

## **Congressman, State Department Official, and Rev. In Jin Moon Call for United Effort to Stop Religious Intolerance**

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*Suzan Johnson Cook, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, addressed the audience.*

In a town in which politics always trumps religion, the embattled religions raised their voices in a crowd at an unusual day-long conference in Washington, D.C., on July 13, 2011, and members of Congress and the Obama Administration heard their call. “Stop Religious Persecution Now!” was the banner for a meeting of 12 minority religious groups that reported their struggles with persecution and got tips on pitching their stories to the press from editors, reporters and public policy experts meeting at the Washington Times’ Arbor Ballroom.

Suzan Johnson Cook, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom told the gathering, “I look forward to partnering with you. I want to hear from each of you, and you can be sure that I am an ambassador that you can reach.” “Let every person round the globe enjoy religious freedom so that every person has the freedom to believe or not to believe,” she added.



*Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Florida Republican, pledged to be available to faith groups battling persecution.*

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Florida Republican, told the group, “Religious persecution has personally touched me. My godmother was forced out of Turkey because of religious beliefs. I will always be there for you, I promise you, because this is an issue very dear to my heart. That is one of the reasons I got into public service and into the International Religious Freedom Caucus of Congress.” Rep. Bilirakis commended the Washington Times for its coverage of religious groups under repression. “I commend the Washington Times for being a consistent, singular voice for those who are voiceless,” he said.

Sponsored by the Washington Times Foundation and the Universal Peace Federation, both founded by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon of Korea, the conference heard from Hindus, Orthodox Greeks, Muslim Uigurs from China, Sikhs, Christian representatives from China, Egypt, and Pakistan, Muslims, Scientologists, Bahai’s, and Ahmidyya Muslims. The Washington Times reported the conference in their online edition the same day. Several speakers urged reauthorization and strengthening of the International Religious Freedom Act, a bill proposed before Congress by Rep. Frank R. Wolf, Virginia Republican, that would give more power to the State Department to advocate for religious freedom abroad.



*Rev. In Jin Moon shares her father's teachings of practicing the philosophy of living for the sake of others in our daily lives.*

### **Rev. In Jin Moon Shines Light on Forced-Conversion Scandal**

The plight of persecuted Unificationists in Japan who have been abducted and subjected to forced conversion was reported by the Rev. In Jin Moon, president and CEO of the Unification Church USA who gave the keynote address during the luncheon.

“In Japan 4,300 of our [Unificationist] brothers and sisters have been incarcerated and have suffered mental, emotional, physical and many times sexual abuse. Our members in Japan who have been abused and silenced over the years need to be heard. People should be allowed to exercise their faith in a way they choose to, but in Japan these freedoms are being denied to our brothers and sisters. So we have come together to make our presence known on Capitol Hill and to make known what is taking place, and I know that the good senators and the good representatives of Capitol Hill are beginning to listen,” she said.

“Through interactive discussion we can continue the good fight and put an end to this faith-breaking issue that is robbing families of their right to happiness, to exercise their liberties, and to be dignified citizen of Japan,” she continued. “With this issue of faith-breaking that’s taking place in Japan, when we come together and exert the right kind of pressure on Capitol Hill, we can become a bastion of faith that can safeguard the world from religious persecution and social injustice and atrocities of all kinds.”

Rev. Moon recounted her own painful high-school years when she was daily ridiculed as a “Moonie,” a “Chink,” and a “brain-washed Zombie,” by students who blew wads of paper at her and her brothers and sisters.

“As someone who grew up in the late 70s and early 80s, I saw firsthand how cruel and unjust religious persecution can be. There were numerous occasions where I was belittled at school. I was something ugly, something sub-human. Yet I remember my father saying to me: ‘Hold your head high, know that you are a daughter of God. Find your dignity in yourself in knowing that you are a divine creature. Your life has a divine purpose: to love and to be loved. So with every spitball that lands on your face, say, ‘thank you god,’ and receive it for every man and woman and child that has suffered from religious persecution.’”

### **What My Father Taught Me**

“My father has taught us that people want a world of peace. But he said that you cannot begin to contemplate the meaning of the word peace if we do not understand love. We are all divine creatures in that we were born to love and to be loved. That's what makes us human, that's what makes us beautiful children of god. So my father's teachings are very simple: we have to learn to love each other. We cannot talk about peace when we're talking about tolerance. Do we talk about tolerance when we share our love to our families? I certainly don't tell my children, ‘I want to tolerate you for the rest of my life.’ I tell them, ‘I love you.’ Imagine if we can encourage all the different faiths to look at us as brothers and sisters, as one family that has the responsibility to safeguard each other in allowing others to pursue their life of faith.

“I believe differences in opinion are vital to a healthy and dynamic debate, but at the same time we need to understand what it means to practice true love, to practice the philosophy of living for the sake of others. It is my hope that with an event such as today, with so many great men and women represented, we can continue to fight the good fight and claim the victory for a lot of people who have no voice in Japan. We can put the right kind of pressure on the Japanese government to make them do something about it.

“If we can truly inherit the understanding that we are God's children and that we are here to exercise true love in our lives, we need to encourage, empower and support each other in our efforts. We should have healthy debates, and be looking towards being the kind of people who practice living for the sake of others.

“We have all been called to do something great, to be of service to each other. If we're going to be great parents, we need to start by changing ourselves. The world of peace really starts within ourselves. The world of peace starts with the decision to do something about it [hatred].”



*Rev. Luonne Rouse introduced Rev. Moon saying, "Rise and get on board this love train, because it is not a train that is just here in Washington D.C., but it is a train that is bound for glory."*

Rev. Luonne Rouse, a United Methodist pastor from New York and a leader of the American Clergy Leadership Conference introduced Rev. Moon with the following words: "We have come today to see that we are one people and one world with one love. I know that the words that I hear from the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon are words of truth, and that we are moving toward a time when all of God's children, regardless of race, creed, or color, are going to live together in harmony because God has destined it to be so. The sea of faith that inspired him to bring together the HSA-UWC and a new generation that acknowledged him as the father, is the same sea of faith that brought him to recognize that Rev. In Jin Moon with her Lovin' Life Ministries, is the leader who's going to take this generation to another level. This is a ministry that has brought about the love train that is going to Malaysia, Russia, India, Turkey, Japan, a train that's going to be about religious freedom, that's going to have on board all the love and understanding of the Holy Spirit. What I want you to do today is rise and get on board this love train, because it is not a train that is just here in Washington D.C., but it is a train that is bound for glory."



*Joshua Cotter, Ben Lorentzen, and Joe Young of Sonic Cult performed the songs, "While My Guitar Gently Weeps," by George Harrison, and "I Shall Be Released," by Bob Dylan.*