

UPF International: Before Peace Becomes an Agreement Trust Becomes Practical

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When the [United Nations Peacebuilding Week 2026](#) opens in New York from June 22 to 26, much attention will naturally turn to institutions, financing, inclusion and impact. These attentions are necessary. Peacebuilding requires structures that can survive political pressure, respond to local realities and support communities before violence returns.

Yet one part of peacebuilding is often less visible because it does not begin with a signed accord. It begins earlier, in the period when no agreement is ready, no side is willing to yield, and public

language has already hardened. In that period, the most useful work may be the quiet preservation of channels: channels between communities and regions that have learned to see one another through old fears.

This is where trust first becomes practical. Trust is not sentiment. It is the accumulated evidence that contact can continue without humiliation, that disagreement can be expressed without destruction, and that a person or institution can remain present after the cameras have left. Peacebuilding begins with trust because trust keeps communication alive when agreement is still beyond reach.

This is the space in which UPF has often worked. UPF is not a negotiating body between governments. Instead, it creates and protects channels where leaders from politics, religion, academia, media, business, youth and civil society can remain in contact when formal politics alone is too narrow. Founded by [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and the late [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#), UPF carries the conviction that humanity is actually one family into public life through dialogue, service and cooperation across boundaries.

This conviction does not remove political complexity. It gives peacebuilding a wider horizon. If human beings are viewed only through the conflicts that divide them, peace becomes a temporary management arrangement. If they are viewed as members of one human family, then even difficult diplomacy can be supported by a deeper moral logic: the other side remains human, the future remains open, and reconciliation remains worth preparing for.

This multi-sector pattern matters in 2026. At the same time that Peacebuilding Week commences in New York, the [Global Sustainable Development Congress 2026](#) meets in Jakarta from June 22 to 25. Its focus on higher education, research, business, government and civil society offers a parallel lesson. Sustainable peace depends on more than diplomacy. Jakarta and New York therefore point to the same conclusion from different directions. Peacebuilding and sustainable development meet wherever communities ask whether young people can find purpose, whether families can remain stable under pressure, whether economic life gives people a stake in peace, and whether public institutions can be trusted.

For that reason, renewed discussion of a possible [Bering Strait link](#) deserves careful attention. It would be premature to treat this as proof of an emerging peace process. The technical, financial, environmental and diplomatic questions would be substantial. Still, the return of such an idea into public discussion is worth noting because it points to the kind of imagination peacebuilding needs: not only how to manage division, but how to picture connection. The Bering Strait has long carried symbolic weight because it is not only a geographical passage. In [the vision](#) of UPF founders, it is a place where continents nearly touch. Any serious conversation about linking them asks whether nations can still imagine projects that outlive the anger of the moment.

In this spirit, UPF welcomes UN Peacebuilding Week 2026 as a timely space for renewed partnership. The next stage of peacebuilding will require more than declarations of goodwill. It will require durable channels, credible relationships, ethical leadership and practical cooperation across sectors. UPF remains committed to working with partners who see trust not as a soft ideal, but as the living infrastructure of peace.



REV. DR. SUN MYUNG MOON, 1920-2012

Rev. Sun Myung Moon was born in 1920 in what is now North Korea. In 1935, after praying near Mount Myodu, Jesus Christ appeared to him on Easter Morning and asked him to "take on a special mission on Earth having to do with Heaven's work." After having escaped to Pusan at the beginning of the Korean War, he began writing and teaching the Divine Principle. In 1954, he founded the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, now known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, in Seoul, Korea. Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon was blessed in marriage to Rev. Moon in 1960. They founded an array of religious, academic, educational, arts and peace organizations working in more than 190 nations. Dedicated to the belief that world peace must begin with harmonious families, they advocate the coming together of diverse political, religious, academic, media, and civic leaders to work cooperatively in addressing and solving the critical problems of the world. The Universal Peace Federation was launched in New York City in 2005, after which Rev. and Mrs. Moon and their family traveled throughout the world delivering peace messages. His autobiography, As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen, was published in 2009 in Korea and translated into nearly 40 languages



Sun Myung Moon was born on January 6, 1920, into a family of farmers that had tilled the land for centuries. As a boy he studied at a Confucian school and was a keen observer of the natural world. Around 1930, his parents became fervent Christians — Presbyterians — and the young Sun Myung Moon became a Sunday school teacher.

At that time, Japan ruled Korea and was trying to force the practice of the Shinto religion onto all Koreans. The religious intolerance of the Japanese regime was one facet of the contempt they held for the Koreans, a people they believed to be inferior. The Korean people were subjected to forty years of humiliation and cruelty as part of Japan's Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Growing up oppressed in his own land, Sun Myung Moon learned early the pain of injustice, whether among his own people or at the hands of the Japanese rulers.

The young Moon became intensely aware of human suffering and the failure of humanity to create a loving and just world. He sought to understand why people suffer and how suffering can be ended. From going to church, he knew that religion addressed the fundamental human condition and promised an ideal world to those who obey God; but he saw that established religions, although centuries old and based on scriptures offering revelatory insights, were, in practice, unable to answer many of life's questions or solve the deepest problems facing humankind. Troubled by the immense gap between religious ideals and the actual state of the world, he began his own ardent pursuit of solutions through a life of prayer and study.



Early Easter morning 1935, Jesus appeared to the young Sun Myung Moon as he was praying in the Korean mountains. In that vision, Jesus asked him to continue the work which he had begun on earth nearly 2,000 years before. Jesus asked him to complete the task of establishing God's kingdom on earth and bringing peace to humankind.

The young Korean was stunned by this encounter, and especially by the request that had been made of him, and at first he refused. However, after deep reflection, meditation and prayer, he pledged to take on the overwhelming mission.

After personally accepting Jesus' call, the young Moon set out to discover the meaning of this unusual call. If Jesus called him to complete his mission, it meant that Jesus' mission was incomplete. Was not salvation through the cross all that humankind needs? What was it that Jesus had left undone on earth? If sin is not completely solved, then what is the actual root of sin?

Sun Myung Moon ceaselessly studied the Bible and other religious teachings in order to unravel these mysteries of life and human history. During this time, he went into deep communion with God and entered the vast battlefield of the spirit and flesh. Through denying his personal desires he overcame temptations of knowledge, wealth and physical pleasure. He came to understand God's own suffering and His longing to be reunited with His children. He learned the difficult steps that humankind would have to take in order to return to God and establish true peace on earth. After receiving his commission from God, he knew he could not succeed in his task without a profound understanding of the Creator and His creation. He intensified his quest for the truth, spending days and nights in passionate prayer, rigorous fasting and study. His method was to posit specific questions, research answers in the physical and spiritual worlds, and then seek confirmation for those answers through prayer. On several occasions he was guided directly by Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha and other saints and sages of all faiths, who met him in spirit and contributed to his understanding of God and the complex history of God's relationship with humankind. By the age of 25, he had developed the fundamentals of the Divine Principle and Unification Principles.

Rev. Moon graduated from high school in 1941 and went to Japan to study electronic engineering at an industrial college affiliated with Waseda University. During his time in Japan, he continued his intense prayer and search for the truth. A school friend during that time said that in his room he kept three Bibles — one in Korean, one in English and one in Japanese, which he studied continuously.

He also was a Christian leader in the Korean independence movement against the Japanese occupation of Korea. Young Christians and communists were the strongest leaders of the independence movement against the Japanese occupation. In Japan, some of his closest school friends were communists, and while their atheism pained him, he recognized their sincere dedication to a utopian ideal. A fellow student at that time, Aum Duk-Moon, reports that Rev. Moon defended communists to his Christian friends, saying that they were good people and that Koreans should work together to save their country. He was eventually imprisoned by the Japanese for his student underground activities and tortured for not revealing the names of his collaborators. This imprisonment was what would be his first of six imprisonments under four governments: Japan, North Korea, South Korea and the United States

Rev. Moon returned to his native land in 1943. Upon returning from Japan, he was married to Sang Il Choi, a strong Christian from a well-known Presbyterian family.

In 1944, Rev. Moon was again arrested and severely tortured by the Japanese occupation government in Korea after his name came up in the interrogation of a communist student friend who had been active in the anti-Japanese underground in Tokyo. He refused to confess and was finally released.

In spite of such treatment by the Japanese, his cousin and companion at the time reports that Rev. Moon showed only love and respect to Japanese people. When the war ended in August 1945 he persuaded others not to take revenge on local Japanese officials and worked secretly to get them safe transport back to Japan.

By 1945 he had systematized his teachings, which came to be known as the Divine Principle, and he began his public ministry. The Divine Principle is the fundamental teaching of Rev. Moon and the Unification Church.

The Republic of Korea, although an Asian country, is recognized having perhaps the most fervent Christian faith of any nation. Rev. Billy Graham was so impressed by the spiritual vitality of her churches during his first visit to Korea that he predicted that one day Korea would send missionaries to revive the West. In this atmosphere of fervent Christianity, Rev. Moon's original plan was not to start a separate denomination but to work with other Christians to build God's kingdom on the earth. He worked hard to introduce his new revelations to existing Korean Christian churches. But his new teachings were not well received. American Christian missionaries disregarded him as an unschooled "country preacher." Korean ministers, jealous of the young man's impact on their congregation members, accused him of espousing false teachings. Despite his many efforts to reach out to established Christian churches, they did not respond to his new ideas. Rev. Moon soon realized that he was headed down the lonely path of a pioneer religious visionary.

In 1946 while buying rice for his family, Rev. Moon was told by God to leave his family without notifying them and go to communist North Korea to preach.

Before World War II, the center of Korean Christian activity was Pyongyang, now the capital of North Korea; it was called the "Jerusalem of the East." Among the spirit-filled churches were many with strong messianic expectations. Some of these churches had received revelations that the Messiah would be born in Korea, and they were directed in various ways to prepare to receive him.

He began to teach publicly, despite the dangers presented by the communist-dominated government. As a poor preacher with new interpretations of the Bible, Rev. Moon was more vulnerable than leaders of the established churches and was, therefore, one of the

first religious figures to be imprisoned by the communists.



Rev. Moon at a North Korean court

Charged with disturbing the social order, in November 1946, the young minister was imprisoned and tortured. The police believed him to be dead and tossed his body into the prison yard. Some of his followers found him and carried him away to tend to his broken body. Miraculously, Rev. Moon survived and regained his strength. Undaunted, he began preaching in public once again.



In April 1948, he was arrested a second time and sentenced to five years of hard labor in Hungnam prison. He was among the first of the Christian ministers sent to the Soviet-style North Korean gulag. Hungnam was an extermination camp where prisoners were deliberately worked to death. Few lasted more than six months. Yet in that horrific concentration camp, Rev. Moon survived for nearly three years. Although he did not speak a word of the Divine Principle, many of his fellow prisoners looked to him for spiritual strength and became his disciples.

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean army invaded the South in a lightning attempt to unify the entire peninsula by force. UN and American forces, under Gen. Douglas MacArthur, rescued the beleaguered South. One month after the capture of Seoul, UN forces reached the gates of Hungnam prison. Knowing the UN forces were near, the communist prison authorities began to execute the prisoners. The prison camp was liberated by UN forces just hours before Rev. Moon's scheduled execution.

Despite his brutal prison camp experience, Rev. Moon did not immediately flee to the South. Instead, he returned to Pyongyang and spent 40 days searching for the members of his scattered flock. He eventually found a few members and then traveled south on foot with two of them. One of his followers had a broken leg and protested that he would slow the party down. Rev. Moon insisted on bringing him and for the long trek either pushed him on a bicycle or carried him on his back.



As one of hundreds of thousands of war refugees, Rev. Moon arrived in the southern port city of Busan, where he and one disciple built the first Unification Church from discarded army ration boxes. At that time, he told his small following that one day the message of the Divine Principle would be spread all over the world. He prophesied that people from all over the world would venerate that hillside. Rev. Moon's predictions sounded unbelievable. Today, in fact, tens of thousands of people make a pilgrimage to the spot.

Beginning his evangelization work in the South after nearly five years in the North, Rev. Moon was rejoined by his wife. However, he continued to dedicate himself night and day to his religious mission. She could not accept his dedication to the mission at the sacrifice of his family. Finally she filed for divorce, in spite of Rev. Moon's strong opposition to a divorce and efforts to dissuade her. (His only child from this marriage and his family are loyal followers of Rev. Moon.)



On May 1, 1954, in Seoul, Rev. Moon founded the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, Rev. Moon's faith community which became popularly called the "Unification Church" worldwide.

The church immediately attracted followers from a major Christian women's university, Ewha University, a school closely linked with the Korean government and with the mainline Protestant denominations. Because many students were joining the church, the school sent professors to investigate. When several professors also joined, instead of sincerely welcoming this new church, the school persecuted it. The university president ordered the professors and students to either leave the church or leave the school.

Coincidentally, newspapers in Seoul suddenly began to print alarming stories about the Unification Church, sex orgies and Rev. Moon being a North Korean agent. Rev. Moon was thrown in jail, to be released weeks later when no charges could be found. Again the following year he was thrown in jail on charges of evading the military draft, even though during the time in question he had been in Heungnam prison. After several months confinement — and sensational media coverage — the charges were dropped. His release received scant notice in the press. Thus began the pattern of collusion between religious leaders, government and the media that to this day suppresses Rev. Moon and his church.

Amid this severe persecution, Rev. Moon nurtured a growing community of faithful disciples, known as the "weeping church" because of the tearful prayers of Rev. Moon and his followers. By 1957, churches were established in 30 Korean cities and towns.

In the late 1950s, the first international missionaries were sent, one to neighboring Japan in 1958 and two to the United States in 1959.



Rev. Moon was blessed in holy marriage to Hak Ja Han on March 16, 1960. Their blessing was followed by a series of group marriage blessing ceremonies for their followers. Hak Ja Han and her mother, a devout Christian, had also fled south during the Korean War. They soon thereafter joined the Unification Church. Since their marriage, Mrs. Hak Ja Han has dedicated herself entirely to supporting Rev. Moon and his mission.

The International Federation for Victory Over Communism was the first of many organizations and activities founded by Rev. Moon to bring about the peaceful downfall of communism. Rev. Moon taught that communism should be defeated ideologically through education about the fallacies of Marxism-Leninism, offering a counterproposal consisting of universal principles called Godism, conferences, global networking, rallies and demonstrations in Asia, the United States and Latin America.

God directed Rev. Moon to expand his ministry to the world level by going to the United States in 1971. America, which embraces all peoples, races and religions, represents the world. What happens in America has global repercussions. He expressed gratitude for America's role in liberating his homeland. But he also knew that God expected much more from this land that had been so richly blessed. It was clear to Rev. Moon that America had drifted from its original ideals.



The "Day of Hope" speaking tour began February 3, 1972 in Alice Tully Hall at the Lincoln Center in New York and went on to seven major US cities with the purpose of reviving traditional Judeo-Christian values.

The Unification Church had centers in ten states, and in 1972 pioneer leaders were sent out to the forty remaining states to found Unification Church centers. In the same year, evangelical teams traveled from state to state in a membership campaign, and thousands of young people accepted his message and dedicated themselves to the Unification Church.

After the successful Madison Square Garden event on September 18, 1973, public speeches were given and banquets hosted for thousands of society's leaders in all 50 states.



Rev. Moon met with US President Richard Nixon during the Watergate crisis of 1974. Through rallies



and newspaper statements, he urged Americans to forgive the beleaguered Richard Nixon at the time of the Watergate scandal. Any public relations strategist would have advised him against such action, which called on Americans to "forgive, love and unite." Virtually no one at the time was willing to side with a president on the verge of impeachment, but Rev. Moon does not flinch when he receives God's directions. He also foresaw the serious consequences of undercutting the American presidency in a world still dominated by the communist threat. His appeal was met with scorn, even though his "forgive, love and unite" message embodied the essence of Christian practice.

As a result the rapid growth of the movement in the United States, it went through a period of persecution similar to what other new religious leaders and movements have faced in the past — the new was seen to be strange and threatening. Rev. Moon's appeal for a true Christian renewal of America was initially welcomed. However, this receptivity proved shallow when, in 1974, he became an easy target for the now-hostile news media unhappy over Rev. Moon's "forgive, love and unite" message concerning the Watergate scandal.

The fair and objective coverage of the past was replaced by portrayals of Rev. Moon and his church in the worst possible light. All sorts of unfounded allegations from Korea were dug up. In this atmosphere of hysteria, the enthusiasm and idealism of his young followers was reinterpreted as "brainwashing." Rev. Moon was portrayed as a hypnotist and an agent of a foreign government. Religious and racial bigotry and persecution, a phenomenon in the United States as old as the country itself, showed its ugly face. Even though the United States was founded for the sake of establishing religious freedom, regrettably, religious intolerance remains today. The Unification Church bore the brunt of America's religious intolerance for three decades.

With churches already established in Korea, Japan, North America, and the Western European countries, in May 1975, Rev. Moon sent out missionary teams consisting of one Japanese, one American and one German to countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Oceania, bringing the total number of nations with Unification Church representatives to 120.



Rev. Moon continued his Day of Hope tour, accompanied by a Global Team of young followers from America, Europe and Asia, with speeches in Japan and Korea, concluding with a rally at Yoido Island near Seoul which was attended by 1.2 million people. Rev. Moon spoke a message of determination to stand against communism in South Korea and establish a world centered on God, at the height of the Cold War during a time of great tension between North and South Korea.

The Unification Theological Seminary, established in 1975 in Barrytown, New York, offers Master's Degrees in Divinity and Religious Education, with a recently added Doctorate of Ministry degree. It was founded as an ecumenical seminary, and faculty members have belonged to a broad range of religious denominations. Rather than concentrating solely on Unification theology, students learn philosophy, psychology, world religions and homiletics, as well as the histories, theologies, and scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other world religions.



Starting with dialogues at the Unification Theological Seminary, the New Ecumenical Research Association for Christian Unity and continuing with other initiatives, such as the Assembly of the World's Religions, Rev. Moon promoted interreligious discussion, understanding and cooperation to solve the problems of poverty, war, injustice and breakdown of the family. The 1985 Assembly of the World's Religions was attended by 1,000 distinguished religious leaders and scholars. A key social teaching of Rev. Moon is that the world's most difficult problems will be best solved by religious leaders working interreligiously rather than by purely political and economic initiatives.

An estimated 300,000 people of all creeds and colors came to hear Rev. Moon speak at the "God Bless America Festival" on September 18, 1976 at the Washington Monument in the nation's capital. To date this was the greatest religious rally ever assembled in Washington, D.C. At this historic rally, Rev. Moon called upon America to fulfill its blessing as one nation under God, and to create "one world under God." He referred to himself as a "doctor" or a "fire fighter" from the outside who has come to help America meet its third great "test" as a nation, that of "God-denying" communism, and to revive its religious heritage. He proclaimed that the Unification Church with its "absolutely God-centered ideology" had the "power to awaken America, and raise up the model of the ideal nation upon this land."

He called members from around the world to England in 1978, where he gave them daily guidance and sent them around the country in a grass-roots community service initiative called "home church." He gave direction to members around the world to choose an area of 360 homes and serve the people and be examples of God's love.

Under strong pressure from a few politicians who saw an easy way to garner favor with voters riled up by the bad press about Rev. Moon and the Unification Church, the United States government launched a plethora of official investigations of Rev. Moon involving nearly twenty federal agencies. Hearings were conducted on Capitol Hill to warn of the dangers of new religious movements.

Meanwhile, a five-year Internal Revenue Service investigation finally produced a politically-crafted indictment against Rev. Moon. This indictment, handed down in 1981, charged him with evading income taxes nearly a decade earlier, as well as conspiracy to avoid those taxes. The total amount of taxes supposedly evaded was less than \$8000.00. No one in the United States has ever been indicted for tax evasion of such a small amount. The indictment's real purpose, however, was to spur Rev. Moon to leave America.

However, the US government and some politicians underestimated Rev. Moon's religiosity and commitment to his mission in America. When the indictment was handed down, Rev. Moon was in Korea. His lawyers recommended that he not come back to America, since there is no extradition treaty between the United States and Korea and by staying away he could avoid conviction and imprisonment. However, he did not follow their advice. He was, after all, a man of God, not a criminal fleeing the law. He immediately returned to the United States. He told his counsel: "I will not abandon my mission in America. That I will never do."



Upon arriving in New York for the Federal District Court arraignment he spoke only one sentence: "Your Honor, I am not guilty." The outcome of the trial was a foregone conclusion. He was convicted and sentenced to spend eighteen months in a federal prison. When, the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, despite forty amicus briefs from mainline Christian leaders, legal associations, civil liberty groups and state governments, he prepared to go to jail.

Still, the US Justice Department tried to negotiate with Rev. Moon's attorneys, determined to achieve their goal of him leaving the United States permanently. On the condition that Rev. Moon depart for Korea and never come back to the United States, they said the government would waive his prison sentence. He flatly refused. His comment was, "It must be God's will that I go to prison. There must be a providential reason why I must go this way." Imprisonment was not new to Rev. Moon: He already had endured imprisonment in communist North Korea, South Korea and Japan during World War II.

In the meantime, protests were being made all around the nation over the injustice Rev. Moon was suffering as a result of religious persecution. Many Christian leaders who never knew or cared about him began to realize that the government had made a serious assault on religious freedom. Christians, including the National Council of Churches headed by Rev. Dean Kelley and non-religious groups representing more than 160 million Americans, came to his legal defense.



A US Senate Subcommittee published the following report on Rev. Moon's conviction:

"We accused a newcomer to our shores of criminal and intentional wrongdoing for conduct commonly engaged in by a large percentage of our own religious leaders, namely, the holding of church funds in bank accounts in their own names. Catholic priests do it. Baptist ministers do it, and so did Sun Myung Moon... we charged a non-English-speaking alien with criminal tax evasion on the first tax returns he filed in this country. It appears that we didn't give him a fair chance to understand our laws. We didn't seek a civil penalty as an initial means of redress. We didn't give him the benefit of any doubt. Rather, we took a novel theory of tax liability of less than \$10,000 and turned it into a guilty verdict and eighteen months in a federal prison.

"I do feel strongly, after my subcommittee has carefully and objectively reviewed this [Rev. Moon's tax] case from both sides, that injustice rather than justice has been served. The Moon case sends a strong signal that if one's views are unnonular enough, this countrv will find a way not to tolerate, but to convict. I don't

the event that the most basic sense of being right and wrong there is expected, though the feeling that this may not be necessary, just to comfort isn't believe that you or I or anyone else, no matter how innocent, could realistically prevail against the combined forces of our Justice Department and judicial branch in a case such as Rev. Moon's."



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On August 20, 1985, Rev. Moon was freed after completing thirteen months of incarceration. Upon his release, major Christian and civil rights leaders, including Rev. Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority and Rev. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, held a press conference decrying the persecution and imprisonment of Rev. Moon and to welcome him back.

During his trial, Rev. Moon founded The Washington Times on May 17, 1982, and it became the second largest daily newspaper in America's capital. Its initial purpose was to be instrumental in the peaceful fall of communism, a goal achieved in conjunction with the Reagan Administration, and then with the end of the Cold War, to promote family values and support of the role of religion in society.

Rev. Moon organized a major conference of news media leaders and former heads of state in Moscow in April 1990. This fulfilled a pledge he had made in 1976 that one day he would organize a "great rally for God in Moscow." During this conference, Rev. and Mrs. Moon met with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Through several interviews, televised and in print, he gave a message of hope to the Soviet people, urging them to turn toward God. A strong opponent of communism, Rev. Moon taught that the ideology was mistaken but he came to love the communist people. Since the fall of the Soviet Empire, he has funded numerous activities to assist former communist countries in their transition to democracy and freedom.



Rev. Moon made a crucial step in 1991 towards the establishment of world peace through the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea. Risking his life, he traveled to North Korea in December 1991, and met with President Kim Il Sung, under whose regime he had been tortured and sent to a labor camp. His purpose was to seek ways to bridge the gap between the two countries. The North Korean ruler, who had suppressed religion for forty years, met and graciously welcomed Rev. and Mrs. Moon. In the same visit Rev. Moon was permitted to return to his hometown and the house of his birth, placing flowers on the graves of his parents and embracing proud and tearful surviving relatives.

Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon, the devoted wife and mother of 14 children, began her own public activities for world peace in 1992 with the founding of the Women's Federation for World. Her mission is both to lead peacemaking work and promote the central role of women in creating a just and peaceful society. Today, after years of intense international work, Mrs. Moon is recognized as one of the most effective woman leaders in the world. She has spoken in such notable venues as Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., the United Nations in New York City, the Kremlin, the Great Hall in Beijing, and congressional buildings in Japan, Korea, and Canada. Perhaps no other woman leader has addressed so many large audiences in as many countries as Mrs. Moon.

Her first world tour in 1993 took her to 44 cities in the US, 27 cities in Japan, 40 university campuses in Korea, and 41 nations around the world. In 2006, accompanied by her adult children and grandchildren, she undertook two world tours for peace at the incredible pace of a country per day. She and her family spoke to enthusiastic audiences in 120 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania and Latin America. She was received as a dignitary and met with many heads of states, prominent religious leaders and political leaders.



Rev. Moon announced the end of the era of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity in 1992. In its place, he founded the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, building a network of families from every race, religion and culture, united in the belief that centered on God's love, happy marriages and successful families are the cornerstones for solving the most fundamental problems of society.

Well-known for officiating at mass wedding ceremonies for his followers, Rev. Moon began in 1997 to invite people of all faiths to join in dedicating their marriage to God and world peace. World Peace Blessing ceremonies began with invocations by leaders of various religions. Newlyweds and couples renewing their vows make a sacred promise to love each other faithfully, live together in peace, and raise up their children and grandchildren to uphold purity and fidelity. A special contribution to world peace is made by couples who bridge the divides of race and religion, pledging that they and their families will promote understanding, respect, and harmony.

Rev. Moon proposed the creation of an international council of religious, civic, and political leaders to supplement the peacekeeping work of the United Nations. The Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (known as the Universal Peace Federation since 2005), has been active throughout the world with Ambassadors for Peace who work for peace in their nations and internationally.

A month after the September 2001 attacks on the United States, Rev. Moon organized a peace conference that brought together religious and political leaders from around the globe; a second, unprecedented conference for international Muslim leaders in Indonesia in December 2001, was titled: Islam and the Future World of Peace, reflecting Rev. Moon's confidence in Islam's potential to be a major partner in the global quest for peace.

Rev. Moon dedicated himself to address the world's most unsolvable challenges, among them achieving peace in the Middle East and a peaceful reconciliation between North and South Korea. The Middle East Peace Initiative exemplifies his approach to peace by calling on leaders of all fields, including government, academia, religion and the arts, to join in interreligious peace missions to the trouble spots of the world.

The Universal Peace Federation was established in 2005 to create a global council of religious and other leaders to supplement and support the peace-making work of the United Nations. It has a Global Peace Council with distinguished leaders from all continents and Ambassadors for Peace committed to the vision of a global human family under God. UPF is a non-governmental organization with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. UPF was inaugurated in September 2005 at a gala event at the Lincoln Center in New York City. After that, the founders embarked on a World Peace Tour, inaugurating chapters on six continents. After a journey of more than 70,000 miles, 280 hours of airtime, and 60 time zones the tour concluded in Toronto, Canada three months later.

While the Internet links people the world over on an information super-highway, there is no highway with bridges and tunnels to connect all the continents. The idea for a Bering Strait crossing was promoted during the UPF Peace Tours of 2005 and 2006 as a vision for overcoming cultural and religious boundaries as well as geographic and political divisions.

Beginning in 2006, a number of Rev. and Mrs. Moon's children and adult grandchildren, accompanied by their spouses, joined Mrs. Moon on a history-making world tour for peace to 120 nations. Audiences worldwide were inspired that Rev. Moon's important work is being effectively continued through the dedication of the second and third generations of his family.



The initial Peace Message of 2005 was developed for diverse audiences and to address complex issues facing the globe. In 2006 and 2007, the momentum generated from the initial tours continued locally in more than 14,000 locations organized by Ambassadors for Peace inspired by the vision of the Peace Tours.



Going up into the mountains for meditation and prayer has long been a tradition among the peace-loving people of Korea. For decades Cheongpyeong Lake northeast of Seoul was a beloved prayer retreat for Rev. Moon. As he prayed in the hills nearby, his conviction grew that one day there would be a peace village here and people from all over the world would come to his homeland to learn peace.

In addition to the Cheon Jeong Gung Peace Palace, Museum and Meeting Center there is a training center, hospital, seminary, and stadium at the complex.

UPF initiated a ‘Legacy of Peace’ memorial program at the United Nations headquarters in New York on March 18, 2010 to honor Hédi Annabi, the UN Chief of Mission killed with 100 other UN personnel in the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010 and seven other prominent individuals associated with UPF who had recently passed away and whose lives were dedicated to peace. Rev. and Mrs. Moon were present at the programs in New York and Las Vegas. Similar events were organized by UPF chapters around the world.

A tireless advocate for peace, Rev. Moon and his wife traveled in Asia, Europe, North America, and Africa in 2011 to speak to the public on the theme of “Building a World of Universal Peace.”

Rev. Sun Myung Moon passed away on September 3, 2012, of complications of pneumonia. He is survived by his wife, ten of their 14 children, and more than 40 grandchildren.

Global Citizen of Peace

The Life of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon

January 1920—September 2012



1930

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

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DR. HAK JA HAN

Dr. Hak Ja Han, widow of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon [1920-2012], is the co-founder of the Universal Peace Federation. Together with her husband, she has devoted her life to peace, founding many organizations and initiatives in a wide range of fields.

Childhood and Family Life



Hak Ja Han was born in Anju, South Pyong-an Province, now in North Korea, on the 6th day of the first lunar month (February 10) in 1943. Her mother, Soon-ae Hong, was an earnest Christian and her father, Seung-un Han, was the disciple of a famous preacher, Rev. Young-do Lee. The North Korean Communists were bent on suppressing religion, and in 1948, when she was five years old, her mother and grandmother were arrested by Communist police and jailed for 11 days.

After their release, Hak Ja Han, her mother, and her grandmother fled their village in the middle of the night. They went to Seoul, later moving further south to Taegu, where they lived through the Korean War. The family later moved to Chuncheon, where Hak Ja Han's uncle was living, and she soon graduated from elementary school in that city.

During this period, she, along with her mother, joined the newly formed Unification Church. Five years after joining, on April 11, 1960, the young Hak Ja Han married the church's founder, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. She stands as co-founder of the Unification Church, now known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. Since the passing of her husband, she has taken full responsibility for the affairs of the worldwide movement the two worked tirelessly to establish.

Devoted Wife, Mother, and Grandmother



Dr. Han is a devoted wife, the mother of 14 children and the grandmother of more than 40 grandchildren. She is known for her extraordinary compassion, capability, grace and charm. Above all, she is exemplary as a woman who has created a God-centered marriage and family of three generations.

Leadership to Strengthen Families

The heart and soul of Rev. Moon and Dr. Han's lifelong ministry is the re-establishment of God's ideal of the family as the foundation for harmonious societies and the cornerstone of world peace. The Marriage Blessing movement, which began with the marriage of three couples in 1960, has reached millions of couples worldwide. Dr. Han and her husband presided over marriage blessings in Madison Square Garden in New York in 1982, in Seoul's Olympic Stadium in 1992, in RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C. in 1997, and other venues over many years.



[Right: Marriage Blessing at RFK Stadium, Washington, DC]

A Woman of International Peace and Good Will

In 1968, Rev. Moon established the Professors World Peace Academy in Korea, and in 1972 the first International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences was held. These and similar organizations have attracted the participation of scholars, scientists, and leaders in the fields of religion, the media, government, and the arts, including numerous Nobel Laureates. Dr. Han played a crucial role in all of these developments, where her compassion and kindness complemented her husband's vision and drive.

By addressing informal gatherings of women at these activities, Dr. Han became more visible in the public sphere. Her speeches included the Address to the Women of the World Media Conference (October 1981) and the Address to the Women of the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (November 1981). She moved forward on the world stage for the promotion of God-centered values in 1989, when an interview with Soviet media appeared in the Religion and Society section of Za Rubezhom (June 12, 1989).

Meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and President Kim Il Sung in North Korea



The following year, Rev. Moon and Dr. Han met with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. This extraordinary event, which took place in the Kremlin on their 30th wedding anniversary, April 11, 1990, initiated an educational exchange that brought hundreds of Russian students to study in the United States.

Then, in December of 1991, Dr. Han put her life on the line when she and her husband traveled to North Korea to meet with President Kim Il Sung for the purpose of uniting the two Koreas. That meeting led to ongoing projects to facilitate the peaceful union of North and South Korea.

Founding the Women's Federation for World Peace and Universal Peace Federation

In 1992, Dr. Han, together with her husband, founded the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), of which she became international chairwoman. She invested all her energy into developing a global base for the new organization, giving the federation's inaugural speech in 113 cities in 12 countries and in three different languages within an eight-month period.

Her first world tour in 1993 took her to 44 cities in the United States, 27 cities in Japan, 40 university campuses in Korea, and 41 nations around the world. She spoke in such notable venues as Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., the United Nations in New York City, the Kremlin, the Great Hall in Beijing, and congressional buildings in Japan, Korea, and Canada.

A further turning point came with the inauguration of the Universal Peace Federation on September 12, 2005. The years that followed were a period of intensive joint outreach and institution building. Dr. Han accompanied Rev. Moon on a world speaking tour of 100 international cities in 100 days.

The following year, accompanied by her adult children and grandchildren, she undertook two world tours for peace at the incredible pace of one country per day. She and her family spoke to enthusiastic audiences in 120 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania and Latin America. She was received as a dignitary and met with many heads of states, prominent religious leaders and political leaders.

Perhaps no other woman leader has addressed so many large audiences in as many countries as Dr. Han. Today, after years of intense

international work, she is recognized as one of the most effective woman leaders in the world.



[Above left: Dr. Moon speaks in the Tokyo Dome and right: United Nations.]

In July of 1993, after speaking throughout America, Dr. Moon’s tour culminated with addresses on the US Capitol Hill and at the United Nations, delivering a message of peace and interreligious reconciliation.

Taking on the Mantle of Leadership



After Rev. Moon’s passing in September 2012, Dr. Hak Ja Han assumed full responsibility for the worldwide movement and entered a new phase of leadership marked by consolidation, modernization, and the creation of international platforms designed to outlast any single generation.

The Sunhak Peace Prize

In February 2013, she proposed the [Sunhak Peace Prize](#) in memory of Dr. Sun Myung Moon, framing it as a public instrument to recognize leadership for peace and human development. A preparatory committee was formed in January 2014, the first laureates were announced in June 2015, and the inaugural award ceremony was held in Seoul on August 28, 2015. The first laureates were former President Anote Tong of Kiribati and Indian aquaculture pioneer Dr. Modadugu Vijay Gupta. The same year, Dr. Han visited India and Nepal in November 2015, where she met government leaders and addressed public meetings, reflecting her emphasis on peacebuilding that combines high level dialogue with grounded community development.

The Sunhak Peace Prize continued on a two-year cycle, with the second award ceremony in February 2017, honoring Italian humanitarian surgeon Dr. Gino Strada and Dr. Fatema Hameed. The third award ceremony, in February 2019, honored women’s rights activist Ms. Waris Dirie and African development leader Hon. Dr. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina. These choices reflected the prize’s stated focus on sustainable human development, conflict resolution, and ecological conservation, and they placed women’s leadership and social solidarity at the center of peacebuilding.

UPF’s Primary Associations and the World Summit

From 2016 onward, her leadership included the establishment of UPF’s primary associations as standing platforms for sector specific cooperation. The [International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace](#) was inaugurated in February 2016, and in November 2017, UPF launched the [Interreligious Association for Peace and Development](#), offering a structured framework for interfaith cooperation that has particular relevance in societies shaped by migration and religious diversity.

World Summit 2019 in Seoul was another milestone, convening current and former heads of state and government, parliamentarians, and civic leaders. In that context, UPF also established the [International Summit Council for Peace](#), a platform intended to sustain dialogue among national leaders beyond electoral cycles and regional divides.

In February 2020, UPF convened World Summit 2020, an expanded framework for high-level dialogue that also served as a launch point for additional sector platforms including the [International Association of Academicians for Peace](#), the [International Association for Peace and Economic Development](#), the [International Media Association for Peace](#), and the [International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace](#). During the COVID-19 years, UPF adapted its convening model through initiatives such as the global online Rally of Hope series, and in May 2021 launched Think Tank 2022 to generate practical policy proposals through cross-sector collaboration.

[World Summit 2022](#) in Seoul was an international gathering hosted by Dr. Hak Ja Han that combined in-person participation with global virtual engagement. Within that summit framework, the Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony honored Professor Dame Sarah Catherine Gilbert of the University of Oxford and [Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance](#) for contributions linked to vaccine development and equitable immunization. In May 2023, UPF convened [Peace Summit 2023](#), where Dr. Han addressed global participants and continued to frame peace as a long-term, values-based project that requires leaders, institutions, and citizens to cooperate across dividing lines of nation, religion, and ideology.

Dedication of the Cheon Won Gung

Since the 1970s, Rev. Moon and Dr. Han have worked to establish a permanent base for the Unification community in the district of Gapyeong in South Korea. They purchased land and built numerous buildings, including a training center, a hospital, a middle and high school, a graduate school and Korean language academy, a retirement home, residential apartments, and a world-class stadium. After her husband’s passing, Dr. Han directed the construction of an office complex and the imposing Cheon Won Gung, or Peace Palace. On April 13, 2025, Dr. Han dedicated this beautiful building to God, as a place where people, including world leaders, can come to meet their Heavenly Parent and join together in seeking pathways to peace.

Through the decades of Dr. Han’s public life, the core narrative has been continuity in building families dedicated to the public good, as well as partnerships among individuals and groups striving for harmony and peace. Since her husband’s passing in 2012, she has focused on institution building to ensure these efforts endure. She continues to advance a vision of peace grounded in the dignity of the person, the strength of the family, and the belief that humanity is one family under God.



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He suggested it could be built in less than eight years, and while the cost could exceed \$65 billion, he said it could be reduced to \$8 billion with help from Elon Musk’s Boring Co., which constructs tunnels.

Mr. Dmitriev proposed the tunnel after Mr. Putin spoke with Mr. Trump by phone, also in October, regarding the war in Ukraine. After the call, Mr. Dmitriev wrote to Mr. Musk on social media.

“Imagine connecting the US and [Russia](#), the Americas and the Afro-Eurasia with the [Putin-Trump Tunnel](#) — a 70-mile link symbolizing unity. Traditional costs are \$65B+, but @boringcompany’s tech could reduce it to <\$8B. Let’s build a future together,” Mr. Dmitriev posted.

In a series of October posts, Mr. Dmitriev cited RDIF’s Russia-China railroad bridge as a precedent.

“RDIF has already invested in and built the first ever Russia-China railroad bridge. The time has come to do more and connect the Continents for the first time in human history. The time has come to connect [Russia](#) and the US,” Mr. Dmitriev wrote.

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“The dream of a US-Russia link via the Bering Strait reflects an enduring vision — from the 1904 Siberia-Alaska railway to [Russia’s](#) 2007 plan [for a Bering Strait tunnel]. RDIF has studied existing proposals, including the US-Canada-Russia-China railroad, and will support the most viable,” he added.

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DerJaeger

Conversation Starter

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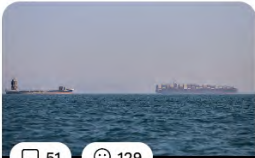


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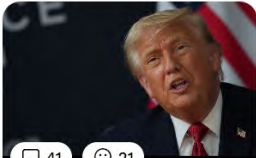


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