

Justice Not Served - The wrongful tax evasion case against Rev. Sun Myung Moon

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"This was a case of justice not served. When Rev. Moon walked into the courtroom, the trial was already over," said Prof. Joseph Dunne, an expert trial lawyer who oversaw jury selection in the wrongful tax evasion case against the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon in the 1980s.

Dunne, who teaches Criminal Justice and Human Security at the University of Bridgeport, was among the featured speakers during a virtual commemorative event Tuesday, "Justice Not Served: Reverend Sun Myung Moon and the Danbury Papers," which observed the 37th anniversary of Rev. Moon's entry into Danbury Prison on July 20, 1984. The online program hosted by Dr. Thomas Ward, president of the Unification Theological Seminary ([UTS](#)), brought together some 800 Unificationists, faith leaders, as well as legal experts who examined the high-profile case that took New York City and the nation by storm.

Dunne said Rev. Moon, who co-founded the Unification movement in Korea in 1954, was vilified by the U.S. media and, more troubling, by a political system sworn to uphold due process.

"I got a hold of books, transcripts, briefs, and was reading and listening to the news," said Dunne. "The prejudice that came out through all my research showed there was never any good news about Rev. Moon or the Unification Church... There was bloodlust of punishing this religious figure, and the media did whatever they could to make sure that punishment took place."

A public poll taken around the time of the trial regarding Rev. Moon and the Unification movement

revealed extreme bias and an unfavorable rating, said Dunne, calling it the worst poll in his career. With an unsequestered jury, Dunne said the trial was "poisoned" by the system and set an alarming precedent for unfair practices.

Dr. William Lay, another speaker and founding chair of the University of Bridgeport, said the origins of the case and tax evasion claim began years earlier and were rooted in religious persecution.

"In 1976, Senator Robert Dole encouraged the IRS to investigate the Unification Church because he was critical of the fundraising and other activities," said Dr. Lay. "This triggered off a relentless series of IRS audits for 10 years - even six months after Rev. Moon was released from prison - and they found no wrongdoing."

"If this had been a bench trial, a trial by a judge, it would have been a different outcome," said Dr. Lay. "But Rev. Moon was denied a bench trial... and the U.S. Supreme Court did not want to review the case."

Rev. Moon was ultimately sentenced to 18 months at Danbury Prison. But even there, he maintained faith and reserved to "do good, find good, and bring hope," said Dr. Chung Sik Yong, North America regional president of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), colloquially known as the Unification Church.

"Rev. Moon and Dr. Moon came to America to find and appreciate righteous men and women who allowed God to love this country," said Dr. Yong in his opening remarks. Even behind bars, Dr. Yong said Rev. Moon "served as an exemplary inmate doing prison tasks with the mind that he was cleaning up America."

"Let us think with the mind that Rev. Moon had entering prison," said Dr. Yong. "What happened on that day he went to Danbury will never be forgotten... [but] Rev. Moon had filled the prison with God's love and it became a lonely place when he left it."

Rev. Moon, who called the trial a test from the outset, said what mattered most was his behavior during the process. He garnered sweeping support from a range of religious leaders and politicians who defended him, including former Utah Senator Orin Hatch.

"I have nothing to fear or feel ashamed about in the sight of God, America, or its forefathers," said Rev. Moon on July 18, 1982. "I have never hated the prosecutors; I know that although they do not understand me, their children will come to appreciate me in the future."

In his remarks, Dr. Luonne Rouse, national co-chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference ([ACLCLC](#)), said even while in prison Rev. Moon had a kind and forgiving heart that won't be forgotten. "While we acknowledge the pain," he said, "Rev. Moon took it upon himself to turn the situation into good... He took it as an opportunity to represent who he really is."

"A remarkable man lived among us," continued Dr. Rouse. "Through all of this, Father Moon showed compassion... and when the unforgiven forgives, it sets a new direction for us to forgive."

Dr. Rouse and fellow speakers, including ACLC National Co-Chair Emeritus Dr. Michael Jenkins and FFWPU-USA National President Rev. Naokimi Ushiroda, called on America to pray for forgiveness as well as a presidential pardon to exonerate Rev. Moon.

"We are reminded of the difficult course Father Moon walked," said Rev. Naokimi, "but let's maintain that same heart of forgiveness until justice is served."