

The Beautiful Game: Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Football

Michael Balcomb
July 7, 2021



As we draw closer and closer to England's semi-final clash with Denmark, we look back on Rev. Sun Myung Moon's passion for the beautiful game of football.

Rev. Sun Myung Moon was always an avid sports fan. While he enjoyed fishing for salmon in Alaska, he was most passionate about football, a sport he had played since he was a young man.

Over the course of his life, Rev. Moon invested substantial resources into football, the most well-known investment being the Peace Cup he created with Brazilian footballing star Pele, which featured some of the world's most prestigious football clubs.

In 1989, Rev. Moon founded the Ilhwa Chunma FC soccer team in Seoul which is now known as Seongnam FC. The South Korean club plays in the top division in South Korean football and have gone on to win seven national league titles. The team is regarded as the second most successful Korean football team, after Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors.

Rev. Moon also established two football teams in Brazil: Atletico Sorocaba and CENE.

In 2003, Rev. Moon met with legendary footballer Pele in New York and founded the Peace Cup. The Peace Cup was an invitational pre-season friendly football tournament for club teams which was held every two years. Football clubs such as Tottenham Hotspur, Aston Villa, Juventus, FC Porto and Real Madrid have all participated in the tournament.

"When you mention the word 'peace', when you are trying to bring peace in the world, I will always be

there," Pele said on why he worked together with Rev. Moon.

When talking about football, Rev. Moon said: "Through football, you can unite all peoples."

Rev. Moon also founded the Peace Queen Cup which was an invitational women's football tournament for national teams. This was at a time when women's football was not as popular as it is now.

Following the passing of Rev. Moon, Pele sent the following condolences: "I am deeply sorry to hear about the passion of Rev. Moon.

"After meeting three former popes and former presidents of various nations including President Nelson Mandela, I had an opportunity to meet with Rev. Sun Myung Moon and the peace movement in Korea.

"He said to me that, since football is the largest organisation in the world and a very important means of propagating the message of peace, I hold a great responsibility.

"I hope that, just as Rev. Moon had endeavoured to bring about peace, his co-operators and his followers will continue to work for peace."

Rev. Moon has often spoken about football and sports. The following are extracts taken from the Cheon Seong Gyeong:

"6. To usher in the age of peace, we cannot exclude the roles of the arts and sports. With this in mind, it is amazing that we have achieved world-class standards in those fields. First it was the soccer world. Next it was in the world of art and culture, where our ballet company is almost as well-known as the Bolshoi Ballet. In the future, when we enter a world of freedom and peace that is free from war, sports and the arts will be absolutely necessary. (412-036, 2003.07.14)"



"11. People may wonder why Rev. Moon, a religious leader, takes an interest in sports, soccer in particular. Sports will be absolutely necessary in the future, for the purpose of enhancing the vigor of young people in cultural festivals or a cultural Olympics. The flourishing or perishing of a nation depends on the vigor of its young people. No matter how knowledgeable, brilliant or handsome a person may be, it is all for naught if he or she lacks vigor. A nation that has young people of high spirit and increasing vigor will flourish. Therefore, this philosophy is crucial. (237-317, 1992.11.18)"

"15. Why did I make a soccer team, and why am I taking an interest in sports? Sports are instrumental in promoting harmony and peace. When a famous soccer team plays, the entire world watches. Boxing requires only one player, but soccer requires eleven players. A soccer team need to play in harmony. The players first need to unite and harmonize with one another. When a soccer team attains peace and harmony, free from conflict, the crowd can find even more enjoyment setting aside their mundane existence and watching them play. Right there, unity is created between the players and the crowd. The soccer team itself symbolizes harmony and unity, namely, total oneness. That is what we need in our families, societies, nations, and in heaven and earth. Peace is needed everywhere. In order to bring about peace, we need unity. Without unity, we never will attain peace. (276-112, 1996.02.11)."

We wish the England National Football Team all the best as they face Denmark at Wembley Stadium! Let's bring the Euros home!