

An Open Letter to the New York Times About Coverage of Sun Myung Moon's Death

Ms. Jill Abramson
September 7, 2012
Executive Editor
New York Times
620 Eighth Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Dear Ms. Abramson,

We are writing to you concerning the article entitled: "Rev. Sun Myung Moon, 92, Self-Proclaimed Messiah Who Built Religious Movement, Dies," by Daniel J. Wakin, NY Times, September 3, 2012.

As religious leaders who have been associated with Rev. Moon for many years, we are deeply concerned about the factual errors in this article as well as what appears to be intentional bias and discrimination against Rev. Moon and all associated with his great ministry. We request a meeting with you as soon as possible concerning these matters.

First, you use the term "Moonie" which is discriminatory, bigoted and contrary to your own policy. Your managing editor, Mr. Gene Roberts, wrote to Peter Ross, then director of Public Relations for the Unification Church, on May 6, 1997: "Once again I must apologize to you for a disrespectful reference to your church. As Bill Schmidt conceded in his telephone conversation with you last month, the use of the term 'Moonie' was a violation of our policy. We do not refer to religions by invidious slang terms." The 2002 edition of *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* advised: "Unification Church is appropriate in all references to the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, which was founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Do not use the disparaging Moonie(s)." (p. 344). We ask that you correct the author and reinforce your existing policy.

In addition, we want to underscore that using the word with qualifications as was done in your article by saying "derisively known as Moonies" is just as hurtful as if the hate language were used directly as a label. Certainly you don't refer to African-Americans with the caveat of "derisively known as n.....ers" ?

Second, there are glaring errors of fact. It's hard for us to understand why Mr. Wakin did not call anyone affiliated with Rev. Moon or the public relations department of the church in New York. We understand that the Unification Church's media relations representatives extensively communicated with your organization during previous events such as the Blessing of Marriage event at the Manhattan Center last March, and that when the public affairs director attempted to visit you personally, no one was available to speak with him. Why would the author write such a subjective piece without seeking comments from the officials of the church? This appears to indicate an unfair and unbalanced attitude of the writer and, perhaps, your paper. As clergy, we would like to meet and discuss this with you, for we do not assume that this bias was intentional.

Consider some of the factual errors. To start, the reporter wrote: "Church leaders plotted a strategy to defend the president. Church rallies in support of Nixon drew thousands to Yankee Stadium, Madison Square Garden and the Washington Mall." It's sad to see such an important newspaper as the *Times* writing in a manner that is out of step with the facts of history. Richard Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, one month before the Madison Square Garden rally, which was held in September 1974 as an evangelical rally about Jesus and his return (no mention of President Nixon there). The well-documented

events at God Bless America Festivals in Yankee Stadium and at the Washington Monument took place in June and September of 1976 respectively, and had the purpose of strengthening the faith communities of America and introducing them to America's providential role in the world (again, nothing to do with President Nixon as your article states).

Another factual error is the statement that Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo renounced his marriage to Ms. Maria Song of Korea who was blessed with him in marriage by Father and Mother Moon. Archbishop Milingo, who was close to Pope John Paul II, did return to the Vatican in response to the Pope's wishes after his marriage in hopes that the door would open for priests to be married. During that period the marriage appeared to be in question. However, the fact is that in 2006 he returned to his wife, Maria, and they now live as a happily married blessed family in Zambia. The Archbishop's "Married Priests Now!" movement has a solid base and is spreading in Africa as well as in the United States.

Mr. Wakin wrote that Rev. Moon turned on America in the 1990's. Rev. Moon has continually believed in and loved America and was always clear that America was a nation inspired by God. In his many public addresses he admired the spirit, faith and sacrifice of the Pilgrims to freely worship God. He always praised Christian leaders as well as people of conscience, veterans, men and women who throughout American history were the very reason that God's divine protection could carry America forward through troubled times.

Religious leaders often have risen to challenge America when she was not true to her founding principles. That's why Rev. Moon recognized the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the greatest American of the 20th century because Dr. King wasn't afraid to speak out about America missing the mark in respect and equality for all races, yet he did it out of love for America. In the same manner, it was out of love for America that Rev. Moon challenged this nation to live up to and realize its God-affirming principles and to continue to improve as a nation that respects and protects the freedom and equality of all races, faiths and cultures before God and the Constitution as a nation whose motto is: "In God We Trust."

He never "turned on America" and never ceased to remind his followers of the role that America played in saving his nation of South Korea and in saving his life and the life of many of his countrymen at the time of the North's invasion of the South. He always expressed love and hope for America -- asking God to forgive its shortcomings and that this nation's spirit would be guided by the light of God so that she could be an example to the world as to how all faiths, races and nationalities could be "One Nation Under God." In a speech given in 2007 he states, "Victory (in the two world wars and over communism) came because God had chosen and raised the United States of America as the second Israel, in accordance with His providential program, and had raised the American people through Christianity. God worked through America to bring His providence to its present stage of fruition."

Father Moon prepared well for this time of transition in leadership. On March 17, 2007 in a speech entitled: "A Providential View of the Pacific Rim Era in Light of God's Will - The United States and the Future Direction of the United Nations and the World" delivered in Kona, Hawaii, he announced that we were entering the era in which women would take the central leadership of all world affairs and that the movement for world peace would be led by his beloved wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. From 2007, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has led this movement under Father Moon's encouragement and love.

Further, on January 15, 2009 in Seoul, Korea and again on January 31st (Seoul in the morning and New York in the evening), Rev. and Mrs. Moon presided over special ceremonies in which they anointed their youngest son, Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, as the one to assume responsibility as the spiritual leader of the Unification Church, its movement and all of its organizations under the guidance of True Parents. We are happy to report that the movement is secure, strong and continues to grow under this leadership. As clergy of the ACLC founded by Rev. Moon, he taught us how to melt the barriers between denominations

and faiths with the love of Jesus as well as “living for the sake of others” more than oneself and “loving our enemies” as Jesus taught and even “loving and helping our enemies’ children.” The clergy movement and the larger Holy Spirit Association couldn’t be more vibrant. Father Moon prepared us well.

Our experience as faith leaders is conclusive. Rev. Moon is not a “self-proclaimed Messiah” as you say but anointed by Jesus through a personal encounter with him. In Hebrew, Messiah means the “the anointed one,” and in that context we affirm that Father Moon is the Messiah (anointed one), and, together with Mother Moon, the True Parent. We have confirmed and witnessed this “anointing” from God both in spirit and in truth. Now the grace that Jesus brings to the individual who believes is expanded to the couple through the blessing of marriages. Divorce is on the decline where Father Moon’s teaching is practiced.

Many of us traveled with Rev. Moon extensively in 2001 throughout the 50 states, and having worked closely with him during the last 11 years, thousands of Christian clergy of all denominations in America have received confirmation through their study of his Biblically sound and powerful teachings. We have received affirmation concerning his historic role through the “still, small voice” of God. We believe that time will reveal to humanity God’s confirmation of Rev. Moon and the True Parents. As for now, we have confirmed in our own hearts and ministries that he is “anointed, appointed and approved” by God. We are confident that “greater works” will be realized by those who practice his teaching on “True Love” which will eventually expand into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.



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