

Rev. Sun Myung Moon dies at age 92

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SEOUL, Sept. 2 (UPI) -- The Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church, died early Monday in South Korea. He was 92.

Moon died at 1:54 a.m. at a hospital at the Cheong Pyeong church complex outside of Seoul of complications arising from pneumonia that led to the shutdown of other organs, including his kidneys, a church official said.

"I lament the passing of my father but I know that his spirit and legacy will live on," said Hyun Jin Moon, also known as Preston Moon, the Rev. Moon and Mrs. Moon's oldest living son. "His vision has inspired so many forward-thinking people to see beyond the barriers that divide humanity -- be they national, racial, or, most of all, religious.

"Sadly, some people, including many of his followers, see him merely as the founder of yet another church. Yet to me and countless others whom he has touched, his vision is so much greater than that. I will continue to work to give meaning and substance to his legacy."

Sun Myung Moon was born Feb. 20, 1920, in what is now North Pyongan province, North Korea, and established his first church in 1954. His following grew to an estimated 7 million members and he led large gatherings in which he conducted mass weddings for as many as 2,000 couples.



Moon was also involved with a series of charitable and business interests. Those include the Universal Peace Federation and the Peace Cup soccer tournament. The Unification Church also became involved with a series of business interests, which included founding The Washington Times newspaper; the Tongil Group, a South Korean chaebol (a chaebol is a Korean global conglomerate); and, for a time, ownership of United Press International.

Sun Myung Moon is survived by his wife Hak Ja Han Moon and 11 children.

Preston Moon is chairman of the UCI Group, which currently owns UPI.