

An Appreciation of Rev. Sun Myung Moon

Andrew Wilson
September 11, 2012
UTS Professor of Scriptural Studies



Sun Myung Moon - April 16, 2001

What I appreciate most about Rev. Sun Myung Moon was his dedication to God. From an early age he was consumed with God and determined to live for God's Will. Arguably, no person in human history, with the possible exception of Jesus Christ, has tried to do more for God than Rev. Moon. Whether or not one believes he was the Second Coming of Christ, it is without question that he took with utter seriousness Jesus' call to him, back in 1935, to take responsibility for some of the tasks that he had left unfinished.

Rev. Moon's family was Presbyterian, yet as a boy of 10 he knew a God that few Presbyterian clergy knew, or would admit to knowing: a suffering God. God is our long-suffering Parent who lost His children, Her children, who have strayed into the swamps of self-centered thinking. God created us to make Him/Her the center of our lives, but instead we center on ourselves and live to satisfy selfish desires. Hence God is left forlorn, bereft of His/Her children, who do not even hear God calling to them.

Yet in front of their children, good parents who struggle to put food on the table will hide their difficulties and smile. They want their children to have hope and believe that they can find happiness in life, even if they as parents are miserable. God is the same way; he shows a face of glory to believers who need to believe in such a God, while hiding His/Her inner pain.

God our Parent knows most people could not bear to know the truth, but He/She could be honest with Rev. Moon. Rev. Moon, in turn, made it the touchstone of his life to liberate God from this sorrow.

Hence, when Jesus Christ appeared to the young Sun Myung Moon and called him to complete the work that he was unable to do, he hesitated at first, knowing that this was no ordinary request but a heavy responsibility that would require a life-long commitment. Twice he turned him down; but on the third request Moon accepted his mission. From that time forward, he became utterly serious.

With that seriousness Rev. Moon embarked on a path that would send him to prison six times. His body would experience torture, and his heart would be wounded by numerous betrayals, even by trusted associates. Yet he would persevere, fortified not only by his iron will but by his promise to God and Jesus Christ. A man might fail to accomplish self-made goals, but a pledge to God is a far more serious matter. This was Rev. Moon's heart.

Rev. Moon was not only a man of will; he also possessed a towering intellect. After meeting Jesus, Rev. Moon had to figure out for himself just how he was going to accomplish Jesus' unfinished work. Jesus' goal—the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth—is well known from the Bible. But Jesus did not leave more than a few parables about what the Kingdom would look like or how to build it. He needed a lot more specific information than what could be gleaned from parables.

For 10 years from his calling in 1935 until he began his ministry in 1945, Rev. Moon searched for the truth. We do not know very much about what that search entailed, only that it involved three fields of study: the Bible, science (electrical engineering), and forays into the spirit world. It also involved hours upon hours of prayer, late at night and early in the morning. Typically Rev. Moon would pray from 3-5 a.m. every morning and then begin his Bible study. He had trained his body to subsist on only 2 hours of sleep a night.

The result of all this study was the Divine Principle. I have seen a manuscript of the first Divine Principle that Rev. Moon wrote in his own handwriting back in 1951. It is nearly 700 pages long. This Divine Principle is not a simple doctrine. It has complexities that even most long-time church members do not understand. Its discussion about the nature of reality spans religion, philosophy and natural science. In the Principle, Rev. Moon grasps for the essence of reality, how God designed everything in the natural world to work together in harmony and how human beings are meant to participate in that design. If only human beings would live by the design of nature, they would become the crown of creation, the central point that links all things into one harmonious union centered on God.

Essential to God's design is the duality of male and female. Hence in the Principle there is not one Messiah but two: True Father and True Mother. The Lord of the Second Advent needs to find the Lady of the Second Advent; then they need to marry and create a love between them that can represent and embody God's love. God designed the creation to mirror God; hence the love between human beings has the same degree of holiness as God's love for His/Her creation. When you think about this deeply, it is a revolutionary thought that can hardly be found in the world of religion. Religion tends to denigrate human love as profane and dirty, while love for God is pure and holy. But that is far from ideal from the perspective of the Principle. In the Kingdom of God on earth, all love will be holy. Even sex will be holy! You might like this idea, but to traditional Christians it was heresy.

The Divine Principle is an entirely original and revolutionary thought. I predict that scholars will be studying it and learning from it for centuries to come.

We have been reading numerous articles in the press about Rev. Moon's life and accomplishments. Yet what I appreciate most about Rev. Moon was the internal quality of his life, a life lived totally for God. Externally, I am sure Rev. Moon would have wanted to accomplish more—preside over the unification of North and South Korea, for one thing. Yet measured from a spiritual viewpoint, his life has already brought revolutionary changes to the cosmos. We have learned new ways to think about God, that God suffers and needs our help. We have come to appreciate the male-female duality and to critique any religion that gives primacy only to the male gender. We have witnessed the indomitable Rev. Moon even bring Satan to surrender as he opened the gates to the Kingdom of God.

Now that Rev. Moon is in the spirit world, I am sure that he is working more fervently than ever to bring about God's Kingdom on earth. If we want to memorialize him rightly, there is nothing better we can do than to strive with redoubled efforts to make Rev. Moon's vision of the Kingdom a reality.