**FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Sang Hun Lee on when Equality becomes Control**

Knut Holdhus
October 15, 2026




*Featured image above: Dr. Lee Sang-heon (Sang Hun Lee - 1914 - 1997), a South Korean physician and philosopher who developed Unification Thought [See editor's note 1 below], seminar in Schmitten, Hessen, Germany in October 1991*




*The latest version of Unification Thought: New Essentials of Unification Thought, published in 2006.*

**From materialism to Godism: A new series examines the gap between communism's promise of equality and the realities of political control**

A new series examines why an ideology that promised equality and freedom ultimately produced systems of oppression, and explores the search by Lee Sang-heon (이상헌 - also romanized as Sang Hun Lee) for a deeper foundation for human dignity.

Continued in part 2: The Love Materialism Failed to Explain

Continued in part 3: Can Revolution Change Human Nature?

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See also Why Unification Thought Matters in 2026

Communism was one of the most influential political and philosophical movements of the 20th century. It attracted millions of people with the promise of overcoming exploitation, abolishing class divisions, and creating a society in which everyone could enjoy freedom and material prosperity. For many of its adherents, communism represented not merely a political program but a path toward the liberation of humanity.

Yet the historical outcome often contradicted those aspirations. Communist regimes concentrated power in the hands of the state and ruling parties, restricted individual freedoms, and subjected entire populations to political control. In North Korea, the concentration of authority went so far that the country's leader came to occupy an almost absolute position, surrounded by an extensive cult of personality.

How could an ideology dedicated to human liberation lead to such outcomes? And what did its philosophical foundations overlook?

These questions lie at the heart of Communism Without God: Lee Sang-heon's Intellectual Journey and the Path to Human Liberation, a series published by the South Korean newspaper Segye Ilbo. In the second installment, published on 15th October 2026, religion correspondent Jeong Seong-su (정성수)

explores the relationship between materialism, human nature, and the origins of love.

세계일보

*Segye Ilbo, one of the top 10 comprehensive daily newspapers in South Korea.*



*Religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su (2025)*

The series draws on the lectures, writings, academic papers, and testimonies of Lee Sang-heon (1914 - 1997), a physician and philosopher who developed Unification Thought (통일사상) [See editor's note 1 below]. Lee had once embraced the communist movement, believing it offered a way to achieve both national independence and human liberation. His subsequent intellectual journey led him to question whether communism's materialist understanding of humanity could adequately explain the qualities that make human life meaningful.

For Lee, the fundamental problem was not simply that communist governments had made political and economic mistakes. He traced a deeper difficulty to the philosophical denial of God. In his view, God was not merely an object of religious devotion but the ultimate source of human existence, the foundation of love and conscience, and the basis of a human dignity that no government or political party should be permitted to violate.

By reducing human beings to material conditions and class relationships, Lee argued, materialism overlooked an essential dimension of human nature. An ideology might promise to liberate people from external oppression, but if it failed to understand the foundations of conscience, love, and moral responsibility, it could also fail to protect them from new forms of domination.

The historical collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 appeared to mark the end of an era. Nevertheless, communist or communist-derived one-party systems continue to govern countries including China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and Cuba. Meanwhile, economic inequality and social alienation remain serious concerns even in liberal democratic societies.



*December 8, 1991: Signing the Agreement to eliminate the USSR and establish the Commonwealth of Independent States. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk (second from left seated), Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus Stanislav Shushkevich (third from left seated) and Russian President Boris Yeltsin (second from right seated) during the signing ceremony to eliminate the USSR and establish the Commonwealth of Independent States. Viskuly Government House in the Belorusian National Park "Belovezhskaya Forest"*

The challenge, therefore, is not simply to declare communism a failed experiment and move on. Inequality, poverty, and exploitation cannot be dismissed merely because communist solutions have often proved oppressive. At the same time, addressing these problems by treating entire social classes as enemies or granting excessive power to the state risks reproducing the very restrictions on freedom that human liberation was supposed to overcome.

The series seeks to examine this dilemma without limiting itself to a retrospective critique of communism. It considers how the movement emerged, why it appealed to so many people, and how its original promises became associated with coercion and repression. It also introduces Unification Thought

(통일사상) [See editor's note 1 below] as an alternative developed by Lee, emphasizing the relationship between human freedom, dignity, responsibility, and love.

A central concept in this alternative is Godism (하나님주의) [See editor's note 2 below]: the idea that a sound social order must recognize God as the source of human existence and establish relationships grounded in love and conscience rather than power and self-interest.

From this perspective, genuine liberation requires more than changing political institutions or economic arrangements. It also requires a transformation in how people understand themselves and relate to others. A society cannot secure lasting freedom simply by replacing one ruling group with another if the underlying desires for domination and control remain unchanged.

The series thus raises a question extending beyond communism itself: What philosophical foundation can support a society that protects individual freedom while also confronting inequality and encouraging responsibility toward others?

The intellectual journey of Lee Sang-heon (이상헌 - also Romanized as Sang Hun Lee) offers one proposed answer. By reconsidering the relationship between God, human nature, and social organization, the series invites readers to examine whether the pursuit of a more humane world requires not only institutional reform but also a deeper understanding of the origins of love and human dignity.

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> Based on the article of Jeong Seong-su (정성수) in Segye Ilbo, 15th October 2026, the second installment of the series "Communism Without God"

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> Text: Knut Holdhus, editor
>
> **[Editor's note 1:** Unification Thought is a philosophical system developed by Sang Hun Lee (1914-1997) from the teachings of Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012). It was designed as a comprehensive worldview that integrates religion, philosophy, science, ethics, and social theory into a single framework centered on God's purpose for creation.
>
> At its core, Unification Thought argues that reality reflects the nature of God, understood as a being of "dual characteristics": internal character and external form, as well as masculinity and femininity in harmonious unity. Human beings, according to this view, are created to embody divine love through mature relationships, family life, creativity, and moral responsibility.
>
> The system places strong emphasis on purpose and relationality. Everything exists through "give-and-take action", a dynamic process of interaction that produces harmony, growth, and development. Human history is interpreted as a providential process aimed at restoring the ideal world originally intended by God, overcoming alienation, conflict, and selfishness caused by the human fall.
>
> Unification Thought also attempts to respond to modern ideologies. It criticizes both materialistic Marxism and purely secular humanism while also seeking to modernize traditional religious thinking. Its ethical and political applications include theories of education, art, economics, and social organization grounded in family-centered ethics and mutual cooperation. The philosophical system can be regarded as a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought, religion and science.]
>
> **[Editor's note 2:** "Godism" (하나님주의) is one of the central philosophical and theological ideas associated with Sun Myung Moon (문선명) and the Unification movement. 하나님 (Hananim) = "God" (the personal, loving Creator). 주의 (主義) = "-ism" or "principle/ideology". So 하나님주의 (Godism) literally means "ideology centered on God".

Sun Myung Moon presented Godism as a third ideological alternative to capitalism and communism, especially during the Cold War. It was meant to be a moral and spiritual worldview that could reconcile left and right, transcending materialistic and human-centered ideologies.

This is closely connected with his idea of Head-Wing Thought (두익사상) [See editor's note 3 below] - where Godism serves as the core spiritual content, and Head-Wing Thought serves as the social-political application.

The core principles of Godism:

God-centered humanism - Humanity's ultimate purpose is not self-centered fulfillment but living for the sake of others, reflecting God's heart of love.

Dual purpose of life - Each individual exists both for personal perfection (becoming one with God in love) and for the good of others (family, society, and the world).

Family as the school of love - True love begins in the family and expands to all levels of human relationships, reflecting God's parental heart.

Unity of science and religion - Godism seeks to harmonize spiritual truth and scientific understanding under a divine purpose.

Overcoming ideological conflict - By centering politics and economics on God's love, Godism proposes peace through moral renewal, not domination or class struggle.]

**[Editor's note 3:** Head-wing thought (두익사상 - 頭翼思想) is a concept coined by Sun Myung Moon. 두 (頭) = "head", 익 (翼) = "wing", 사상 (思想) = "thought" or "ideology". So 두익사상 literally means "Head-Wing Thought."

It was developed by Sun Myung Moon (Co-Founder of the Family Federation) and his followers as a philosophical framework intended to transcend and harmonize left-wing (liberal/socialist) and right-wing (conservative/capitalist) ideologies - hence the "head" guiding both "wings".]

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# Grandson Named Head Of New World Headquarters

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# prepares a new generation of leaders



***Moon Shin-heung**, here speaking to members in Japan in August 2026. Screenshot from video by FFWPU.*

South Korean media have reported that the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (FFWPU), commonly known in the country as Unificationism (통일교), has established a new top-level organizational body, the World Headquarters, appointing Moon Shin-chul (문신출), a grandson of founders Sun Myung Moon (문선명) and Hak Ja Han (한학자), as its head. The appointments have renewed media discussion about the movement's future leadership and the possibility of hereditary succession amid the current legal difficulties and absence from the religious organization's day-to-day activities of Hak Ja Han (한학자), also called Mother Han.

*See also Mother Han Granted Bail Under Strict Conditions*

On 13th October, several South Korean media outlets reported on the appointments, citing a 29th September internal document obtained by Japan's *Mainichi Shimbun*. According to the document, the World Headquarters was established as the Federation's highest-level organizational body, with Moon Shin-chul (문신출 – born 1999) appointed as its director. His younger brother, Moon Shin-heung (문신흥 – born 2001), was named head of the newly established *Cheonshim Cultural Institute*, which is responsible for overseeing cultural content and communications. The various media reports correctly state the brothers are in their twenties.

*The logo of the Hankyoreh (한겨레), one of South Korea's largest and most influential daily newspapers.*

The reports identify Moon Shin-chul (문신출) and Moon Shin-heung (문신흥) as sons of Moon Hyo-jin (문효진 – 1961-2008), the eldest son of Sun Myung Moon (문선명) and Hak Ja Han (한학자). Hankyoreh quoted the large Japanese media outlet *Mainichi Shimbun* as observing that, with Mother Han currently absent from the organization, her grandson would effectively assume a leading position. However, the Japanese newspaper also cited expert assessments suggesting that, given his young age and limited experience, the Family Federation would probably continue to be run in practice through collective leadership, with established senior officials supporting him.

*The logo of Pressian (프레시안), a prominent progressive, independent South Korean online news publication. Its name is a portmanteau (blend word) of the English word "Press" and the acronym "IAN" (Internet Alternative News)*

The online news outlet Pressian, in a 14th October report, framed the appointments more explicitly as a sign that hereditary succession was taking shape. Its headline described the development as Unificationism's own form of "hereditary succession". The article noted that the younger brother of Moon Shin-chul (문신출) had simultaneously been appointed to lead the cultural organization, interpreting the two appointments as part of a broader leadership transition. It also highlighted the timing: Mother Han, 83, was appealing a 31st August first-instance verdict sentencing her to two years in prison for offences related to political funds and alleged bribery.

*The logo of JoongAng Ilbo, one of South Korea's largest and most influential dailies.*

The succession question had already attracted attention earlier in the year. In a 17th February article, JoongAng Ilbo examined competing interests surrounding the Family Federation's future leadership. It identified Moon Shin-

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chul (문신출) and Moon Shin-heung (문신흥) as Mother Han's preferred successors and highlighted the role of their mother, Choi Yeon-ah (최연아) – also known as Moon Yeon-ah (문연아), who previously served as Mother Han's chief secretary and is now chair of the *Sunhak Educational Foundation*. The article also mentioned Moon Hoon-sook (문훈숙), director of Universal Ballet, as another significant figure in the network surrounding the potential successors.

What the various South Korean media reports fail to mention, is the fact that there has already existed a World headquarters within the Family Federation. *Doo Seung-yeon (두승연), aka. Ken Doo, was its director from August 2025 to September 2026. Before him, Dr. Song Yong-cheon (송용천) served as International President from May 2023, taking over after Yoon Yeong-ho (윤영호), who held the position of Director General of the international headquarters since May 2020.*



*Dr. **Michael Balcomb**, here speaking in London on 20th Sep. 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by FFWPU*

At an international prayer meeting on Zoom 14th October, Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the Family Federation in Europe and the Middle East, commented on the latest leadership change where Moon Shin-chul has been asked to officially take responsibility for the leadership of our international headquarters together with his brother Moon Shin-heung. Dr. Balcomb said,

> "The last year and a half, they've been touring the churches of Korea and supporting True Mother, visiting her many times in detention. But now they're being asked to step up.
>
> And in response to that, all around the world, efforts are being made to prepare the next generation of young leaders who can work with them in the time to come. And that's on every level.
>
> And as you heard a couple of weeks ago, also here in Europe, where we're beginning the search now for the next continental directors."

*See also Mother Han Granted Bail Under Strict Conditions*

***Text**: Knut Holdhus, editor*

***Featured image** above: Moon Shin-chul (문신출) addressing a meeting of Family Federation members in South Korea in April 2026. Photo: Screenshot from FFWPU video.*

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