

## Rev. Hyung Jin Moon Returns to North Korea to Offer Condolences

Ariana Moon  
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*Rev. Hyung Jin Moon is greeted as he arrives in Pyongyang, North Korea on Saturday Dec. 24, 2011. Moon met with North Koreans and laid a wreath at Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung square five days after the announcement of the death of Kim Jong Il - AP Photo.*

Shortly after returning from Pyongyang, North Korea where he commemorated the 20th anniversary of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's meeting with President Kim Il Sung, Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, the International President of the Unification Church and Chairman of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) International, traveled back to Pyongyang on December 24, 2011 to pay his respects to the late Kim Jong Il. That day, even as the frenzied and widespread displays of grief for the Kim Jong Il continued to shake the country, the people of North Korea vowed to uphold Kim Jong Un as the "supreme commander" of the 1.2 million strong military and thus solidified his rise to power as the third-generation leader of one of the world's last totalitarian, communist dictatorships. The entire country of North Korea is to remain in an official state of mourning until Kim Jong Il's funeral on Wednesday and memorial on Thursday.

"Most foreigners aside from those living in North Korea were shut out, and the same is expected this week, though Rev. Moon, an American citizen and son of Seoul-based Unification Church founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon is planning to attend the funeral," wrote *World Wires*.

According to the South Korean Yonhap News Agency, an official of the Unification Church who requested not to be named said, "President Moon, who was staying in the United States, visited the North without announcing his plans, and is expected to return to the U.S. after attending Kim's funeral."

Dr. Mark Barry, an adjunct professor at the Unification Theological Seminary and advisor to the UPF's

Office of Peace and Security Affairs in Washington, D.C., said the following: "North Korea respects Rev. Sun Myung Moon because he was born in the North (before it became the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)), and because he has established a worldwide movement on his own which has been totally independent of the ROK (Republic of Korea) government. The Unification movement is an independent actor that the North respects. Although the North is outwardly hostile to religion, it is not hostile to Unification theology because to them it appears "home-grown." A religion that holds high the role of the Korean people intrigues them. Moreover, one or both of Kim Il Sung's parents were reportedly Christian, and in his latter years, he became nostalgic about religion (hearkening to his youth and hometown), and for that reason he invited Rev. Billy Graham twice to North Korea in 1992 and 1994 for one-on-one conversations."

North Korea's *Korean Central News Agency* (KCNA) reports that Rev. Hyung Jin Moon carried a wreath to the main mourning site at Kim Il Sung Square in central Pyongyang. The 32-year-old Rev. Moon was accompanied by Sang Kwon Park, the president of Pyeonghwa (Peace) Motors, a car manufacturer in the North Korean automotive industry and a joint-venture between Unification Church-owned Pyeonghwa Motors of Seoul, South Korea and the North Korean Ryonbong General Corp. Also present was the Chairman of the Unification Church-owned *Washington Times*, Dr. Dong Moon Joo, who met at length with Kim Jong Il in August 2005.



*President of World Peace Federation Hyung Jin Moon carried a wreath to lay near the portrait of the late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il at Kim Il Sung Square - AFP.*

The *Washington Times*, founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 1982, wrote in a December 19 editorial that "The death of North Korea's longtime ruler, Kim Jong Il, is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to settle the conflict on the Korea Peninsula and bring North Korea into the community of nations. . . . Mr. Kim's anointed successor, third-son Kim Jong Un, faces many challenges in taking over the family leadership post. There is a 40-year age gap between him and the core party and military leaders, who are in their 60s and 70s. . . . The challenges of dynastic succession provide the young Mr. Kim a historic

opportunity to prove his leadership ability by embarking on a bold new course of openness. ...The opening is there if Mr. Kim is bold enough to take it."

The Universal Peace Federation, also founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, issued a statement on December 22, 2011 that said, "The recent death of North Korean President Kim Jong Il and the current transition of power to a new generation of leadership is a time of great risk for all Koreans and the entire East Asian region. At the same time it also offers an important opportunity to plot a new course of peace and reconciliation that will finally bring to a close more than six decades of division and distrust.

"The Universal Peace Federation counsels a course that recognizes the importance of stability on the Korean peninsula. This will require sincere good will from the strategic actors in the region including, of course, the US, China, South Korea and Japan."



Lee Hee-ho, center, and Hyun Jeong-eun, right, in Paju, South Korea, on their way to North Korea on Monday to pay respects to Kim Jong-il and meet Kim Jong-un. Photograph and caption courtesy of the *New York Times*.

"North Korea was founded in 1948 by Kim Il Sung, the country's first and only president," wrote the *Associated Press*. "He retains the title of "eternal president" long after his death in 1994. His son, Kim Jong Il, ruled as chairman of the National Defense Commission, supreme commander of the Korean People's Army and general secretary of the Workers' Party. Kim Jong Un was promoted to four-star general and appointed a vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party in September 2010. He had been expected to assume a number of other key posts while being groomed to succeed his father." Although North and South Korea have remained in a state of war since the 1950, South Korea's Unification Ministry spokesman Boh Seon Choi said that the government in Seoul has allowed a private delegation to travel to Pyongyang to offer their condolences to the late Kim Jong Il (as a citizen of the United States, Rev. Hyung Jin Moon may freely travel to the North). The delegation was led by Hee Ho Lee, the widow of former South Korean President Dae Jung Kim and the chairwoman of Hyundai Asan, Jeong Eun Hyun, both of whom met with Kim Jong Un and paid their respects at the Kumsusan Memorial Palace in Pyongyang, where Kim Jong Il lay in state.

The *New York Times* reports: "Ms. Lee and Ms. Hyun laid wreaths and walked around Kim Jong Il's glass coffin to show their respect, K.C.N.A said. In a message in the visitors' log, Ms. Lee wrote that she hoped the two Koreas would achieve an 'early reunification' by honoring a 2000 summit agreement in which her husband and Kim Jong-il had promised to encourage political reconciliation and economic exchanges."