

A Seonghwa Report: Fifty Thousand Gather to Say Farewell to Dr. Sun Myung Moon

Michael Balcomb

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Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the international religious leader and founder of the Unification Church and the Universal Peace Federation was laid to rest yesterday in a series of moving ceremonies held in the mountainous countryside just outside Seoul that Father Moon loved so much in life.



In addition the 50,000 mourners packed in and around the Cheongshim Peace Stadium, church officials estimated that millions more participated in the ceremony through live web broadcast and satellite programs in over 100 nations.

After a selection of messages of support and condolence received from Korean and world leaders were shown to the mourners on the giant video screens, live coverage began. Father Moon's body, which had been lying in state for eight days at a small chapel at the nearby *CheonJeongGoong* museum, was reverently led out to the waiting vehicles. Slowly, the flower-decked procession wound its way slowly down the mountainside, through wisps of fog and cloud, to the stadium where the tens of thousands of mourners—women dressed in white and cream and men with dark suits and white ties—waiting in somber silence.



The procession approaches the Peace Center



Rev. Moon's son lead the honor guard

The casket was met at the entrance by an honor guard of pallbearers, and then began the dignified processional entry through the center of the arena and up to the main stage, transformed into a garden of roses, lilies and chrysanthemums. Three of Rev. Moon's sons led the procession,

followed by Mother Moon, supported by her daughters. Grave but composed, she took her seat next to her husband for the last time.

Against a backdrop of roses, lilies and chrysanthemums, a representative prayer was offered by Dr. Bo Hi Pak, an early disciple, and one of the first missionaries to the USA. A wave of muted sobs quietly filled the arena as Pak emotionally and poetically recalled the fruits of Rev. Moon's life of love and devotion for heaven.

The *Seonghwa* Address was delivered by Rev. Hyung-jin Moon, the Moon's youngest son and the President of the Unification Church. Frequently pausing to wipe away tears, he called on all present to join together to realize his father's vision of a kingdom of peace. "It is only today that we realize the meaning of his words," he said. "As he asked us to do, let us offer everything for the ideal world of freedom that God and True Parents envisioned for this earth."



Kwon-jin Moon carries Rev. Moon's portrait as the procession nears the stage



A prayer from Bo Hi Pak



340-voice Korean / Japanese choir



Tears were shed throughout the ceremony: (L) Mother Hak Ja Han Moon (center) Hyung Jin Moon during the Seonghwa Address (R) the congregation was also frequently moved to tears

Three speakers offered eulogies reflected the scope of Father Moon's life. The first was Dong-Suk Kang, Chairman of Expo 2012 in Yeosu, the coastal town where Dr. Moon had spent a great deal of time and effort in his final years. Kang noted his contribution to Yeosu and his lifelong commitment to the ocean. "He was proud to be a Korean," Kang said, "and invested so much to raise the profile of Korea in the world."

The next speaker was Lord Tarsem King, the first Sikh member of the British House of Lords and Patron of UPF in the UK. King, who had welcomed the Moons to Britain and to the Parliament buildings just last year, offered condolences and encouragement. "On the one hand, this is a day of sadness, as we reflect on the loss of a man we all came to know and love," King said. "But we should also be proud of his life, passion and conviction. He was always ready to risk his life for the sake of God's Will."

"I can think of no one who has devoted himself more thoroughly to the promotion of interfaith understanding and cooperation," King continued. "Long before interfaith had become a mainstream idea, Father Moon had been its champion. He has even called upon the United Nations to take interfaith more seriously and to establish an interfaith council within the United Nations system."



Dong-Suk Kang, Yeosu, Korea

Lord Tarsem King, UK

HE Alfred Moisiu, Albania

The final eulogist was Alfred Moisiu, who as President of Albania had welcomed Dr. and Mrs. Moon to his country during the 2005 UPF peace tour. "During our conversation I was moved by his great vision and hope for my country," Moisiu said. "I felt he came to give selflessly for the sake of the Albanian people and that his visit was truly an unforgettable moment in our history. The vision he outlined has been consistently implemented and now has wide support across Albanian society and has made a real difference." Moisiu and King were among 300 foreign

dignitaries from 80 nations who joined the UPF in paying their final respects. Media coverage was extensive, with frequent reports on BBC Asia, Al-Jazeera, Reuters, AFP and more.

A number of the UPF delegates were asked for comments. "We are very grateful for his work," said General Malimba Masheke, the former Zambian Prime Minister, interviewed on Korean television. "He managed to bring people together from so many nations, beyond the barriers of nationality and religion that so often and so unnecessarily divide us." Jose deVenecia, the five-time speaker of the Philippine Congress, commented that Father Moon's vision of an interfaith council at the United Nations was needed more than ever, given the conflicts and violence raging in the Middle East. "Although this is the end of his earthly life, it is not by any means the end of his impact and legacy on this world," said UPF President Dr. Thomas Walsh, interviewed by Al-Jazeera. "I am convinced that today is in fact the beginning of a new chapter in his work that will definitely bring our world to peace."



Banners line the road outside the World Peace Center

After the main ceremony concluded, Father Moon began his final journey. Leaving the Peace Center, the funeral procession wound its way back up the narrow mountain roads lined with flag-waving supporters, arriving at last at the tranquil and private burial site in the grounds of the Cheongjeongoong museum.



Rev. Moon's wonjeon (tomb) lies behind the Cheonjeongoong Museum

There, close family and friends gathered tightly around the Wonjeon, or gravesite, to hear some final words, taken from the teachings of Rev. Moon, about the spirit world and the our eternal home with God. Finally each one offered flowers and sprinkled dirt onto the casket as it was gently lowered into the waiting earth.