

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Jack Corley - 50 Years Devoted to Peace in a Troubled World

Knut Holdhus
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From interreligious peace rally at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem September 2004



Jack Corley in August 2024

Clear vision enabled Jack Corley to work tirelessly for more than 50 years devoted to peace

Part 5 (final part) of an interview in Episode 2 of "Why I Stayed - [Unificationist Stories](#)", where Jack Corley, a farmer's son from Ireland, tells his story.

See [part 1: Reason for Joining: God Became a Reality](#) See [part 2: More Than a Belief: Finding a Living, Loving God](#) See [part 3: Importance of an Ideal When We "Marry Reality"](#) See [part 4: Joining Was "the Best Decision in My Life"](#)

See the [video of the interview](#)

Presenter: I'm sure everybody would die to hear all the stories from all the different parts of the world you've been to. But maybe you could share some of the experiences you had with charitable work or peace work that the Unification Movement does that changed people's lives?



An IEF training workshop for teachers in Russia

Jack: One of the things that I'm more familiar with was when I lived in Moscow for 15 years. It was the time of the changing situation from being Soviet Union to becoming independent countries.

There was a great need, I would say, from educators for some kind of character education programme to support the education system. It was not teaching religion in schools, because that was illegal, but teaching a value system that could help young people and guide their lives in a good direction.

So I worked with the Russian - originally the Soviet - Ministry of Education, to develop a programme called International Educational Foundation. Together with a whole team of people, we developed a programme of materials which teachers could use in the school system. We published books for young people from the age of seven to 17. It dealt with all issues that a young person goes through in the growth from childhood to adulthood.

And at the same time, also, given the situation of various faiths, just within Russia alone, you have major faiths like Islam, Buddhism, the Jewish faith, and of course the Orthodox faith, and in the far east of Russia, they have various oriental faiths.

There was a real danger of civil war arising, as we saw with Chechnya in the nineties.

A part of the programme we developed was helping to inform young people about the various faiths. What are their basic beliefs, what are their family practises, what are the rituals and ceremonies and so on, so that even at a young age, young people could grow up with an understanding of each other's faiths, not becoming suspicious, but appreciating the differences of their faiths.

So this is something we developed and we reached something like 50,000 schools in Russia and the former Soviet region of Mongolia with this material. I feel this was a very important project to help the country move from the communist system to, you know, as they would say, a more "normal" system.

Presenter: That was a really inspiring life journey you shared with us. It was so short, but it sounds like you were "changing the world" back in the days. I can see why it can be so inspiring for a young person like you who cares for the world to join such activities and projects.

I can't say we live in an ideal world yet, though. I can't say we have come any closer to building the [Kingdom of Heaven](#), as you say, here on earth. We see crises, wars, even here in Ireland, there are quite a lot of problems in the society, How do you look at all that? Is there anything in the [Unification Church](#) activities or goals that inspires you these days?



A vision for peace in the Middle East: From an interreligious conference on peace in the Middle East, held in Washington DC 27th Feb. - 2nd Mar. 2003

Jack: Yes, let's go back to the vision that we have. Without a clear vision, we have no guidelines how to live our personal lives, no national direction, and so on. I think that is what gives me hope always. Of course, if you look around the world today, you can see tremendous confusion, e.g. in terms of gender, just to take one issue. Politics has become very corrupt, and it seems like the whole world is falling apart. For many people, it's a very gloomy situation.

The way I view that is that this darkness is like the darkness before a bright morning. I believe that [God](#) has a [providence](#) and is moving it forward. We will begin to see an awakening even in these years. Sometimes people have to be taken to the edge of a cliff and look over it and realise, "That's not where I want to go."

People will begin to look around more. We will probably see an increase in people searching for a spiritual direction. They have tried all the material, physical, sexual, everything, probed everything, but have yet neither found peace nor happiness.

I believe they will begin to realise that only a return to spiritual values and a spiritual vision can resolve the problems. So I see a lot of hope, in fact, even in this very dark time.

I have been around the world, as I said, and have, I believe, quite a realistic view of the reality of the world. I flew one time from Singapore to Bangladesh, and I can tell you the differences between the two are stark.

But even in that situation, you can see that [God](#) is moving in this world, I believe, today to bring about change. I think it will take more than politics, more than economics, but the people will begin to return to a more spiritual view about the future.

So, I'm very optimistic. In fact, I often joke, quoting a statement that we are "incurable optimists" because we believe that we live at a special time in history, and we have a perspective based on [principles](#) that allow us to see beyond the reality in our lifetime.

Presenter: You're not just an optimist, though, you're a realist, because we heard a lot of activities that were going on.

Is there any particular work that the Unification Movement is focusing on now?

Jack: If I look worldwide, we have, for example, in the United States, the Washington Times, which promotes family values in a very confused United States. On this issue, we have similar media in other countries.

We have also other activities which deal with political issues, interreligious issues, in other words, we work through many different organisations to bring people together and to put the problems on the table, discuss them and try to resolve them.



Women of Peace: Participants in Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) in front of Al Aqsa Mosque 27th May 2004

Over the years, we've had programmes in the Middle East which brought together Jews, Arabs and Christians. And this, I believe also brought a lot of hope. Even though today the situation is dire, I believe that we will see a resurgence again of that effort to bring people together. We are a catalyst many times for such discussions.

We have the issue of the Koreas that's related to our movement founded in Korea and have made a foundation there to bring about the reunification of North and South Korea.

So there are many issues where I feel we can bring a lot of hope. And as I said, we live at a very difficult time in human history. But it is often at such times that the most dramatic changes take place. After all, you only need the doctor when you are sick, not when you are healthy. It is at a time when [God](#) will send that doctor, and the patient will be cured, eventually.

Presenter: Let's hope so. We can only wish you luck with all the amazing activities and work you've done and will carry on. Thank you, Jack, for coming here today, answering all the questions.

See [part 1: Reason for Joining: God Became a Reality](#) See [part 2: More Than a Belief: Finding a Living, Loving God](#) See [part 3: Importance of an Ideal When We "Marry Reality"](#) See [part 4: Joining Was "the Best Decision in My Life"](#)

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Joining Was "The Best Decision In My Life"

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• September 17, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



After becoming a member 51 years ago, Jack Corley realised it was the best decision he had ever made



Found more than a belief: Jack Corley in August 2024. Photo: Screenshot

Part 4 of an interview in Episode 2 of "Why I Stayed - **Unificationist Stories**", where Jack Corley, a farmer's son from Ireland, tells his story.

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See the [video of the interview](#)

Presenter: We were talking about the nice feeling, amazing experiences that you had joining the **Unification Church**. And how lucky you were to have your siblings there, because I think often a person who decides to change his or her life so drastically faces a lot of misunderstanding from family or friends. How did your life change the moment you stepped on

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this path?

Jack: Well, basically I would say, first of all, the truth of what I heard made a deep impression upon me because it gave clear guidelines about what is right and wrong. I was at the point in my life where I was really questioning all the things that I had been taught as a Catholic, the issue of morality of various kinds.

When I heard the [Principles](#), I understood that it answers those questions. I felt it was something that I would like to have as a guideline in my life.

As a student, when I was studying in Cork, one of the things I studied was navigation. And the reason I was doing that was I wanted to become a ships radio officer and then travel the world and just see the world before settling down.

Here I thought that travelling the world would be okay, but of course you can really go astray when travelling the world. But I found there's an ideal here which even if I travel the world, I can actually do it and do it right. When I joined the [Unification Church](#), I didn't realise that I would end up travelling the world.

Maybe I wasn't paid as much as I would have otherwise as a navigator on a ship, but nonetheless I felt that was a great benefit also at the time, of course, I didn't know that I was going to be travelling all over the world.

So the big issue though is I found a way to live a more moral life, I would say. And that was always something that I felt inside, that life is meaningful if you can live a more moral life. I did not want to fall into a trap of promiscuity, drugs, all these things which were a big issue among my friends actually at school. I felt I could not take that path. And I felt reinforced when I heard the [Divine Principle](#).

Presenter: So you came to live the life of your dreams, but there was another way leading there. Were there any rough moments, rough times?

Jack: Of course. I remember reading some articles in various media which were very critical of our movement and our founders. And it put some thoughts in my mind, "What if this is wrong? What if this is not really true, and [Reverend](#) and [Mrs. Moon](#) were charlatans?" And I had to wrestle with that.



Travelled the world: Here, Jack Corley with globe in Irvington Library, New York, USA. Photo: Private



Jack Corley singing for [Father and Mother Moon](#) in 1983 in Mt. Seorak National Park in South Korea. Photo: Private

leave, all confused and unhappy. And here you are, being absolutely content with your decision. What made you stay?

Jack: Well, again, the strong belief in the ideal of the [Principles](#), but also in the integrity of the founders of the [Unification Church](#), and in my experience of travelling the world. I've met our members in all kinds of circumstances, whether from the jungles of Mindanao to the steppes of Russia, to the south of India, wherever, or here in Ireland, where I also

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worked for some time. I always felt the genuineness of the people and the conviction that they have about the belief that they now follow. So to me, that was a reinforcing experience.

And of course, we talk about each other being like brothers and sisters in our movement. And I feel this is not just a cliché; this is a real experience. We do feel that way among each other.

When you struggle with something, you can actually talk to somebody who very well understands, because they share your vision, share your faith, and they're able to guide and support you in times of difficulty. You have a worldwide family.

To be continued. Part 5 coming soon.

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Featured image above: Jack Corley on a visit to the southern coast of South Korea 10th May 2023. Photo: Private

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