

Yohan Lee, the first FFWPU minister in Korea to reach a hundred years of age

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Rev. Lee became True Father's first male disciple in 1952 and was the Unification Church's first pioneer church leader, in Busan and in Daegu

Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (also known as the Unification Church) established by Rev. Sun Myung Moon (1920–2012) in 1954 is marking its sixty-first anniversary this year. FFWPU is known as the only religion that has taken root globally in such a short period of time. This year, for the first time in FFWPU history, an FFWPU minister turned a hundred years old. He is Rev. Yohan Lee. He was the first president of the Unification Divinity School (predecessor of Sun Moon University). He raised many ministers including chairman of UPF Dr. Chang-shik Yang, president of Sun Moon University, Dr. Sun-jo Hwang and regional chairman of UPF-Asia Dr. Chung-shik Yong. He remains on active duty on the front line of outreach work as an international itinerant missionary. He was the first male member to join the Unification Church, in 1952, and was the only member with a theological background at that time. When

Rev. Moon wrote the Original Principle [Wolli Wonbon], he appointed Rev. Lee as the supervising editor.

Despite using an artificial cardiac pacemaker, his complexion and his memory skills are comparable with people in their forties or fifties. He answered the reporter's questions by precisely reading the reporter's intentions. Even today, he visits up to fifteen churches around Korea each month and provides consultations to church members. Last October, when he was ninety-nine years old, he traveled by plane to Taiwan as an international itinerant worker. The reporter visited Rev. Lee's affiliated church, the FFWPU Family Church in the Yatap Ward of the Bundang Borough of the City of Seongnam to interview him on topics such as FFWPU's ideological weight, religious and family issues, North Korean affairs and the future of humanity.



Question: Please tell me your motives for joining FFWPU.

I was studying at a divinity school in Tokyo but they kicked me out for refusing to visit shrines. After returning to Korea in 1945, I worked as an evangelist around the coast of Hamgyŏng Province [Today in

North Korea]. It was around this time that I heard about Rev. Sun Myung Moon. From 1940 to the 1950s, the concept of the Second Advent occurring in Korea was spreading rapidly through Korean society, and Rev. Moon was one of those spoken about. Since I believed that the Christ would come on the clouds, for me to accept this concept was not easy. However, one day, I dreamed of Rev. Moon. In this dream, a woman came up and introduced him to me as the Messiah. Before disappearing, she said, "Three days from now, you will see a double rainbow in the sky. If you do, you must believe that what I said was true." I was shocked when I actually saw a double rainbow in the sky and I immediately headed for Busan to see Rev. Moon. I was overwhelmed by the way he stared at me when we first met.

Question: What was your impression of Rev. Moon, and what attracted you the most?

First of all, Rev. Moon has special insight and reads peoples' family backgrounds at first sight. I have studied theology, but many theologians do not know the relevant ties between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Many praise the New Testament, but treat the Old Testament as mere "morally good stories." Professor Junta Watanabe, who taught me at divinity school, was a famous biblicist who specialized in the Old Testament but he said, "The Old Testament is not the Bible." This is a major contradiction. It cleared my head when I heard Rev. Moon explain the history of God's providence to restore humanity by connecting the New Testament and the Old Testament.

Question: What accomplishment of Rev. Moon's is special?

He determined the relationship between God and humanity to be a "parent-child relationship" and recovered that relationship for the first time in history. When the Christians were claiming to go to heaven after death, he fought alone to eliminate evil on earth and to create a good world to fulfill the providence of restoration. Only recently have I heard some Protestant ministers making a claim similar to that of Rev. Moon. I'm sure Rev. Moon's accomplishments will become even clearer as time goes by.

Question: What was most challenging in your life of faith?

Prior to the establishment of the Unification Church (FFWPU), we had to go witnessing without any names or signs. I could not answer when I was asked which sect I was from. The Unification Church was established in 1954, but none of the ministers or missionaries had theological backgrounds back then. We faced many difficulties because we went out witnessing with our incentive alone to tell the "new word" without even knowing what the Book of Matthew was.

Question: Have you ever doubted Rev. Moon's mission, or rebelled against him?

At no time did I doubt him, because he always knew what I would ask before I asked it and gave me immense answers. We had some conflicts of ideas. These were when he told the headquarters to fund the construction of local churches, and when he proposed to construct an air gun factory. I claimed that in order for a church to develop, it must be built by gaining assistance from the local people, and I insisted that it was of far more urgency to build a divinity school than to build an air gun factory, but he would not listen. I never thought of violating what he said because he had great foresight. I believe financial ability was absolutely necessary for him to carry on the history of the providence of restoration, but since he knew the people in the world would not support him, he forged ahead with building a financial foundation. In this area, Japan has played a meritorious role.

Question: People nowadays tend to turn away from religions. Where do you think the problem lies, in the religions or in the individual believers?

I think the problem lies in religions. Ministers have failed in nurturing people in spirit and in truth. We could not change people through religious rituals alone. They cannot nurture people because they themselves are not spiritual. A minister must be able to inspire the believers. To do so, he must become a slave of love and serve them. I am sorry to see churches cool down and fall into a mere form of culture.

Question: How could we enhance the flag of religion again?

We must imprint anew God's existence in people's heart. God could not help but support people unconditionally. He helps when people admire him and plead with him. If you do not have the heart to admire him, he cannot support you. Secondly, we must clearly explain the existence of the world after death (the spiritual world). The Divine Principle explains the physical world as "the shadow of the incorporeal world (the world after death)." I'm sure people will develop cameras that are capable of capturing the spirit world when technology develops in the future. Lastly, in order for religions to survive, they must be reborn as a place to nurture filial piety and spirituality. Rev. Moon taught the nature of filial piety in a revolutionary way. Filial piety starts, not when children return it to their parents, but when parents dedicate it to their children. It is not easy for parents to show courtesy to their children and there may be times when parents must ask their children's understanding for areas they are lacking in, but we must re-create the culture of filial piety within our family.