Beyond the Headlines: An American Story of Peace

By Ron Lucas

During my career in public relations, I've had the privilege of working with churches, civil rights organizations, nonprofit organizations, corporations, elected officials, and community leaders from every walk of life. That experience has taught me one simple lesson: every organization deserves to be judged by the totality of its work—not simply by its headlines.

That is why I have found myself reflecting on Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, commonly known as the Unification Church and originally founded as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity.

No, I am not a member. My communications firm has represented Family Federation USA on communications initiatives, and that professional relationship has given me the opportunity to look beyond the stereotypes, meet its members, observe its leadership, and witness its work firsthand. What I have discovered is a story that many Americans have never had the opportunity to hear.

For more than seventy years, the movement founded by the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and led today by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has promoted a vision centered on peace, strong families, interfaith cooperation, and the belief that humanity is one family under God. Over the decades, it has devoted extraordinary time, leadership, energy, and resources to conferences, humanitarian initiatives, marriage

and family education, and efforts to bring together people of different faiths, races, cultures, and nations.

One of the clearest expressions of that vision in the United States has been Peace Starts With Me. Over the years, these gatherings have welcomed an extraordinary cross-section of American leadership—pastors, civic leaders, elected officials, community activists, and some of the nation's most respected Christian and gospel artists. Voices such as Yolanda Adams, Hezekiah Walker, Kim Burrell, Israel Houghton, JoAnn Rosario-Condrey, Jason Crabb, and many others have helped inspire audiences with a message of faith, reconciliation, family, and hope. Those stages have reflected something increasingly rare in America: people from different backgrounds choosing to stand together instead of apart.

As someone whose career has also been deeply connected to the Black church and the Civil Rights Movement, I recognize something familiar in that approach. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rev. Jesse Jackson reminded us that lasting change is built through relationships, moral leadership, and coalitions that bring people together rather than drive them apart.

Much of that effort in the United States has been guided by President Demian Dunkley, whose leadership has emphasized openness, diversity, inclusion, interfaith partnerships, and community engagement. Rather than turning inward, he has encouraged the American movement to build relationships across racial, cultural, and denominational lines while welcoming new voices into the broader work of building peace.

That distinction is worth understanding.

Family Federation USA is part of a worldwide faith movement inspired by the vision of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. At the same time, it is led in America by its own national leadership, serves American congregations and communities, and carries out its mission within the framework of American law and the constitutional principles of religious liberty. Like many global faith communities, it shares a common spiritual heritage while addressing the unique needs and opportunities of the nation it serves.

That is one reason I believe Americans should evaluate the movement by what they see here at home: its people, its service, its partnerships, and its commitment to strengthening families and building peace in American communities.

Having worked behind the scenes on many of these gatherings, I have watched pastors embrace rabbis, gospel artists stand beside civic leaders, and people from every race and background unite around one simple belief: peace is possible when we choose one another over our differences.

In an era when our nation seems increasingly divided by race, politics, religion, and ideology, organizations that intentionally bring people together deserve to be part of our national conversation.

Peace is not created by governments alone. It is created in our homes, our churches, our neighborhoods, our schools, and in the choices we make every day to recognize one another's humanity.

Perhaps the greatest measure of any faith community is not how often it appears in the headlines, but how faithfully it serves when the cameras are gone.

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That is why I believe Family Federation USA deserves to be understood by the work it is doing here in America—building bridges, strengthening families, encouraging interfaith cooperation, and reminding us that lasting peace begins with each of us.

Peace Starts With Me.

Perhaps that isn't just the movement's message.

Perhaps it is a challenge for us all.

Ron Lucas is a communications and public affairs professional. The views expressed here are his own.

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Bishop Noel Jones

Peace Rally

Peace Starts With Me Choir

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