

News and Current Events :: The Unholy Alliance Between Rev. Moon and Christian Clergy

The Unholy Alliance Between Rev. Moon and Christian Clergy - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/11/15 11:25

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Central United Community Church stands on Chicago's South Side as a storefront sanctuary, serving the needy and spiritually hungry who pass through its doors. The modest church has worn wooden pews and a fiery pastor preaching from a pulpit, but missing is Christianity's most powerful symbol: the cross.

Rev. Joseph McAfee took down the cross and buried it, inspired by the teachings of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the controversial Korean spiritual leader. "If you stop at the cross, you're just preaching pain," said McAfee, who keeps an autographed picture of the Unification Church founder in his office.

The cross may be a symbol of pain to McAfee, but its removal from his church is emblematic of something more—a growing and potent alliance between Moon and black religious leaders across the country.

The unlikely partnership, known as the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC), represents the latest chapter in Moon's remarkable evolution from convicted felon and alleged cult leader to influential religious and political figure with ties to Rev. Jerry Falwell and former President George H.W. Bush.

Nationwide, organizers say, thousands of pastors attend monthly prayer breakfasts where they praise Moon and his wife as "Father and Mother Moon." Many have taken expenses-paid overseas trips, including one under way in Japan, Korea and Europe.

And dozens of Chicago-area ministers such as McAfee either have taken down their crosses or participated in those ceremonies. Moon's people, in fact, see Chicago as the model for national growth of the religious alliance.

Moon's outreach to largely Baptist and Pentecostal clergy thrives despite a doctrine that states he is the Second Coming of the Messiah and that Jesus Christ failed to complete the mission God sent him to do.

The ACLC attracts primarily black clergy even though Moon envisions creating a new human family where his interracial wedding ceremonies eventually will produce a single race that is all "yellow."

As Moon put it in a 1991 sermon: "Little by little the color of black people will gradually become lighter."

While the conference is promoted as a bridge between races and faiths, it also has become a marriage of convenience for Moon and African-American religious leaders.

For the black pastors, the benefits include prestige, a powerful ally and gifts, including watches worth \$12,000. For Moon, the alliance brings credibility in poor urban communities, a new audience for his theology and political leverage.

"The assumption is that he's just doing it to curry favor and buy credibility," said Rev. Phillip Schanker, spokesman for the Unification Church, formally known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. "That's not what I've seen."

Although some African-American pastors courted by Moon's followers contend the network is being manipulated to advance his agenda, those closer to the movement defend their thinking—even if they don't declare Moon as the Second Coming.

"No. I already have a messiah. That's Jesus Christ," McAfee said. "I don't need another messiah. But I do need a friend."

The ACLC was born on a Korean mountaintop in May 2000. Moon invited the 120 founding members on an expenses-paid trip where he christened the pastors, presented each with a diamond-studded watch and said they were on a "mission to become one with the True Parents," as Moon and his wife are known in the Unification Church.

Those on the trip included two men who are leaders of the ACLC in Chicago, Rev. T.L. Barrett Jr. and Rev. A. Harold White. With their help, the leadership conference has become Moon's main vehicle in the black community to help unite the world's religions under his philosophy of Godism—in effect, a worldwide theocracy.

"The wall between church and state as it's understood now would not be there," Schanker said.

To finance his grand vision, Moon and his followers have developed a sprawling business empire that includes The New Yorker Hotel, The Washington Times and a seafood conglomerate, True World Group Inc., that supplies sushi-grade fish to thousands of restaurants in the U.S.

In launching the ACLC, Moon has spent several million dollars, according to the Unification Church.

Moon's unorthodox theology is spelled out in the sacred text of the Unification Church, the Divine Principle. Under Moon's interpretation of the Bible, Jesus failed to complete God's mission for him, to marry and create perfect children.

Moon, 86, also teaches that he and his second wife are the "True Parents" of a new spiritual lineage born without original sin.

The ultimate purpose of Moon's famous mass weddings is to carry out his vision of a world in which most people will have Asian blood. "The Pacific era will come," Moon said in a 1993 speech. "The Asian culture and people will become more dominant."

In explaining Moon's philosophy about race, Schanker wrote in an e-mail: "The emphasis is not on diluting the races, per se, but the transcending of race."

Moon's controversial views don't faze his supporters in the African-American religious community.

"If we could live under the hard oppressive rule of the white man, certainly I have no problem with the Koreans," said Washington, D.C.-based pastor Bishop C. Phillip Johnson. "If God so chooses to raise them up to be the lead and to bring about real true religious and racial harmony, then I have no problem following him."

Some African-American pastors find take-down-the-cross ceremonies meaningful because of this country's history of racism and brutality.

McAfee, who has traveled on Moon's trips but has not received a watch, equated the image of Jesus on the cross to photos of African-American men being lynched in the last century.

"I know we need to teach about slavery. We need to know about that. But do we have to show those pictures of black men hanging from trees?" asked McAfee, who took down the cross Easter weekend in 2003.

"Why would you want to come to church every Sunday and look at a dead man killed on a piece of wood?"

Moon respects the cross but believes it "has become a symbol throughout history of intolerance for Jews and Muslims," Schanker said.

Persuading ACLC pastors to act on such beliefs is evidence of how Moon's movement has matured since he was incarcerated in the early 1980s after a tax-fraud conviction.

At the time, the Unification Church was likened to a cult, in part because it built large compounds where members lived together. Since then, Moon's followers have abandoned mass-conversion efforts and living in communes in favor of churches whose members reside in their own homes.

"The movement has normalized and lost the rough edges that made many families fearful for adult kids being involved," said Anson Shupe, a sociology professor at Indiana University-Purdue University who has studied Moon for nearly three decades. "Nobody even bothers to accuse Moon of brainwashing anymore."

In the black community, the ACLC has become the most prominent example of Moon's inroads into the American mainstream.

At the conference's monthly Chicago prayer breakfast in September, dozens of mostly black pastors bowed their heads as a Japanese soprano performed a haunting rendition of "Amazing Grace." After that serene opening, the gathering ended with a rousing sermon and a burst of applause and praise for "Father Moon."

Rev. Levy Daugherty, ACLC executive director, estimated that 1,200 Chicago-area religious leaders are members of the conference, but he would not provide a list.

Overall membership, he said, is 6,000, three-fourths of whom are black.

Daugherty and other conference leaders say they have no intention of converting black pastors to Unificationism. Still, some ACLC pastors look to the Divine Principle for inspiration in crafting their sermons—even if they don't overtly credit Moon as a source.

"I can use it and never have to mention Rev. Moon's name," said Rev. A. Harold White, senior pastor of True Light Church Baptist on the South Side and a local organizer for the leadership conference.

Like other pastors, White said he doesn't feel obligated to embrace the entire doctrine of the Unification Church. "It's a smorgasbord that you can choose what you agree with and what you don't."

In cultivating these alliances, the ACLC hopes to reshape Moon's controversial image.

"With a large membership base, we will change the public perception of our Founder Moon," ACLC leaders wrote earlier this year in an internal summary of the group's objectives. "We will be able to influence public policy decisions among our state legislators and the U.S. Congress. Even Government officials would have to listen to the voice of the ACLC. It is the voice of the prophet to the king."

The church's agenda, however, concerns some of those wooed by Moon and his followers.

Rev. Hycel Taylor, a former faculty member at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, went on free Unification Church trips to Israel and Korea and still wears the \$12,000 gold-plated watch that Moon gave him.

Taylor said he has privately cautioned Unification Church leaders about their attempts to win favor in the black community using "cheap trinkets" that he said have played a disturbingly important role in the development of the ACLC.

"It's not a message I think they like to hear," said Taylor, former pastor of the historic Pilgrim Baptist Church on the South Side, "but I've personally warned Unification leaders of abusing my people and our communities."

Still, Taylor continues to participate in the Moon-funded overseas trips because, he said, he does share some of Moon's ideals and goals. Taylor is among the group of about 20 Chicago pastors from the ACLC currently on such a trip to Asia and Europe.

Other African-American pastors are stunned that fellow ministers would associate with Moon and what one called his "anti-Christian" theology.

"I mean what is going on here? Taking down the cross from your church? I just don't understand people that would do that," said Bishop Ocie Booker, head of the Church of God in Christ in Illinois.

Booker said he was courted to join the ACLC, but was never told the group was affiliated with Moon. He said he became suspicious when he pressed Moon representatives for documents on their doctrinal beliefs and they didn't provide any.

"One of their people said to me one time that 'we agree with all religions,'" Booker recalled. "Well, I can't agree with that. You can't agree with every form of religion and be right. You have to take a stand for something."

(<http://www.ajc.com/living/content/living/faithandvalues/stories/2006/10/18/1022SLJESUS.html>) Was Jesus rich?

(Moderator note: Shrank the above url to keep the page from going 'wide')

Re: The Unholy Alliance Between Rev. Moon and Christian Clergy, on: 2006/11/15 11:49

"Christian" clergy?? Christian by name only... they can feed the poor all day long if they wish... it doesn't make them Christian.

What foolishness and deception.

Krispy

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/11/15 13:22

What's even sadder is that the father of modern prophecy Tim Lahaye, and his wife have long been involved with Rev. Moon, in supporting him or receiving money from him.

Re: its deeper than we think, on: 2006/11/15 16:26

<http://www.cuttingedge.org/News/n1990.cfm>

I'm trying to get a list of who is in this thing:

but I found this:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/specials/chi-0604sushi-1-story,0,3736876.story>

why is this apostate bedeviling my beloved city?

oh Lord have mercy...read this!! Its all REALLY deep and dark...I was just complaining about the Council on National Policy (and Ted Haggard's involvement in it....guess who else is tied up with this?

<http://www.seekgod.ca/cnp.l.htm>

Tell ya what.....I am beginning to regard every mainstream "christian evangelical", who wears a suit and tie, as just minions of the enemy...I kid you not, they are all worshipping money and power.....

why do you think we don't have revival?

enough searching. I'm already sickened.

Come Lord Jesus, please.

(later add: <http://www.seekgod.ca/cnp.htm>)

Hey Krisp, on: 2006/11/15 16:34

click that last link below, read the whole shebang, and lemme know what you think about the great Ollie North now?

he SAYS he's a "christian".....you're probably wise in keeping in a home church tucked away into the hills.

Lord have mercy.

neil

Re: Hey Krisp, on: 2006/11/15 16:59

I'll get back to ya on the Ollie North thing. Was never a big fan. He was typical of upper brass who were gunning for a so ft chair to sit in at the Pentagon... long on politics, short on getting anything relevent done.

Krispy

amen Krisp, on: 2006/11/15 17:05

besides ole Ollie was the commander of the mothership achored in the Med during the failed "rescue" attempt during the Iranian hostage crisis.....need I say more?

Re: amen Krisp, on: 2006/11/16 7:07

Well Barlte... as Lord Acton once said:

"Every thing secret degenerates, even the administration of justice; nothing is safe that does not show how it can bear di scussion and publicity."

Krispy