

Michael Breen on the alleged *pikareum* sex rituals in the Unification Movement

Mark Bramwell

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Conference via Zoom, 2025.12.30

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Dear Blessed Families, dear Friends

Many of us contributed the prime years of our lives to the building of the Unification Movement, believing that it represents the centre of God's providence and God's hope for humanity in this age. Hence, we have a strong interest in the success of this movement.

However, the Unification Movement is currently in a state of great disarray. It is not only deeply divided based on the Founder's physical family, but also lacks competent leadership, accountability, transparency, principled governance, and seems confused about the Divine Principle and the direction of God's Providence. Our movement is sadly very far from the ideals of the Family Pledge: the world of freedom, peace, unity, and happiness. It is time for Blessed Families to step up and take responsibility.

Among the many problems the movement faces is the unsettled and extremely damaging controversy surrounding the Founder's alleged sex rituals in the early days of the movement. Unsubstantiated rumours are being exploited to create mistrust and division among Blessed Families and even to promote the theological status of certain members of the Founder's own family. The allegation of sex rituals is an issue that urgently needs to be addressed, investigated and clarified, as it strikes at the very root of the faith. I am therefore grateful that a professional journalist, Michael Breen, has done much objective research on this subject, including interviewing the early members. In the 1990s, Michael published his excellent book *Sun Myung Moon - The Early Years 1920 - 53*, and he is currently working on a new book to be published soon: *The Search for the Bride* (which will also incorporate the content of the first book). Michael outlined his research in a Zoom talk on 30th December 2025, which I am attaching for your information.

Currently, the movement is divided over whether sex rituals ever in fact took place; whether there is any truth in the 'picareum' claims of that sordid book *The Tragedy of the Six Marys* (especially considering that its author later retracted them); how all this squares with the principles and the marriage and family ideals of the movement; who is Sammy Park, and more. There are many rumours and much confusion, which is causing immense damage to the life of faith of the believers. My hope is that Michael's talk will help solve some of these issues so that we can move on as a movement and deal with other pressing matters. These matters include such questions as the meaning of Cheon Il Guk (the 'One Nation of Heaven'); and the way forward in the Divine Providence after the break-up of the Founder's physical family and of the disbanding or shrinking of most of his core projects. (Some core projects, such as the establishment of the Abel-UN, have hardly been followed up at all.) Above all, it is urgent to train and actively support Blessed Families in their outreach activities in society.

Wishing you and your family God's abundant blessings and your success in 2026!

Sincerely

Mark Bramwell

(Former European CARP President)

Discussion on the alleged *pikareum* sex rituals in the history of the Unification Movement

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Michael Breen – Journalist, Author of the book *Sun Myung Moon – the Early Years 1920 – 1953* (1997). Michael has done extensive research on the early Unification Movement, including interviewing the early members. He was in the British Unification movement from 1978 to 1982 and was editor of the church publications, *One World* and *New Tomorrow*. In 1982, Mike went to New York and then Korea where he became the Seoul correspondent for *The Washington Times* and *The Guardian*. He has remained in Korea where he runs his own public relations firm. He also contributes columns to Korean newspapers, trains Korean journalists, and edits an English news site about North Korea whose reporters are North Korean defectors. Mike has written four books about Korea, including the one on Father Moon's early life. He is in the process of completing a full biography of him. Mike is British and is also an Honorary Citizen of Seoul.

Transcript of Michael Breen's Talk

Thanks for this meeting. It's nice to see some old faces. I appreciate that we are coming from different parts of a divided movement—in fact, so divided that I am not even sure it is any longer a movement. But this ability to come together reminds me of the old days of the *Pak-Kwak* factions, when the staff on each side of the divide were quite friendly with one another.

Researching Rev. Moon

As Mark mentioned, I wrote a book about the early life of Sun Myung Moon some years ago. At that time, I was the Washington Times correspondent in Seoul, and I thought I would take advantage of the job to research Rev. Moon's life. I approached the task of interviewing people who had known him and his early followers with some trepidation, because I imagined that what we had been officially taught in the movement about his life was probably missing a lot of detail and perhaps even fabricated or exaggerated. So, my rule of thumb was to rely on people who had direct experience, regardless of their current status. If they were not there at the scene, I did not pay much attention to their input.

In the early 1980s, I got to know Pak Chung-hwa, the man who was in Hungnam prison camp with Rev. Moon. He had a phenomenal memory—the kind that comes from continually thinking about and telling your story. If we do not often reflect on our past, our memories begin to fade. But Pak could even remember the colour of someone's sweater from decades ago. Also, he was retired and somewhat shunned by the Korean Unification church because he had left it decades earlier. So, he always had time for me.

Sexual allegations

At the end of each one- or two-hour interview, however, he would start talking about sexual allegations. That's when I first heard about them. I decided to end the book up to 1954 (the founding year of HSA-UWC) in order not to go onto the territory of sexual allegations and risk burning my sources, with a view to making *The Search for the Bride* a second book. In the end, I did not do this, but instead incorporated the early book into an overall biography which, as Mark mentioned, I am close to completing.

One of the first people I spoke with regarding the sexual allegations was Lee Yo-han, a Christian pastor from North Korea when he joined the UC, later head of the Korean church's

seminary, and a 36-Couple. He said the sexual allegations are all rumour. But when I asked about a specific case—which we will get to—he said I should ask Rev. Moon about that. I thought this was obfuscation. But over the years, I found that it was an honestly felt pattern.

I asked him to explain the rumours, and he told how in the 1950s he and other members would get **called up to Seoul for certain ceremonies**. They did not know what was going on. The ceremonies would take the form of: “We are restoring Noah’s family: You, A, are Noah; you, B, are Noah’s wife; you, C, are Ham; and you, D, are Ham’s wife,” and so on. There would be a prayer ceremony and maybe a brief sermon, and that would be the end.

People outside the room where these ceremonies were held were naturally curious. They’d ask, “What are these people doing here? What are they up to?” The participants did not explain well because they didn’t know much more themselves. So, the people outside the room weren’t satisfied and began making assumptions that something bad was going on. Rumours spread through Seoul and beyond.

Korea was a dictatorship then and there was no credible media, so Koreans were generally in the habit of disbelieving people’s testimony, always assuming there was something behind what went on. The country was rife with rumours and conspiracy theories. So was the Unification Church.

I would point out that if you believe Satan exists, if you believe that Rev. Moon’s theology is accurate when it claims the Fall was sexual, that the Christ will come as another person, and that his mission is to “restore” this, then you can predict that the very crime that caused the Fall will swirl around the Christ figure.

Most of us in the first generation of believers had rather unusual paths of conversion. We all have our stories. But one of the strangest I heard was that of a man named Chung Suk-cheon. In 1955, he read in the newspapers about the Ewha scandal and the UC, when the first sex-cult allegations surfaced in the media, and remembered something his mother had told him. She was the woman who founded the Holy Lord Church sect in Pyongyang. Before he left, she said: We are living in the messianic age; the Messiah is coming as a man; the Fall was sexual; and if we want to find the Messiah, we should look where the sexual allegations are swirling—and the Messiah will be there. (I assume she also said, “Make sure the allegations aren’t true!”)

After reading the papers, he came up from Daegu to Seoul to do what his mother had said. He was convinced and joined. Interestingly, he was the one who introduced the mother of Rev. Moon’s wife, Han Hak-ja, to the church.

What caused the allegations at that time? One reason was **social change**. Older Koreans still wore traditional white clothes and the sexes were separate. But here were these young people in Western clothes staying out at people’s houses during the nightly curfew. Clearly, something dodgy was going on, people thought.

A second reason, as I’ve mentioned, was that **the Unification theological focus on sexuality is easily misinterpreted**.

Third, there was **guilt by association**. For example, there was a scene once in a Unification Church in Seoul where Rev. Moon asked a woman member to stand up and explain her experience of the Holy Lord Church. She shared how the congregation became so ecstatic that they took off all their clothes and danced around naked—most of the congregation were

older people. At the time, this story was not attractive to Unification members. They did not think, “That’s a good idea! Let’s do it too.” Rather, they regarded it as problematic. But there was guilt by association when newspapers linked this story to the Unification Church.

Most of all, however, sexual allegations arose from **legal pressure**. The more serious matter was that Rev. Moon was investigated for adultery. At that time—and until very recently—adultery was illegal in Korea. If one partner filed a complaint, the police were obliged to investigate. Rev. Moon’s first wife, Choi Sun-gil, had filed such a complaint. The police found nothing. He was lucky. In fact, he was in an adulterous relationship. It wasn’t ‘ritual sex,’ however. He was moving on from a failed marriage, but not legally divorced. However, almost no one knew about it.

One other thing I’d like to say before looking at the allegations in detail is that it seems to me that almost everybody—the critics, the anti-cultists, and former and current church members—all share one belief about Rev. Moon in common: that he was in control of himself. There are one or two exceptions. Sammy Park—who we will talk about in a minute—has referred to “my father’s lust for women.” The only other person I can recall offhand who believed the lust explanation was a music professor called Kim Deok-jin, who composed the melodies to many of the movement’s holy songs. Kim himself was a randy fellow who deployed theology to seduce a surprisingly large number (for that conservative time) of women in the church. So, I reckon this is a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

This is an important point because, as men can see, lust is the most obvious explanation for the misbehaviour of a man surrounded by adoring women. But it doesn’t seem to apply here. That is why people come up with elaborate theories.

I have put the allegations into three categories: (1) *Six Marys*; (2) *Restoration of Cain* – the claim that Rev. Moon had ritual sex with the wives or a representative wife of the early Blessings – 36, 72, 124, 430 Couples in the 1960s (before those rituals were replaced by the holy wine); (3) *Search for the Bride*.

(1) “Six Marys” allegations – theory and evidence

This is based on the book by Pak Chung-hwa (the man with the broken leg who escaped North Korea with Rev. Moon and Kim Won-pil) and Eu Ho-min, his co-author. Eu was the cousin of the church leader Eu Hyo-won. These cousins belonged to the 36 Couple Blessing. I met Eu several times, sometimes with Pak and sometimes at his office. I’ll refer more to Pak because I think the book *The Tragedy of the Six Marys* is much more his work than Eu’s. Pak’s explanation is that Rev. Moon told him Jesus “failed” by not having sex with those six women mentioned in the Gospels – the woman at the well in John’s Gospel, and so on. They included Jesus’ own mother, Mary! To “restore” that failure, Rev. Moon had to have sexual relations with six women “in the position of” – i.e. representing – these biblical characters, before finding his virgin bride.

Frankly, this theory is laughable. The trouble is that no one is laughing. It’s odd that Unification believers, steeped in their theology, believe this. I think the reason is – with all due respect to UC members – because of the complexity of the Divine Principle and Rev. Moon’s interminable and complicated speeches and way of talking. It has led them to see Cains and Abels, Jacobs, Adams, and Eves everywhere and made them suckers for biblical-based theories. That is why many of the faithful – including his own children – accept Pak’s story.

As for outsiders and former members, it fits how they feel. This story of the “Six Marys” is truly offensive. It is totally disgusting. But then, frankly, that fits. Because there is nobody more disgusting and offensive than someone who claims he is the Messiah – unless they’re long dead. This all fits perfectly. I am not, by the way, suggesting that this motive means that the allegations are not true.

Another point is that of Pak’s authority. Although shunned, as I said, he was, frankly, the follower that all male followers wished they could have been. He was the man in the death camp who saved Christ. What better source? And yet, as hard as this is to believe, Pak didn’t know the theology that well. The truth is, a person who absorbs a 2-day or 7-day course in the theology probably knows it better.

Again, that doesn’t mean it’s not true. Pak’s motive or knowledge of theology isn’t the test of veracity. The problem with the theory is *the lack of evidence*. I asked him for years what exactly he knew about any sexual rituals. He always obfuscated. Normally, I am mild-mannered. But once, I lost my patience with him and made it clear I was not interested in gossip and rumours. I’m sure some people might think I was bending over backward to defend Rev. Moon. That was true. But not out of loyalty. It was out of a desire for evident truth. What was more, I told him, if I was going to write anything, it had better be correct. I’d be professionally responsible for it, not him. All I could write after all our talks, I said, was “There are widely-believed rumours...”.

Evidence

Then he told me what he knew for sure. One night in Busan (he could not specify when this was, which was unusual for him), sleeping overnight at someone’s house, there were Pak, five or six women, and Rev. Moon lying on the floor, the two men at the end and the women in between. He said he woke up in the middle of the night and looked across and there was Rev. Moon under a blanket with the woman next to him. He did not tell me at that time what they were doing under the blanket but in his book this tale is more graphic with them having sex. It was then that Pak “realized” that “Moon was having them all.”

I asked him what made him conclude that. He tied it back to the Hungnam prison camp when he was told about “Six Marys.” The reason I say he didn’t understand the theology in a systematic way was that, yes, of course, he knew the broad themes, but in the prison camp, the prisoners were not even allowed to talk to one another. They could only whisper discreetly. Rev. Moon wasn’t giving him his later-famous six-hour sermons; church President Eu wasn’t there helping it all make sense. Pak concocted his theory by putting all those fragments together.

I asked him, “What if the woman was Kim Myoung-hee (Rev. Moon’s 2nd wife)? He answered, “Yeah!” as if that occurred to him for the first time. Later, in his book, he wrote that it was her and I wonder if I had inadvertently planted that idea in his head. That, of course, means she wasn’t a “Mary.”

I have to say, as a theory, “Six Marys” at that point collapsed for me. But being a journalist and wondering whether there was no smoke without fire, I persisted along the sex rituals track. I asked Pak, “Who are the Marys?” and he began giving names, but I noticed that whenever I mentioned in further interviews the names of any women, he would say, “He had her as well.” And, in his book, he writes that it was not just six women but more like sixty. He was possessed by the idea that Moon was supposed to have sex with countless women.

However, I took the names of the first six he mentioned and met five (the sixth had died). I started with the one I knew well – Mrs. Kang, whom Sanctuary Church has blessed with Rev. Moon. She was my neighbour. I went in her car to work for a year or two. I spent hours over the years interviewing her about the early church. I also knew Mrs. Choi Won-pok (though not well) and so found it really embarrassing to ask her the question. Four of the women categorically denied ever having sex with Rev. Moon. In fact, Mrs. Kang became totally exasperated with the question, asking, “How can I convince people that what I am saying is true?” She said she was asked the same question by people, denied it, but people were still not satisfied with her answer. Those four women said nothing ever happened. The fifth person was a little ambiguous, just saying, “Father said we should not talk about things like that.” Basically, I conclude that the Six Marys narrative is a pot of crap.

(2) Mass Wedding/Restoration of Cain evidence

As far as I know, no woman who partook in any Blessing has ever come forward and said that Rev. Moon had sexual relations with her in that context.

However, I finally found a man who belonged to the 36 Couple Blessing who said it was true. Rev. Moon did have sex with all of the wives of that mass wedding (actually three separate weddings in 1960 and 1961), he said. I was disappointed to hear this because by this time I was thinking it was all rubbish and I had not been proved wrong. But, at the same time, as a journalist, I was exhilarated because I thought I had finally hit upon some substantial evidence. Whereas Pak was always possessed with anger, admiring and hating Rev. Moon at the same time, this man was very credible and was a highly respected person in the movement, even though he was no longer part of it.

He believed that Rev. Moon’s explanation of the Fall reflected an undue obsession with sex. He said, by the way, that he did not know if Rev. Moon had sex with wives of later mass weddings. At that moment, I felt a bit sorry for him for having to share his wife in this way. I wanted to ask him, but could not bring myself to do so: “Forgive me for asking, but were you there when he had sex with your wife? How did you feel?” Instead, I asked, “Do you think any of the women would speak to me?” He answered, “No. They will go to their graves with that secret. The only person who can reveal it is Rev. Moon himself.”

When the interview was over, as I was putting on my shoes and leaving, convinced by him now but still wanting that one extra bit of confirmation, I said, “So what you are saying is that your wife said she had sex with Rev. Moon?” At this, he physically jolted. “How could I ever ask her such a question?” he said. In that moment, I felt really angry with him, thinking “I am just about to leave with all the evidence I need from one of the most credible sources in the universe, but now he says he never heard it from his wife who obviously is the only person for him who can confirm such a thing!” Later, I did an interview with his wife through a third party in which she said, “This is all rumours.”

There you have it. An entire movement saying, “I heard...” but not knowing. All the way up to the top. Hearing, suspecting, wondering. But not knowing. I conclude it’s all nonsense. I’d like to say malevolent nonsense. But no, it’s banal. It’s honest people saying, “I heard...”

(3) Search for the bride

It is my conclusion that we would not even be talking about this topic if it were not for one plain fact. That some years into his marriage with Han Hak-ja, Rev. Moon had a child with another woman. That needs explaining.

I put this and other sexual relationships we know of into the “Search for the Bride” category. Here is what is in there.

Rev. Moon married his first wife, **Choi Sun-gil**, in 1943. As you know, they had a son, Moon Sung-jin. Had that marriage survived the tumultuous late 40s and 50s, the Korean War and birth of the movement, she would have been ‘True Mother.’ Had Rev. Moon died in North Korea, he would have had a son that the faithful few might have rallied around as his heir. But the marriage did not work out. I met Mrs. Choi a couple of times and, on another occasion, arranged for a mutual acquaintance to interview her. I also met her brother. A Presbyterian, Mrs. Choi was disparaging of Rev. Moon and thought he got his messianic notions from the church they had both attended in Seoul (the Israel Jesus Church, run by Kim Baek-moon). When this marriage failed (but three or so years before the actual 1957 divorce), he started a relationship with Yonsei University graduate **Kim Myoung-hee**. She was to be his bride. They had a son, Moon Hie-jin.

I knew Kim Myoung-hee. She had lived in the UK and had a Masters in English Literature. She did not want to tell me her story and said she hadn’t told anyone. But after a 40-day “liberation” session at Cheong Pyeong Lake, she was ready. We spent 12 hours over two days. It was very intimate and very emotional. (She, incidentally, denied the Six Marys). She described how she had allowed herself to be seduced by a Korean man in Japan. She felt so wretched about it that she told Rev. Moon and withdrew as his bride. He was distressed by this. But she insisted and he had no choice. By the time I met her, Ms. Kim was a humble follower at the back of the church. She was a very Christian lady and said nothing bad about Rev. Moon. (I harboured a private wish that she had become the True Mother. She was a Christian, was fluent in English, and had done a thesis on James Joyce. How cool was that?)

After her withdrawal, the next potential bride was one of those Ewha students, **Choi Soon-shil**, daughter of a Lee Deuk-sam who was one of the alleged Six Marys. But she quit after a very short time. It is not known if this relationship was consummated.

Then he married the lady who would stand by him for the rest of his life, **Han Hak-ja**.

The story, however, does not end there. For then came the other child, **Samuel Pak Jin-kyung**, known as **Sammy Park**, born in 1965, to a follower named **Annie Choi Soon-hwa**. This Ms. Choi was the sister of the last candidate, Choi Soon-shil. This case is the fuel that has given life to the ‘pikareum’ ritual sex theories, although itself does not fit that pattern.

But how to explain this adultery by the head of a religious movement that is otherwise so strict about sexual impropriety? The movement has been puzzling over this since it came to light in the 1980s. Did anyone ever go to Rev. Moon and tell him that there was a problem? Did he know how much the movement was internally convulsed by this allegation? Perhaps he was not aware. Or maybe he thought this was the followers’ moment to grow up. On your path to maturity as a spiritual person, in your teen phase, your guru becomes human, just as your parents do. If it hadn’t been this, there would have been some other challenge. Actually, there were lots. The point being, though, that it was not his issue to explain but rather the followers’ task to deal with it. If you quit over it, so be it.

Of course, that may explain his silence. But it doesn’t explain what happened.

I’ll put aside the latest allegation, which is that the father of Sammy Park was Pak Bo-hi, not Rev. Moon. (Although, on this, I’d just note that Sammy’s Korean name includes the

generational “jin” of all of Rev. Moon’s children and was suggested to Annie Choi by Rev. Moon.)

The most common explanation is that Rev. Moon identified with the biblical Jacob in that he wanted to have 12 sons to continue his legacy. And that when Hye-jin, his third child (and second daughter) with Han Hak-ja, died a week after her birth, perhaps he thought it was unreasonable to expect one woman to give birth to all 12 sons. He would need concubines. This practice may be unthinkable for western Christians – and for the Unification faithful – but was common, though rather outdated, in Korea. The former president of Korea, Kim Dae-jung, for example, was the son of a concubine. However, it is still very odd. If Rev. Moon was so strict about such relations and in control, why violate? For outsiders, the lust theory makes more sense. For insiders, the “he-was-just-doing-what-God-ordered” is sufficient explanation.

Let me say at this point that I do not have enough evidence to be sure about this. I would need to talk to Sammy, his mother and to Han Hak-ja. Or, rely on someone who has. And I’ve not done that. At least, not yet. So, I am just working on theories.

According to that standard explanation, Rev. Moon dropped the 12 sons plan when Han Hak-ja implicitly or explicitly agreed to have 12 children – boys and girls. And if boys were needed, then that makes 12 sons and sons-in-law. The cruel consequence, of course, was that Sammy could be let go and be raised by the faithful followers, Pak Bo-hi and his wife, just as his sons by his first two wives were in other homes. (Actually Sung-jin was with him and Mrs. Han for some of his teens).

However, I have some difficulties with that narrative. There is another one that fits better. It doesn’t exactly contradict the “12 sons” idea – two things can be true at the same time – but in my opinion it fits better. I wonder if, in fact, Rev. Moon was looking for another bride? I wonder if, in fact, after the death of their third baby, Han Hak-ja had a breakdown or was in some way withdrawing? What put this question in my mind was that Annie Choi was quoted as saying that Rev. Moon told her she was to be the True Mother. Was that what was happening? Was she to be wife No. 4? But then did things change? This would explain the cover-up, because once Han Hak-ja recovered, he would not expose her or blame her or otherwise say a word against her. Instead, he bore the consequences of the near marital collapse in the form of disbelief and hatred and accusation.

I think it’s possible the trail stops here and we are left with a question mark. We are not privy, of course, to their private conversations – perhaps some of their staff are, more so than their children. But I wonder if even Han Hak-ja knows what went on? Perhaps Rev. Moon is the only one.

Conclusion

Here is my conclusion. The sexual allegations that are true all fall into the context of the *Search for the Bride*. That period, we might say, is from the marriage in 1943 until January 1, 1968, when Rev. Moon said that after seven years his wife had fulfilled her mission and could stand as True Mother. This achievement, late in life, was a core requirement of his own conception of the Christ mission. It was a quarter-century, a long, drawn-out emotional course, at times tragic and painful, to all involved. But he believed he had finally found the woman who could spend her life with him and stand by him. There was ceremony, there was theological explanation. But it was very human and very real. All the theories of *pikareum*,

‘Six Marys’, and ritual sex with other men’s wives at mass weddings is rumour and supposition and not substantiated.

I’m not saying they never happened. But, if there is evidence, I haven’t got to it and I’m not convinced anyone else has. Yet the burden of proof is very much on those who are convinced by them. That is because these theories that appear so attractive and fitting, that appear to be wrapped in a shawl of Unification theology, in fact contradict the teachings. Could there be some secret teaching that we do not know about? Of course. Then, let those who have it come forward.