

FFWPU UK: Countdown to the Cheonwon Temple Opening - Fertile Ground for All Religions

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The Korean War sparked a religious transformation in South Korea, fuelling Christianity's rise alongside Buddhism and new spiritual movements like the Family Federation. A new exhibition explores this legacy.

The Korean War (1950 - 1953) catalysed significant religious growth in South Korea, particularly for Christianity. Amid the devastation and social upheaval, Protestantism flourished as a beacon of hope and renewal. Western missionary efforts, especially from the United States, intensified, bringing humanitarian aid, schools, and medical facilities that strengthened Christianity's appeal. The faith's principles of equality, compassion, and salvation resonated deeply with Koreans, contrasting traditional Confucian hierarchies. Churches also provided displaced individuals with community and support, becoming hubs of spiritual and social recovery.

Charismatic leaders like Billy Kim and megachurches such as Yoido Full Gospel Church propelled Christianity's expansion, making it a transformative force in Korea's cultural, political, and social landscape by the late 20th century.

However, Christianity was not the sole flourishing faith in post-war Korea. Buddhism, Confucianism, traditional Korean religions like Shamanism, and new religious movements also played crucial roles. Among these, the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, formerly the Unification Church, emerged as a prominent global movement.

Founded by Father and Mother Moon, the movement integrated Korean values of filial piety, communal harmony, and family centrality into its teachings. It emphasised peace, unity, and reconciliation, resonating with a nation yearning for healing and reunification amid Cold War tensions. Through its advocacy for "true families" and global harmony, the Family Federation contributed to Korea's spiritual and cultural diversity, shaping its post-war identity and extending its influence globally.

2025 marks 80 years of division between opposing ideologies on the Korean Peninsula, yet hope for peaceful reunification endures despite ongoing challenges.

In the Great Epic Exhibition Hall at Cheonwon Temple, the Great Epic of the Chosen Korean People will showcase the 2,000-year history of this chosen nation in 13 monumental paintings.