

Dan Fefferman cited for contempt of Congress - A Test of the First Amendment

Louise Strait
September 1977



Once again, the civil rights of Unification Church members are being tested, this time before a Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives. For well over two years, the House Subcommittee on International Organizations chaired by Congressman Donald Fraser of Minnesota has been investigating individuals and organizations suspected of having ties with the South Korean government. The Subcommittee's probes into the Unification Church and other organizations founded by Rev. Moon have been widely publicized, yet no substantial evidence has been revealed to justify such an investigation.

Recently, Dan Fefferman, Director of the Church center in Chicago, was requested to testify before the Subcommittee in Executive Session. In addition to his work with the Church, Dan was an FLF staff member for six years and an officer of the National Prayer and Fast Committee. He testified on two occasions, for over five hours, about those organizations.

The Freedom Leadership Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit educational organization, concerned with the fundamental values of freedom and the dangers of the totalitarian communist ideology. The Foundation publishes a bi-weekly newspaper. The Rising Tide, sponsors seminars on ideological counterproposals to communism, and distributes books and literature.

The National Prayer and Fast Committee (NPFC) was a "nationwide religious crusade for prayer and repentance during the Watergate crisis." Rep. Fraser has alleged that NPFC was a lobbying effort on behalf of the Korean government to block the impeachment of Richard Nixon. To the contrary, the purpose of NPFC was spiritual, not political -- to inspire inquiry in divisive national crisis, and to remind America's leaders and citizens of our need for God's guidance.

The Unification Church, Freedom Leadership Foundation, and National Prayer and Fast Committee have never had, and do not have now, any connection or relationship of any kind to the Korean government.

After lengthy testimony, Dan refused to answer certain questions which he believes transcend the legitimate confines of the area of the investigation and constitute a violation of his and others' First Amendment rights. When he refused to answer those questions on First Amendment grounds, the Subcommittee voted to recommend to the full Committee on International Relations that Dan be cited for contempt of Congress. The recommendation for citation will have to be debated in the Committee, and if passed, would go to the full House of Representatives for debate.

In the post-Watergate era of American politics, probes into potential wrong-doings and scandals have become more prominent and popular, as the press is eager to give them coverage. In light of the current "Koreagate" investigation (a separate inquiry being conducted by a Subcommittee of the House Ethics Committee, not to be confused with the Fraser Subcommittee investigation), it might seem relevant to investigate the activities of any prominent Koreans in America. However logical this guilt-by-association might seem at first, in the long run this practice hurts many innocent people. It is the same vein in which the Spanish Inquisition, Salem witch trials, and McCarthy hearings of the 50's were conducted.