

## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Yong cheon Song Stresses Communication, Transparency, and Sharing

Knut Holdhus  
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Song Yong-cheon, President of the South Korean branch of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), delivers the opening address at the "National Pastors' Assembly for Victory in Vision 2027" held at The Ocean Resort in Yeosu, South Jeolla Province



**Family Federation in South Korea launches organizational reform effort amid growing challenges as renewal, better communication, and openness are emphasized**

An [article](#) by religion correspondent Jeong Seong-su (정성수) published on 8th April in the South Korean daily [Segye Ilbo](#) reports on a significant internal reform effort within the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (often abbreviated as FFWPU). The movement, which originated in South Korea where it is often referred to as [Unificationism](#) (통일교), convened a large national assembly of its pastors and officials with the goal of addressing mounting challenges and rebuilding public trust.

See also [South Korea's Slide Toward Authoritarianism](#)

The gathering, titled the "2026 National Pastors' Assembly for Victory in Vision 2027," took place over three days at a resort in Yeosu, a coastal city in South Korea. Around 600 participants - including pastors and organizational leaders - attended. The theme of the meeting emphasized renewal and a return to foundational spiritual attitudes, framed as "embracing the heart of the [True Parents](#)", a central theological concept within the [movement](#) referring to its founders.

At its core, the assembly reflects a moment of self-assessment for the [organization](#). Leaders acknowledged that the [movement](#) is facing what they describe as a serious crisis, both internally and externally. Internally, there is concern about declining vitality in pastoral work and the need to modernize organizational structures. Externally, the [group](#) faces increasing scrutiny, including legal and societal pressures - most notably developments in Japan, where authorities have taken legal measures against the [Family Federation](#) to [dissolve it](#).

In his opening address, the Korean president of the [organization](#), Song Yong-cheon (송용천), called for a combination of reflection and decisive change. He emphasized that this is a time not only for concern -

such as prayers for the [health](#) of the movement's co-founder and global leader, [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) - but also for critical self-examination. According to Song, rebuilding trust with the broader public requires a shift away from hierarchical and opaque leadership styles toward greater openness.



Pastors of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) pose for a commemorative photo, pledging reform at the "National Pastors' Assembly for Victory in Vision 2027" held at The Ocean Resort in Yeosu, South Jeolla Province. The banner says, "Embracing the Heart of the [True Parents](#), Toward Renewal"

To that end, he outlined three core values that should guide reform: communication, transparency, and sharing. These principles are intended to reshape how the [organization](#) operates, making it more accountable and better aligned with societal expectations. The leadership presented reform not as optional, but as essential for the [group's](#) continued existence.

A key part of the initiative is a set of six practical priorities. These include redefining the [organization's](#) mission in a way that earns public trust, focusing on meaningful and people-centered growth rather than purely numerical expansion, and returning to what leaders describe as the "essence" of church life - pastoral care rooted in empathy and sincere connection. Additional priorities include increased outreach to younger generations, efforts to re-engage former members, and a stronger emphasis on ethical conduct among leaders.

#### Song Yong-cheon's suggested key action tasks

- Establishing a mission for a trustworthy Family Federation
- Achieving practical, people-centered growth
- Focusing on the essence of the church (heart-centered pastoral care)
- Prioritizing youth evangelism and the return of members
- Strengthening communication and transparency
- Becoming a base for public education within local communities

Key action tasks suggested by Song Yong-cheon, President of the [Family Federation](#) in South Korea, at a leaders' meeting 7th April 2026. Translated from Korean. Unofficial illustration

The [organization](#) also aims to improve its relationship with local communities by positioning itself as a contributor to public education and social development. This reflects a broader attempt to shift its public image from a controversial religious group to a socially engaged and responsible institution.

The assembly itself includes a wide range of activities designed to support these goals. Beyond speeches and

discussions, participants are taking part in training sessions on legal compliance and professional responsibilities, as well as collaborative meetings, worship services, and visits to religious sites. These programs are intended to strengthen both the emotional commitment and practical skills of leaders working in local congregations.

This reform effort builds on earlier steps taken in January, when the [organization](#) issued a [formal declaration](#) committing to legal compliance and introduced policy initiatives through a dedicated committee. Since then, it has been working to gather input from frontline pastors and develop what it describes as a more collective, field-oriented approach to leadership.

Overall, the [article](#) portrays a [religious movement](#) at a crossroads. Facing unprecedented pressure, the [Family Federation](#) is attempting to redefine itself through structural reform, ethical renewal, and increased transparency. Its leaders argue that these changes are not only necessary for survival, but also for regaining credibility and playing a constructive role in contemporary Korean society.

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Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

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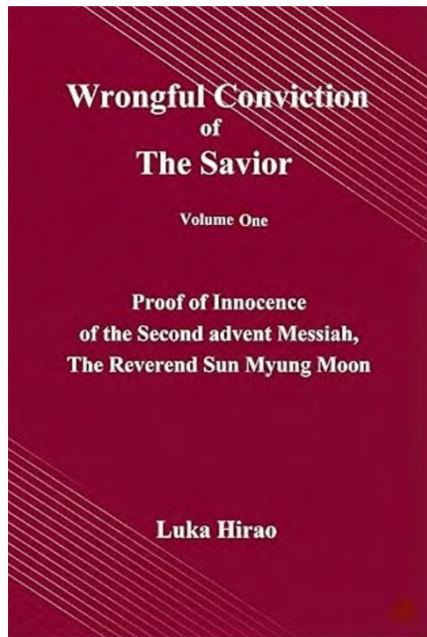
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# Uncovering The Truth Behind 1982 Moon Trial

April 7, 2026 • Knut Holdhus

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## New book uncovering a miscarriage of justice: The wrongful 1982 conviction of Sun Myung Moon as seen by eyewitness who followed the whole case

Luka Hirao's *Wrongful Conviction of The Savior – Volume One – Proof of Innocence of the Second Advent Messiah, The Reverend Sun Myung Moon* (253 pages, published 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026) presents a detailed and deeply personal re-examination of a controversial legal case involving **Sun Myung Moon** – also called **Father Moon** – founder of what at the time was called the **Unification Church**, now the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification**.



Luka Hirao. Photo: Private

Positioned at the intersection of legal critique, memoir, and theological reflection, the **book** argues forcefully that **Father Moon's** 1982 U.S. federal conviction was a miscarriage of justice.

At its core, the **book** advances a singular claim: that **Father Moon** was wrongfully convicted on charges related not to tax evasion – as commonly believed – but to filing inaccurate income tax returns, and even those charges, Hirao contends, lacked sufficient evidentiary grounding. This distinction is central to the author's broader project of reframing public understanding of the case.



Father Moon with Sang-in Kim who translated the court

Hirao's perspective is not that of a detached historian. As the interpreter for Takeru Kamiyama, **Father Moon's** co-defendant, Hirao attended the entire trial, which ran from March to May 1982. This proximity allows him to present the narrative as a form of primary testimony. He repeatedly emphasizes

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**Father Moon** with Sung-in Kim who translated the court proceedings in 1982 for him. Illustration: News World drawing by Sue Tuttle.

that his conviction in **Sun Myung Moon's** innocence never

wavered, even after the guilty verdict, and that the book represents the culmination of a 40-year effort to demonstrate that innocence.

The Introduction establishes both the motivation and scope of the work. Hirao situates his account alongside **Father Moon's** own



**Sun Myung Moon** and Takeru Kamiyama in Danbury Federal Correctional Institution in 1984. It accommodates about 200 male prisoners "under minimum security". Photo: R.M. Davis / New Future Photos.

autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, which recounts his imprisonment at Danbury Federal Correctional Institution but does not, in Hirao's view, sufficiently unpack the legal intricacies of the trial. He writes that the commonly held perception – that **Moon** was jailed for tax evasion – is an oversimplification that obscures the actual legal questions at stake.

Those questions, Hirao argues, were relatively narrow: whether approximately \$106,000 in interest income from a bank account in **Father Moon's** name should have been reported between 1973 and 1975, and whether \$50,000 in stock should have been declared as income. Despite this limited scope, the trial became highly complex due to the volume of evidence and the dynamics of the U.S. jury system, where lay jurors must interpret technical, financial and legal arguments.

A significant portion of the Introduction is devoted to procedural context, particularly the Grand Jury system. Hirao describes how evidence was presented without defense participation and notes that early reviews by *Department of Justice* officials initially found insufficient grounds for indictment. Only after additional evidence was introduced did the prosecution proceed. Even then, he stresses that the final charges were not for tax evasion, highlighting what he sees as a critical misrepresentation perpetuated by media coverage.



**Sun Myung Moon** during a special interview by a Japanese journalist in Danbury Federal Correctional Institution in 1985. Photo: R.M. Davis / New Future Photos.

Beyond legal analysis, the Introduction frames the trial in explicitly religious terms. **Father Moon** is described as the "Second Advent Messiah", and the trial is likened to the Passion of Jesus Christ. Hirao draws parallels between **Sun Myung Moon's** legal ordeal and biblical narratives, suggesting that the case carries not only judicial but providential significance. This theological framing is reinforced by references to key events in the Unification movement, such as the 1976 Washington Monument rally, which Hirao presents as a pivotal spiritual victory.

Chapter One shifts from analytical groundwork to narrative reconstruction, beginning with the indictment on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1981, and the subsequent court appearance. Hirao recounts **Sun Myung Moon's** decision to voluntarily return to the United States from Korea to face charges, despite the absence of an extradition treaty. This decision is portrayed as both courageous and spiritually motivated, reinforcing the book's portrayal of **Father Moon** as a figure acting in alignment with a higher mission.

The courtroom scenes are rendered with vivid detail. Hirao describes **Father Moon's** unexpected gesture of greeting the prosecutor with a handshake, an act that surprised observers and conveyed a sense of composure and dignity. Both **Moon** and Kamiyama entered pleas of not guilty, and bail arrangements were made. Outside the courthouse, a rally drew approximately a thousand supporters.

A substantial excerpt of **Father Moon's** public statement is included, in which he proclaims his innocence, criticizes what he characterizes as religious discrimination, and frames the prosecution as part of a broader pattern of persecution. He invokes themes of racial and religious bias, arguing that his treatment was influenced by his identity as a Korean religious leader. This moment encapsulates the book's blending of legal defense with moral and spiritual rhetoric.

While **Volume One** focuses primarily on establishing the context and initial phases of the case, it also signals the direction of the broader work. Hirao indicates that subsequent sections will delve deeper into trial transcripts, evidentiary disputes, and procedural irregularities, aiming to systematically dismantle the prosecution's case. The project, as framed here, is both evidentiary and interpretive: a reconstruction of events and a challenge to dominant narratives.

Hirao's [book](#) is not merely a legal reassessment but a sustained argument that integrates firsthand observation, long-term research, and religious conviction. Whether one accepts its conclusions or not, it offers a comprehensive and deeply committed reinterpretation of a case that continues to provoke debate.

**Text:** [Knut Holdhus](#), editor

**Featured image** above: [The front cover page of Luka Hirao's Wrongful Conviction of The Savior – Volume One – Proof of Innocence of the Second Advent Messiah, The Reverend Sun Myung Moon \(253 pages, published 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026\).](#)

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