

## Lessons from Reverend Moon's New Culture Strategy

Glenn Strait  
October 6, 2014



*"Do you think you can create a new culture of peace by sitting down?" – Sun Myung Moon*

From 1972-92, Reverend Moon invested huge resources in creating new culture. During this same period, he also invested vast resources in defeating international communism, while he simultaneously conducted major evangelical outreach efforts and established a global footprint of his movement.



*Glenn Strait*

The foundation for each of these components was a system of thought — Unification Thought, Victory Over Communism, and Divine Principle, respectively. My focus is Rev. Moon's strategy for creating new culture.

In strategizing with God about how to usher in God's ideal, peaceful and happy world, he determined his grand strategy would include a component focused on creating new culture undergirded by a new and comprehensive ideological framework built on the foundation of Divine Principle itself. Working directly with Dr. Sang Hun Lee, Rev. Moon elaborated upon Divine Principle to create Unification Thought to serve as that ideological framework.

My windows onto Rev. Moon's new culture strategy were, from 1972-85, working on the core secretariat of the annual International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS), and, from 1985-2004, as editor for natural sciences of *The World & I* monthly magazine.

Rev. Moon's strategy had originally intended *The World & I* to be the vehicle for spreading new culture, as the magazine published articles written by academics and other prominent people inspired by Unification Thought. These authors were to have gained that inspiration in Unification Thought through their participation in ICUS and other conferences spun from it. One of my objectives on the editorial staff of the magazine was to assure that this pool of prepared authors became writers for the magazine.

As a participant in and observer of the implementation of Rev. Moon's new culture strategy, I was painfully aware something was awry. The ICUS conference participants loved the way our staff treated them; valued the diversity of participants and rich exchange of ideas; and, they developed warm feelings of respect and affection for Reverend and Mother Moon. They just didn't pick up on the ideas of Unification Thought.

## **Rev. Moon's New Culture Strategy**

Rev. Moon's strategy with ICUS seemed brilliant to me.

With ICUS providing travel and lodging, and additional honoraria for chairs and presenters, we could attract the highest ranks of academics, and were in a position to frame the overall thematic development in ways requested by Rev. Moon. He founded ICUS in 1972 in New York with 20 participants, guided it to its peak of over 800 participants in 1981 in Seoul, then gradually reduced the size.

To introduce Unification Thought into the conferences, Rev. Moon selected graduates of Unification Theological Seminary for pursuing Ph.D.'s. Once they earned their doctorate, a credential that would make them peers of ICUS participants, these Unification scholars were to write — and they did — papers showing various ways in which the ideas of Unification Thought (also called "Headwing Thought") were related to more mainstream aspects of thought.

Over two decades through 1992, Rev. Moon invested millions of dollars toward planting Unification Thought firmly in academia — not just in the sciences through ICUS, but also in the humanities, media, religion, and the arts — through affiliated conferences and programs. His new culture strategy intended for Unification Thought to gain acceptance first in the academic community — and then with their imprimatur, it would naturally spread to all sectors of society.



*Rev. and Mrs. Moon greet ICUS XV participants at a reception, November 1986, Washington, DC. Dr. Bo Hi Pak is at right.*

The emergence of Unification Thought as the undergirding philosophy of the new culture was to be further enhanced as it gained authority through overcoming secular, materialistic thought and paving the way for the unification of science and religion.

## **The Climax of a Grand Strategy**

In 1992, Rev. Moon implemented the climactic phase of his grand strategy for creating the new culture by simultaneously convening in Seoul contingents representing not only ICUS, but also the Professors World Peace Academy, World Media Conference, Summit Council for World Peace, Assembly of the World's Religions, Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace, Women's Federation for World Peace, international performing arts groups, and World CARP.

Tying all these programs together with the international marriage blessing and sports competitions, Rev. Moon assembled the first World Culture and Sports Festival.

By 1992, Unification Thought concepts were to have been percolating through those assembled groups. With each participant at the World Culture and Sports Festival finding meaning in Unification Thought,

and coming from so many diverse disciplines, they were to have been in the vanguard of creating comprehensive new culture.

Reverend Moon's Founder's Address for the festival articulated his vision (emphasis added):

“...After I received my calling at the age of sixteen, I spent the years searching for the answer to ... this problem of how to bring salvation to humankind. The result of that lonely search for truth is the new expression of God’s truth that we refer to today as the *Unification Principle, Godism, and Headwing philosophy*.

...The First World Culture and Sports Festival... is an occasion to let the entire world see, and to offer to God, the harvest reaped from the seeds I have sown and nurtured for the liberation of God and humanity and for the realization of a world of peace.

... I would like to propose, so that all of our activities for world salvation can be carried out more effectively, that we establish “*The House of Unification for World Peace*” as a structure for the peaceful unification of the world.

... If you will embrace my proposal and join me in this task, then our efforts are certain to bring the world of peace which is the object of God’s desire to all of humanity within the remaining eight years of the twentieth century.”

### **Shift Away From Creating New Culture Centered On Unification Thought**

By the time of the Third World Culture and Sports Festival in 1995, Rev. Moon's message was noticeably different (emphasis added):

“...In order to restore the family that bases its relationship on false love, false life, and false blood lineage caused by the fall, we need a Blessed wedding for all the international families to participate, and through which the great blessing of heaven may be passed on to them.

In this way, we will establish the blood lineage passed through God and True Parents at the levels transcending nations, races and religions. We can then proclaim true principles of parents — husband and wife — and others by establishing the great heavenly families centered on God, initiate the heartistic civilization, and then complete the liberated Heavenly Kingdom on earth. This is the central focus of my work, and the purpose of the Unification Movement.”

Reverend Moon's fundamental shift in priority can be characterized by two phrases:

- 1992: “[E]stablish rounded in Unification Thought]
- 1995: “[E]stablish the blood lineage passed through God and True Parents at the levels transcending nations, races and religions” [grounded in Divine Principle] ‘The House of Unification for World Peace’ as a structure for the peaceful unification of the world”

Although by 1992 Rev. Moon had created a vast apparatus for establishing the new culture centered on Unification Thought, he subsequently reduced funding to them until many, including ICUS and *The World & I*, withered away.

In their place, he guided the development of new organizations, such as the Universal Peace Federation, framed to be more amenable to the goal of establishing the “blood lineage passed through God and True Parents at the levels transcending nation, race, and religions.” For such new organizations, the hope of creating new culture would lie in Divine Principle pointing to True Parents and blood lineage change, instead of in Unification Thought bridging to the mainstreams of knowledge and all sectors of society.

### **A New Vision?**

In the 1990s, Reverend Moon apparently simplified his grand strategy from three primary components — creation of new culture; defeat of international communism; and spread of his movement through evangelical outreach — to one component: *evangelical outreach*. He chose in his last two decades to prioritize this aspect, perhaps because until then it had achieved only anemic results in comparison with his expectations, leaving the movement chronically short of personnel and other resources to accomplish all the providential priorities. Mother Moon has sustained this same priority when she picked up the mantle of leadership upon the passing of her husband.

By de-emphasizing the goal of creating new culture grounded in Unification Thought, Rev. Moon, in effect, severed the movement's connections with many thought leaders of society, undercutting possibilities for the Unification movement to emerge as a powerful moral force in society. That de-

emphasis also extinguished in a segment of stalwart Unificationists their beacon of hope for creating a new world of God's ideal.

The absence of a clear understanding of Rev. Moon's shift in the 1990s to pursuing the one-component, evangelical outreach strategy has likely contributed significantly toward the division of the Unification movement into the groupings seen today.

Considering this, two urgent unmet agenda items for the Unification movement stand out: first, to probe into the possible reasons why Rev. Moon chose to turn away from his profound strategy for creating new culture grounded in Unification Thought; and second, to strategize how to carry on with this lapsed, but essential work for creating God's new world of peace.

---

*Glenn Strait has worked with the International Conferences on the Unity of the Sciences(ICUS), The World & I magazine, UPF's World and I: Innovative Approaches to Peace, and the New World Encyclopedia.*

*Photo at top: Rev. Moon speaking at ICUS XV, November 1986, Washington, DC.*