

UNIFICATION CHURCH FOUNDER MOON DIES

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon died Sept. 3, two weeks after being hospitalized with pneumonia. He was 92.

In mid-August, the founder of the Unification Church “felt ill suddenly and was hospitalized in Seoul in ‘grave condition,’” according to a CNN report. The news article also stated Moon was “unconscious” and “breathing through a respirator.” The initial prognosis was described as “very critical” and gave him “only a 50% chance of survival.”

A few days before his death, his condition worsened and he was moved from Seoul’s St. Mary’s Hospital to a church-owned hospital near his home in Gapyeong County. He is survived by his wife, Hak Ja Han, and 10 children. He is preceded in death by three sons.

Upon his death, the Unification Church held a 13-day mourning period. The funeral was held Sept. 15 in a packed stadium at the church’s headquarters in Gapyeong. He was buried at Cheongseong Mountain, where his home is located. More than 30,000 church members attended the elaborate funeral, which equaled the pomp and circumstance of any head of state. Thousands of mourners flew to South Korea from overseas for the funeral. During the mourning period, prior to the funeral service, more than 150,000 came to the stadium passing by a massive portrait of Moon to offer their last respects to the self-proclaimed messiah.

Moon founded the Unification Church in Seoul in May 1954. He claimed that Jesus Christ’s mission to save mankind was thwarted when He was killed on the cross. Moon further claimed that in 1936 Jesus personally commissioned him to undertake and complete the mission of physical salvation for mankind. This is said to happen through devotion to Moon and his wife.

While religion was Moon’s fundamental ambition, the church acquired numerous businesses, including hotels, newspapers, fisheries, sports teams, universities, and hospitals. Some of the business concerns were lucrative; others were not. According to the Associated Press, “One expert said the church’s business prospects appear brighter than its religious future.” The Rev. Hyung-jin Moon, the youngest U.S.-born of Moon’s sons, was appointed to the church’s top leader position in April 2008 when he was 28 years old. Unification officials are tight-lipped about the exact worth of the entirety of church businesses, merely describing them as a multibillion-dollar enterprise.

Moon savored political relationships on several fronts. He developed associations with a number of conservative U.S. leaders, including Presidents George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Richard Nixon. He also cultivated ongoing friendships with the late North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il, and Kim’s father, the country’s founder, Kim Il Sung. In 2004, more than a dozen U.S. legislators were part of a “coronation service” for Moon and his wife that declared Moon to be the savior of mankind. Following the event, those leaders maintained that they had been deceived as to the true purpose of the gathering.

For years prior to Moon’s death, internal conflict amongst many of the church’s business entities has existed. Those keeping a close eye on the church suggest that discord may now widen and accelerate. The Unification Church boasts a worldwide membership of 3 million members. However, non-members who are familiar with the church claim the number of followers at no more than 100,000.

—MKG

MORMONS CONTINUE TO ELIMINATE CULT DESIGNATION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to make progress in gaining acceptance and credibility, not only with the American public but within Christian circles. The candidacy for the U.S. presidency of Mitt Romney, a prominent LDS church member, has further eroded the Mormon church’s status of “cult” in both evangelical and charismatic camps.

Christianity Today magazine published on its website an article with the headline: “After Romney Meeting, Billy Graham Site Scrubs Mormon ‘Cult’ Reference.” The news story, which was posted exactly three weeks before the national election, revealed, “The Billy Graham Evangelical Association removed language labeling Mormonism a ‘cult’ from its website after the famed preacher met with Republican nominee Mitt Romney last week and pledged to help his presidential campaign. The removal came after a gay rights group reported that the ‘cult’ reference remained online even after Graham all but endorsed Romney, a Mormon, last Thursday (Oct. 11).”

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possible because man was created with the same kind of reason which is expressed in the world in which man lives. For example, if a man was going to translate a book written in a foreign language, he must know the language of the author who wrote the book. If he did not know the author's language he would not be able to translate the book into his native language. It is the same with the kind of reason man was created with and the kind of reason expressed in creation by the Creator.

Biblical psychology will seek to understand man, not in terms of human relations, but in terms of the image of God. The psychologies built on evolution reduce man from a creature made in the image of God to an animal evolved by chance, out of chaos and nothingness. Many believers argue against modern psychology on the basis that it attributes man's behaviors to a plethora of drives and instincts over which he has no control. Christians rightly contend man is not at the mercy of drives and instincts, but is responsible and accountable. It is certainly true that modern psychology does not allow for responsibility, but it is not because of out-of-control drives and overwhelming impulses. The psychologies leave no room for responsibility because it lifts man out of a creation context. Man, made in the image of God, is immersed in an evolutionary scenario where every aspect of his personality has come from chance, chaos, and nothingness. Man cannot be responsible to nothingness. He can only be responsible if he is a creature of God. Man as a creation by God is the only option to man as a creation from nothingness.

—DMT

NEWS UPDATES

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Graham posted on his ministry's website a statement announcing the meeting which took place at the evangelist's home in Montreat, N.C., and which stated in part, "It was an honor to meet and host Gov. Romney in my home today, ... What impresses me even more than Gov. Romney's successful career are his values and strong moral convictions. ... It was a privilege to pray with Gov. Romney — for his family and our country."

Ken Barun, chief of staff for the Graham organization told CNN in a statement that, "Our primary focus at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has always been promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We removed the information from the website because we do not wish to participate in a theological debate about something that has become politicized during this campaign."

In Charismatic circles, self-proclaimed modern-day prophet Rick Joyner told viewers of the Rev. Jim Bakker's Sept. 24 broadcast that a prophecy "supposedly

attributed to Joseph Smith" stated that at a time when "the U.S. Constitution would hang by a thread" that "the Lord was going to raise up a Mormon president to save our Constitution." Joyner went on to say, "And who knows, maybe this was one of those true prophecies."

Right Wing Watch, a website describing itself as a "project of People For the American Way dedicated to monitoring and exposing the activities of the right-wing movement," targeted Joyner's comments and provided a link to its YouTube posting of his remarks as well as a link to Bakker's own website featuring the entire broadcast. The RWW website also noted that Joyner agreed "with Bakker that the differences between Mormonism and Christianity are merely minor ones."

In November, Republican nominee Romney lost his bid for the presidency to President Barack Obama. Despite his loss, the LDS church still was victorious by gaining ground in its ongoing effort to further shed its cult image.

—MKG

POWER STRUGGLE AT TBN REVEALED

The family rifts amidst the leadership of the Trinity Broadcasting Network have snowballed to the point that the local newspaper is describing it as "nuclear family warfare." Brittany Koper, granddaughter of the network's founders Paul and Jan Crouch, along with her husband, Michael, have charged family members with gross financial mismanagement and power struggles for control of the multibillion-dollar broadcasting empire. The Kopers have furnished the courts with numerous internal documents and reports to substantiate their allegations.

More recently, a 70-page declaration was filed in Orange County [California] Superior Court containing a photograph of Jan Crouch holding a letter from Paul Crouch Sr. in which it is alleged that he appointed his son Matthew to take control of the broadcasting ministry after his death. Matthew Crouch is uncle to Koper and younger brother of Koper's father, Paul Crouch Jr. Matthew is a prime target fixed in the crosshairs of the Kopers' charges.

According to a declaration by Michael Koper, the photo was taken in September 2011 when Paul Crouch Sr. "was in the hospital suffering from congestive heart failure," the *Orange County Register* reported. "Apparently, Matthew Crouch and Jan Crouch were celebrating what they believed was Paul Crouch Sr.'s impending death and Matthew Crouch's promotion to president of TBN that would subsequently occur," the newspaper further reported Koper as saying.