

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Le Monde Diplomatique Excusing Terror

Knut Holdhus
June 12, 2023



Leftwing paper's tactic: Excusing terror and portraying victim as perpetrator



Standing truth on its head - excusing terror and vilifying victim - Le Monde Diplomatique published in its June 2023 issue a very strong contender to the title "Biased article of the year".

Derogatory terms

Already in the headline - Moonies embedded in Japanese political life - the derogatory term "Moonies" is used. It appears nine times throughout the article, in the French version even more.

The expression is often used deliberately by leftwing and anti-religious campaigners in order to make fun of and belittle the [Family Federation](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#), and its members.



In its handbook for journalists, the large global news agency Reuters says: "'Moonie' is a pejorative term for members of the [Unification Church](#). We should not use it in copy and avoid it

when possible in direct quotations."

Another derogatory term used many times in the report (25 times in the French version), is "cult" ("sect" in many languages). In the article ["Why 'Cults' \(and 'Brainwashing'\) Do Not Exist - An appeal to avoid labels that have no accepted scientific meaning and are used as tools of discrimination"](#), one of the world's leading experts on new religious movements, Dr. Massimo Introvigne, writes,



"at the end of the last century, the vast majority of religious scholars stopped using 'cult' and replaced it with the less ambiguous term 'new religious movements'." ([article published in the magazine Bitter Winter 27th March 2023](#)).

Radical leftwing paper

But it is not only new religious movements that have been called "cults". Various European communist parties, e.g. those in Italy and France, have been called cults loyal to Moscow. The Soviet Communist Party was called a personality cult under Stalin. And Le Monde Diplomatique is clearly a leftwing paper.

It was once part of the liberal Le Monde, but in 1996 radical leftwing employees, thanks to a huge donation by militant left-winger Günter Holzmann (1912-2001), were able to buy one quarter of the shares of the monthly publication. A leftwing association of readers acquired another quarter, enough to be able to control the direction and editorial line of the paper, even though 51 % of the capital still is in

the hands of Le Monde.

Historian Walter Laqueur (1921-2018) calls Le Monde Diplomatique "the main organ of Castroism" (Reflections of a Veteran Pessimist, Routledge 2017). Castroism is based on the ideas and Marxist theories created by Che Guevara, Raúl Castro, and Fidel Castro, leaders of the Cuban Communist Revolution.

State as vanguard of the anti-cult movement

Above-mentioned Dr. Introvigne mentions another brand of communism out to destroy new religious movements,



"During the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the China Anti-xie-jiao Association, which coordinates the fight against the religious movements banned as xie jiao ('heterodox teachings', often, but less correctly translated as 'evil cults') published a theoretical reflection on the role of the CCP within the world 'anti-cult movement'.

According to a Marxist analysis, the study says, xie jiao (but throughout the article there is a constant reference to the

Western category of 'cults') are 'political cancers' that nobody will be able to 'completely eliminate overnight'. The CCP has consciously assumed the mission of being "the vanguard of the anti-cult movement" on a global scale." ([Chinese Communist Party, "The Vanguard of the Anti-Cult Movement"](#), Bitter Winter 8th July 2021)

In China - as in France - the state has its own anticult movement. It is completely controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. There are public officers to crack down on "cults" in every village and neighbourhood. Every party member is encouraged to become an anticult activist.

And in the opening paragraph of the article in Le Monde Diplomatique it says about Japan, "the country still has few controls over religious cults." Xi Jinping might well have said the very same words.

Excusing terror



Shinzo Abe

Throughout the article the [Unification Church](#) is blamed for the assassination of Shinzo Abe. Just consider the opening sentence;

"The [Unification Church](#)'s far-reaching links with the party of Japan's former prime minister Shinzo Abe led to his assassination [...]."

The actual killer is made into victim; Abe and the [Unification Church](#) are the guilty ones. Truth completely stood on its head.



The Japan Times pointed out in an article 16th April 2023 that this style of reporting - excusing terror and

giving positive media coverage to a terrorist - is dangerous indeed. It may well lead to more terror. (Don't Allow the Attack on Kishida to Become a Trend, by columnist Gearoid Reidy)

Le Monde Diplomatique is of course not the first leftwing paper excusing terror.

The Japan Times writes in the same article,

"Instead of recognizing this [the terrorist's alleged grievances against the [Unification Church](#)] as bitter delusion and focusing on the concerning security lapses surrounding Abe's killing, media reports instead gave Yamagami bizarrely sympathetic coverage and even took up his cause against the church. For months, Japan's front pages and TV shows were dominated by links

between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the [Unification Church](#)."

Terror exploited for political gain

The Japan Times also emphasizes that the terror attack on Abe "was exploited for political gain." The Le Monde Diplomatique article should not just be seen as an attack on a religious movement. It is even more a deliberate attack on a conservative party known traditionally to have been opposed to communism. The worse you make a particular religion look, and the closer you portray the links between that religion and the party, the worse you make the party of Shinzo Abe appear. It is a simple strategy, really.

So-called "ties"

And the Le Monde Diplomatique article reports about "far-reaching links", "close links", "[Unification Church](#) network within the LDP", "connections with the church", "links to", "ties to" throughout the article.

And having contact is made to appear as something really bad. Politicians "admitted" contact. The Japan Times writes,

"A relentless barrage of stories focused on how senior politicians, including Abe, met with the church representatives, but failed to provide the context that politicians everywhere routinely associate with interest groups, particularly those with money."

The paper points out that "ties" often meant little more than attending a meeting or shaking hands.

Communist front of activist lawyers



Award-winning Japanese writer Masumi Fukuda, recognized for her investigative journalism, shows exactly how the assassination of Shinzo Abe was used for political gain. In several articles in the monthly magazine Hanada from December 2022 to March 2023, she reveals how a leftwing group of activist lawyers managed to paint the picture that it was the [Unification Church](#) that was to blame for the assassination.

Fukuda writes,

"Almost all of the lawyers in the Network were affiliated with the former Socialist Party and the Communist Party, who strongly opposed the enactment of the Anti-Espionage Law, were connected with extremist groups and North Korea, and were ideologically leftists and self-styled atheists. In contrast, the former [Unification Church](#) is an anti-communist and conservative organization that opposes atheism.

It is clear that this was an ideological battle between the two camps. Attorney Hiroshi Yamaguchi also clearly stated, "We want to make a big public announcement [about 'spiritual sales'] because it will be good for containing right-wing activities, especially for preventing the passing of the Anti-Espionage Law." (Hanada)



The bulk of the content in the Le Monde Diplomatique article comes from this leftwing network of activist lawyers (National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales). Eito Suzuki, a campaign journalist associated with the network - known as the most vicious anticult-journalist in Japan - is given prominent space. The executive director Hiroshi Yamaguchi is quoted extensively. Nowhere is it mentioned that the network is a communist front and producer of anti-religious propaganda.

The same Fukuda also discloses that the network of lawyers for nearly thirty years was deeply involved in abducting and confining members of the [Unification Church](#),



"There were lawyers who became rich through these cases, as did deprogrammers and Christian pastors involved in the abductions, who received substantial amounts of money from the relatives of the believers they deprogrammed. When the lawyers were consulted by the believers' parents, they first

introduced them to the deprogrammers.



Yoshifu Arita

If and when deprogramming was successful, the lawyers took over from the deprogrammers as 'handlers' of the former believers, made them plaintiffs, and filed lawsuits. The anti-Unification-Church group, including Attorney Kito and journalists Yoshifu Arita, and Eito Suzuki, still defends deprogramming to this very day, and claims it was performed to 'protect' the former members of the [Unification Church](#)." (Hanada)

In another article, Fukuda writes,

"The Network would not hesitate to use all means to destroy the former [Unification Church](#). They are willing to tell all sort of stories, including lies, to achieve what they believe is a righteous purpose. They often throw the words "anti-social" and "cult" at the former [Unification Church](#), but considering their involvement in the abduction and confinement of believers, one may wonder whether they are not more deserving of these labels themselves." ([Sayuri](#)

[Ogawa](#): [When 'Apostates' Slander the Unification Church. 5. Why the Story Is Not Believable](#), Bitter Winter 6th March 2023)

Judging by their article, one may certainly wonder if there are elements within Le Monde Diplomatique who also support confining and deprogramming believers, like the fellow communists within the Chinese Communist Party do, brainwashing more than a million Uyghurs in "reform camps".

Anticult academic

Another "expert" Le Monde Diplomatique gives ample space to, is Yoshihide Sakurai. He is considered an anticult academic, and said to be the Japanese version of Stephen Kent, a Canadian professor emeritus of sociology of religion, who has worked closely with anticult groups. Yet, Sakurai's anticult sympathies are not mentioned at all by the French monthly. He is simply presented as a "professor of sociology".

Hiding essential facts

An old trick of campaigning journalism or advocacy journalism of the sort that Le Monde Diplomatique exhibits here, is to hide key facts. The result is half-truths, the part that profits you the most. Eito Suzuki is presented as an expert journalist. The fact that he is associated with a radical leftwing network of activist lawyers is hidden. The same trick is employed throughout the article.

Mixing facts and claims

Another trick is to mix facts with suppositions, claims and opinions. Already the headline of the French version "Japan in the Clutches of the Moon Cult" (Le Japon dans les rets de la secte Moon), we see the tendentious tone of the entire content. This is not factual reporting, but a wild claim. For those who know European history, it is certainly reminiscent of the myth of the Jewish conspiracy to take over the world.

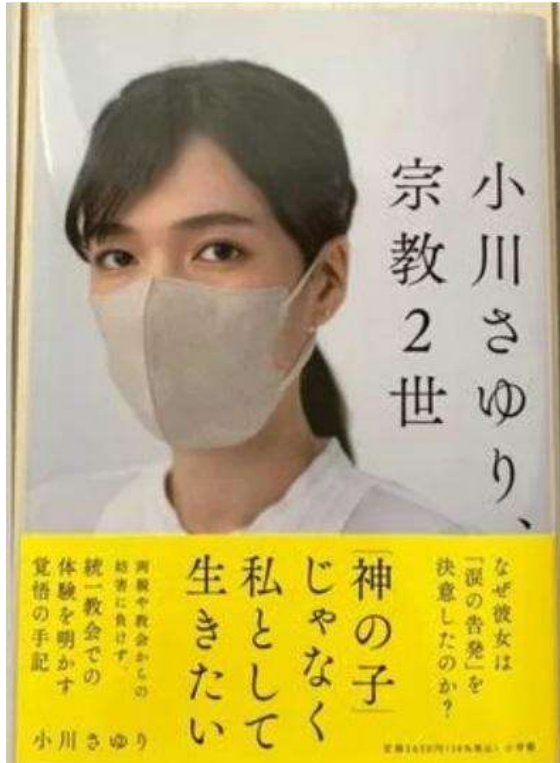
Inflammatory allegations

The same type of wild claims we see in another inflammatory allegation (in the French version) "the cult lures people into its nets." (la secte attire les gens dans ses filets). Just as incendiary is "the infernal cycle of donations then began" (Le cycle infernal de dons se met alors en route). Or consider: "The cult has extended its tentacles into other parties." (French version. The English simply says, "The [Unification Church](#)'s network extends to other political parties too.")

False claims

Some of the content doesn't even qualify as half-truths; there is not even a grain of truth in them. One such false claim is that the ideology of the [Unification Church](#) includes Korean nationalism. Fact is that the movement is emphasizing international marriage and the love of all nationalities and people of all skin colours. All nations ought to serve other nations and the world, and not pursue their own interests

selfishly.



Many other false claims appear in the part about Sayuri Ogawa (pseudonym - merely presented as a 26-year old in the English version). Le Monde Diplomatique (French version) even admits that she suffered from "mental disorders" (de troubles psychologiques). One might expect a serious publication to refrain from publishing grand statements from a mentally unstable person. Fukuda investigated Ogawa's claims extensively, and concluded,

"Her parents' testimony and the 'Hanada' magazine's investigation clarified that what Sayuri told the media may not conceivably be true." (['Sayuri Ogawa': When 'Apostates' Slander the Unification Church. 5. Why the Story Is Not Believable](#), Bitter Winter 6th March 2023)

Le Monde Diplomatique claims that the family of Abe's assassin had been ruined by huge donations. In the French version, not a word is said about the family being devastated already when the father committed suicide - a long time before the mother met the [Unification Church](#). The French text omits the suicide and simply says that she lost her husband.

The French text may easily be read as if the terrorist was involved with the [Unification Church](#) for thirty years: Yamagami recalls "trente ans d'histoire entre [lui] et l'Église de l'unification" (thirty years of history between [him] and the [Unification Church](#)). The fact is that according to church records he was never a member.

The article also claims that the [Unification Church](#) is pressuring members to make large donations. This is a standard allegation from the anticult movement. The above-mentioned Dr. Massimo Introvigne criticizes such a claim, saying,



Dr. Massimo Introvigne

"In its general principles, the [Unification Church](#)'s theology of donations is surprisingly similar to its Catholic and Protestant counterparts. [...]"

Ultimately, the problem is theological and philosophical. For a believer, donations may be deep spiritual experiences. For an atheist, or somebody who believes that groups such as the [Unification Church](#) are not "real" religions, no caution would be good enough, and no donation would ever be recognized as the fruit of a free and reasonable choice." ([The Abe Assassination. Donations to the Unification Church: Separating Facts from Fiction](#), Bitter Winter 3rd Sept. 2022)

Aggressive hate rhetoric

One curious aspect of the story published by Le Monde Diplomatique is that the French version is much more aggressively negative to the [Unification Church](#) than the English version. Could it be related to the fact that the French state has its own anticult movement? Just like communist China. That may well create a climate where the kind of aggressive hate

rhetoric and anticult propaganda that the French monthly displays, is allowed.

Text: Knut Holdhus

Featured image above: The building of "Le Monde diplomatique" in Berlin-Kreuzberg; Rudi-Dutschke-Strasse/Charlottenstrasse. Photo: Fridolin freudenfett / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

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"Sayuri Ogawa": When "Apostates" Slander the Unification Church. 5. Why the Story Is Not Believable

03/06/2023 MASUMI FUKUDA

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Her parents' testimony and the "Hanada" magazine's investigation clarified that what Sayuri told the media may not conceivably be true.

by Masumi Fukuda

Article 5 of 5. Read [article 1](#), [article 2](#), [article 3](#), and [article 4](#).



Ogawa (right) during a TV show with one of the leading anti-Unification-Church lawyers, Masaki Kito (center).

During my interview, Yoshihiko, Sayuri's father, tried his best to speak calmly, but there was only one moment when his face flushed and his voice became choked up. That was when he was talking about his daughter's criticism of the adoptions that had been conducted by the members of the Family Federation for a long time. She said, "It is almost like human trafficking."

"I assume that someone is making her say that. We have been talking to our daughter previously how we felt when we gave my daughters up for adoption, and I am sure she understands that... As for our second daughter, we once gave her up for adoption, but she came back after six months because the family were not confident enough they could raise her due to their difficult circumstances. We talked to our second daughter about this around September last year, before this issue hit the media, and she understood."

Sayuri testified, "I cannot forget my sister's expression when she cried and said, 'Mom, why did you give me up for adoption?'"

But Yoshihiko strongly denies this: "It's impossible. I asked my second daughter and she said she has no idea of this."

"My wife and I were lucky enough to have many children. We wanted to help families who were unable to have children. We decided that if we would have a fifth and a sixth child, we would give them to families who were in desperate need of children. None of this was mediated by the church."

"There is a strange criticism, he said, that 'Arranging the adoption before birth is treating the child as an object and violating human rights.' However, we have formed a trusting relationship based on faith with the future adoptive parents even before the birth of our children who were later adopted, and we cooperated with them until the day of the birth. The two families raise the child together for one month, then the child is adopted. What is the problem with that?"

After that, the two families continue to interact with each other, and the siblings have a good relationship with one another. In fact, our third daughter is particularly concerned about us and her sister [Sayuri] now."

Currently, Sayuri and her parents are communicating again via LINE, and the communication seems to work. The parents hope to meet their daughter in person to make sure of the facts and clear up any misunderstandings, as their memories of past events differ so much. And until then, they ask her to refrain from appearing in the media. Sayuri says, "Okay, let's talk about it." But she would like at least one of her parents to appear in a documentary that Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) is currently planning to feature her, and she says she would like to have a frank talk with them, to work out their misunderstandings.

Yoshihiko replied, "I do not want to have such an important talk in the public media to clear up misunderstandings between parents and child. Why do we need the media to repair a parent-child relationship?"

Her parents continue to ask Sayuri to send them her past bank transaction history but each time she refuses, claiming that she cannot send it because her lawyer would not allow her to do so or because the former Unification Church would misuse it.

Sayuri mentioned a lawyer. In fact, there is a trial she is involved in right now. Noriko Ishigaki, a member of the House of Councilors [the Upper house of the National Diet] for the Constitutional Democratic Party, posted a video of the hearing held by the party with Ogawa on her YouTube channel.

However, on November 2, 2022, the Family Federation requested a provisional injunction from the Tokyo District Court ordering the deletion of the contents, claiming that they were factually inaccurate and constituted defamation against the church.

The part of Ogawa's testimony that the Family Federation finds specially objectionable is the following: "During the collective wedding in which my parents were married, the founder Reverend Sun Myung Moon said, 'Even if you need to borrow money or sell your body, Japan, the country of Eve, must give donations to Korea, the country of Adam.' Echoing these words, dad, who was the head of his local church, said the same thing to his flock during the service."

According to the church, Reverend Sun Myung Moon was speaking in Korean to his male Korean believers at that time, and he did not say, "The Japanese who are from the country of Eve –" or anything like that. In particular, the phrase "even if you sell your body" is a literal translation from Korean. The original meaning is completely different. It means "even if you have to work very hard," and it is derived from the theological principle that "even if you work hard, it is always insufficient in the presence of Heaven." Therefore, Yoshihiko, who was the head minister of the church, would never give such a sermon to his believers.



Reverend Moon speaking in Japan in 1973. Source: FFWPU.

The response from Councilor Noriko Ishigaki to this provisional injunction was extremely insincere. The first trial hearing was scheduled on December 6, but prior to this, the court was contacted by Mr. Takashi Yamaguchi and other lawyers belonging to the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, representing Councilor Ishigaki. They asked to postpone the first hearing because Ogawa was suffering from irritable bowel syndrome and could not attend.

However, I checked Ogawa's Twitter feed and found out that she regularly posted on Twitter every day. She even posted a video featuring herself. On December 4, she announced that she would appear on a live webcast program of the Tokyo Broadcasting System, titled "Houdou 1930," scheduled to be aired on December 6. How can a sick person appear on a live program that requires mental and physical strength? In other words, she showed no signs of illness at all.

On the other hand, the court decided that waiting for too many days would be against the purpose of the provisional injunction, and the first hearing was held on December 6 as scheduled. At that time, Attorney Yamaguchi offered many weak excuses, such as "We only met with Ogawa a week ago, so we have yet to hear her story," and "It takes time to

listen to her."

What I can assume from this is that it is the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales itself that is using Ogawa to further its own agenda, even if they may be very much aware of the lack of plausibility of her statements. Therefore, they try as far as it is possible to avoid bringing her to the forefront.



Press conference against the Unification Church/Family Federation by lawyers of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales on July 29, 2022, featuring attorneys Yasuo Kawai, Hiroshi Yamaguchi, and Masaki Kito. Screenshot.

This can be assumed from another fact. I was eager to talk to Sayuri as well, so I requested an interview through Yoshihiko by e-mail. However, the reply came from Attorney Takashi Yamaguchi.

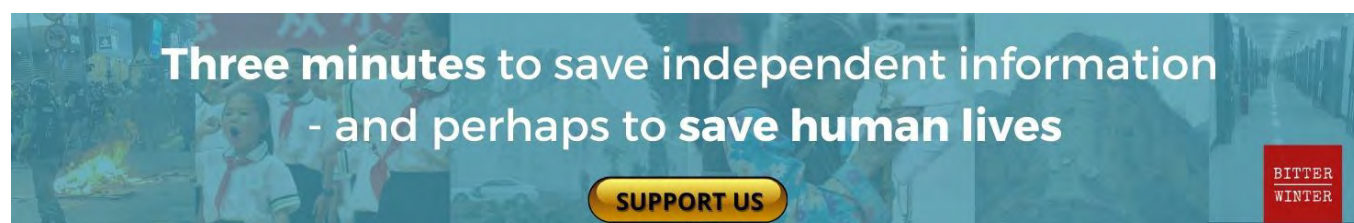
The answer was "no interviews," and he even refused to be interviewed himself about her. Therefore, I replied to him that, "I now understand that Attorney Yamaguchi and the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales do not care about the facts."

The Network would not hesitate to use all means to destroy the former Unification Church. They are willing to tell all sort of stories, including lies, to achieve what they believe is a righteous purpose. They often throw the words "anti-social" and "cult" at the former Unification Church, but considering their involvement in the abduction and confinement of believers, one may wonder whether they are not more deserving of these labels themselves.

The facts are quite simple. Sayuri Ogawa was not a victim of the former Unification Church, nor was she subjected to religious abuse by her parents, who were members of the church. Her parents raised her with sufficient love. If there was some trouble between parents and daughters, even if I accept most of their claims, it was purely a family problem.

In the first place, it is easy to notice that there are many contradictions in Sayuri's statements if you just listen a little bit carefully. However, the media and politicians did not verify her statements, did not pay any attention to the contradictions, and continued to use Ogawa as their convenient tool. As a result, misinformation was spread, and the honor of the parents and the Family Federation was severely offended. And the most serious problem is that national politics was distorted by her false statements.

Her father, Yoshihiko, said, "But I am sure that one day my daughter's misunderstandings will be cleared up and she will come back to herself. Then, my daughter might be criticized. That's what I worry about. And moreover, this is an important time for both my daughter and her baby in the postpartum period. We are capable of resisting slander thanks to the training we have undertaken as part of our life of faith, but it would be unbearable for us that our daughter will be spoken ill of. My daughter has been constantly saying lately that it is dangerous for her to see us, but who is it that makes her say arch things? Who says she can only speak in front of the media? I pray that my daughter will not be used any further by the media. 'Sayuri Ogawa' is not who she really is. I want to talk to X (Sayuri's real name). My daughter is, at heart, a good girl who loves her parents."



TAGGED WITH: [APOSTATES, JAPAN, UNIFICATION CHURCH](#)



Masumi Fukuda



Masumi Fukuda was born in Yokohama in 1956. She graduated from the Department of Sociology of Rikkyo University. After working for a specialty magazine and a magazine production company, she became a freelance journalist. She has reported and written about crime, Russia, and other topics. Her books include "Stalin: A Portrait of His Family" (Bungei Shunju), "Russia, an Assassination State: In Search of a Missing Journalist" (Shinchosha), "The True Nature of Political Correctness" (Hojosha), and others. In 2007, she won the 6th Shincho Documentary Award for "Fabrication: The Truth About the 'Murder Teacher' in Fukuoka" (Shinchosha).

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In a Nutshell

The Unification Church

Name: Unification Church

Founded: 1954 in Seoul, South Korea

Founder: Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012)

Faith: The Unification Principles, a series of revelations Father Moon received from 1935 to 1944.

See: [Brief about the teachings](#). See: [In a nutshell](#)

Goal: A Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, a harmonious world family, where everyone can experience peace, security, freedom and love.

Distribution: Largest in South Korea and Japan, but widespread throughout the free, democratic world. Representatives to 120 countries already in 1975

Europe: First representative here in 1965.

Discontinued: 1997. The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification took over many of the tasks of the Unifications Church.

Frequently asked questions: See: [Faq](#)

History:

The Unification Church was **founded** by **Sun Myung Moon** (1920-2012) and a handful of followers in 1954 in Seoul as the "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity".

It was established based on **Sun Myung Moon's vision** of creating a big global family under **God**, where all people become like brothers and sisters in a world of freedom, peace, happiness and love.

The Unification Church was dissolved 43 years later, in 1997. The **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** took over many of the Unification Church's functions.

Father Moon first turned to the Christian world, which he believed should have a central role in the work to realize such a vision. Large parts of Christian teachings coincide with his own message. At that time, he explained what he was teaching, by frequent use of Bible quotations. Many Christians then also began to follow **Father Moon**.



this name, although he never intended to establish any church.

Those who opposed him, eventually began to call the movement a sect. However, a narrow-minded, introverted sect that believes it has a monopoly on the truth, is about as far from his vision as you can get.

Because the leaders of the Christian world in Korea were not open to his message and did not cooperate with him, he decided to create his own organization.



The movement began to be called the "Unification Church", which is far easier to say than the original long name. **Sun Myung Moon** himself also began to use

The Unification Church was the first of several organizations that came into being as the movement grew



and became what we call the Unification Movement, of which the Unification Church was the

central part.

However, the Unification Church was discontinued in 1997. Then **Father Moon** declared that it had served its purpose. He claimed that the age of the different religions was over, and that we therefore no longer needed a movement that had been founded for the unification of world christianity.

The required foundation had been laid for a much larger and universal movement more in line with his original **vision**. Therefore, from the end of the 90s, he started to set up many peace organizations. The **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** took over many of the tasks of the Unification Church. In many countries, e.g. in the USA and Japan, people continued, often for purely practical reasons, to use the name Unification Church long after 1997.

The **Family Federation** sees the family as the key to world peace. If there is harmony in the family, there can also be harmony in society and the world in general.

So the name, and also the times we live in, have changed, but the goal is still the same: to create a big global family under **God**, where all people become like brothers and sisters in a world of freedom, peace, happiness and love.



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