official portrait of Goodluck Jonathan, President of Nigeria 2010-2015. Photo: National Library of Nigeria / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain image](#)

The [article](#) then traces Barbara's early years in the United States. Born in Missouri and raised in a devout Catholic family, she is described as someone for whom religion and compassion were intertwined from childhood onward. After completing high school, she entered nursing school at Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri and later worked in a maternity ward assisting mothers during childbirth. Jeong presents these experiences as formative, suggesting that her later humanitarian work in Africa was rooted in habits of care and sacrifice learned through nursing. The profession trained her not only to alleviate physical suffering but also to recognize dignity in vulnerable people, qualities that would later define her missionary support work.

A major turning point in Barbara's life came in 1969, when she and her younger sister Kathy Rigney joined the movement that was then called the [Unification Church](#) – now the [Family Federation for World Peace and](#)

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from the [family relocation for their lives and Unification](#). In the [article's](#) interpretation, this decision sharpened Barbara's sense of religious purpose and redirected her ambitions away from personal comfort toward service for a broader spiritual mission. Several years later, in 1975, Kathy Rigney was assigned as a [Unification Church](#) missionary to remote regions of Africa. Jeong emphasizes that Barbara did not regard her sister's mission as an individual undertaking. Instead, she viewed it as a collective responsibility demanding practical support as well as spiritual commitment.



An historical relocation. Illustration: ChatGPT, May 2026

By 1981, Barbara herself had relocated to Côte d'Ivoire in order to help sustain missionary activities there. The article underscores the severe financial challenges faced by missionaries operating in impoverished regions. Rather than limiting herself to prayer or symbolic encouragement, Barbara sought a concrete economic solution. Her answer was unexpectedly simple: she established an American-style restaurant called "Hamburger House", intending to use its profits to fund missionary and humanitarian activities.

Jeong highlights the improbability of this venture. Barbara reportedly had no prior experience in the restaurant industry, yet she proceeded with determination. The columnist presents this decision as an example of practical faith in action. While some people contribute through preaching or direct evangelism, Barbara chose to support religious work through entrepreneurship. What began as a modest business in Côte d'Ivoire gradually expanded into several African countries, including Togo, Ghana, Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Later, additional restaurants were established in Lagos, Nigeria, creating a stable financial infrastructure that supported missionary outreach and charitable initiatives.

However, the [article](#) insists that Barbara's significance cannot be measured by commercial success alone. Jeong repeatedly stresses her refusal to treat the businesses or their profits as personal property. According to the [column](#), the income generated by the restaurants was continually redirected toward educational assistance, medical care, missionary activities, and support for impoverished communities. Even after health problems forced her to withdraw from active work in 2001, she reportedly retained little for herself. The article contrasts worldly standards of success – often defined by accumulation of wealth – with what it describes as a more spiritual measure based on generosity and self-sacrifice.

In his [article](#), Jeong also broadens the discussion into a reflection on the meaning of missionary work in poor regions of Africa. The [article](#) argues that genuine ministry involves more than religious teaching. Hungry children require food before doctrine; families trapped in despair require hope and practical assistance before abstract theological instruction. Within this framework, Barbara's hamburger restaurants become symbolic. The food sold there represented tuition for students, medicine for the sick, and logistical support enabling missionaries to continue their activities. For that reason, many people

reportedly referred to her as “the Mother of Africa”, a title meant to recognize both her material generosity and emotional care.

Another theme emphasized throughout the article is Barbara’s humility. Jeong praises her for avoiding self-promotion and refusing public recognition. In an age characterized, in his view, by performative charity and self-advertisement, Barbara is portrayed as someone who preferred hidden service over visibility. Her achievements were expressed through sustained action rather than rhetoric or personal branding.

The [column](#) concludes with an account of Barbara’s final illness. Despite suffering from advanced cancer, she reportedly maintained strong spiritual resolve. Jeong writes that one of her final wishes was to see [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) – also called [Mother Han](#) – regain freedom and continue her religious mission. This detail is presented as evidence that Barbara remained focused on the future of her faith community even while confronting death herself.

In its final lines, the [article](#) elevates Barbara Harrington into an almost saintly figure. Jeong compares her compassion to that of Mother Teresa and suggests that her memory will continue inspiring people across Africa. The piece ultimately serves both as a memorial tribute and as a broader meditation on sacrifice, faith, humility, and service to humanity.

Text: *Knut Holdhus, editor*

Featured image above: *Barbara Jean Harrington (1938-2026). Photo: FFWPU*

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