

# My Strange Relationship with the Mooniverse

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HYESUNGFANCIS

Long time no see. I had hoped to keep my blog updated as I went through my year with the Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS), but work got busier, life took many twists and turns, and I just couldn't find the time to put out a post. And now I'm at the very end of the year. Whoops. I feel terrible about it, as I imagined blogging to be a powerful spiritual discipline and an engaging way to show off the brilliant work of the QVS. I apologize for those few readers who actually looked forward to my posts.



A somewhat recent picture of the Portland QVS Fellows

In all honesty, I also didn't have much to say. I started this year hoping to explore Quakerism for all that it is, and to some degree I was able to do that. I read plenty of books on Quaker theology and practice, I experienced the worship and communities within both the Liberal and Evangelical traditions, and I was able to connect even deeper to the Friends of Jesus Fellowship despite our distance. In many ways, I've discovered *what Quakerism means to*

me. But really, that hasn't been the query I've been all too concerned about the past year.

What I have been reflecting on and wrestling with kind of took me by surprise... and I've actually been blogging daily, despite my absence on this blog—I'll get to that bit later.

You see, before I was a Quaker, and before I was speaking in tongues, and waaaaay before I had come to have faith in Jesus, I was a Moonie. I was born and raised in the Unification Church; a Second Generation member. This is a topic I've always struggled talking about, even with those close to me. Sometimes my zeal against the Unification Church can be a bit overwhelming for those listening, and there have been many times where I have attempted to mold my past in the Moonies to simply be something *strange* and *funny*, but most of the time I try avoiding that conversation at all costs.



Praying at a UC event in Newark, NJ.

For those who know nothing of the Unification Church, it is a cult. Of that I am confident. As somebody who has been critically researching the Unification Church the past six years, and as somebody who was born and raised in the Movement, I am constantly surprised and appalled by the corruption I keep discovering within it. The layers of deception and tragedy really seem unending.

Long story short, the group was founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, who claimed to be the second coming of Christ and established a religious, financial, and even political empire for him and his family to live off. He displayed very real signs of being a sociopath and his rule over the Moon Kingdom was absurdly nonsensical and cruel. I bowed to his picture every

morning and believed he was the messiah. He was *my* messiah.

I have a hard time sharing about this part of my life because it is so foreign to people and often times people's reactions are disappointing. Perhaps my expectations are too high for how people should react, and perhaps sometimes I make my delivery of this part of my story a bit too light-hearted, but somehow, after being out of the church for the past six years, I still do not know how to talk about it.

After reading "In the Shadow of the Moons" by Nansook Hong, I had finally become convinced that I could no longer associate myself with the Unification Church. I had been exploring my unbelief in Moon and his teachings for a year prior to this decision but continued my affiliation with the church. I had hoped to keep my ties to the church strong despite my lack of faith. After reading Hong's account of her abusive marriage to Rev. Moon's son and finding out that much of the church's corruption is rooted in and endorsed by Moon, I knew I had to leave.

It was around that time I started writing a tumblr-blog called "How Well Do You Know Your Moon" in order to process my departure from the faith. It was meant to be an anonymous personal journal, and I didn't find it necessary to publicize or advertise what I was writing. My entries were mainly about the inconsistencies in Unification theology, but I wrote on other matters such as the forming denominations and splits in the Unification Movement. Within a few weeks, my blog was discovered by church leaders and a witch-hunt ensued. The blog has been up for six years, though we temporarily took it down for a week at one point, and dozens of people have contributed and helped build the blog to be a constant whistle-blower of church corruption and a major resource on UC history. We've had several legal threats thrown at us from the Moon family and the church but luckily such threats were empty.

There were many months, if not several years, where my moderation of the blog died down a bit and I took a more hands off approach, blogging only when most convenient or urgent. Recently, though, I have found a renewed sense of passion and have made it a goal to daily report on the injustices of the Unification Church, including fraud, human trafficking, sexual abuse, etc.

My lack of activity with the blog was my way of "getting over" my experience in the church. I was constantly told by members that I was "bitter", "resentful", and "negative," and I half-believed them. I've found that even among my friends, there is a hesitance to discuss the church we left behind. Many claimed to have moved on and feel no need to dwell in the past, and I've often shut down my own concerns and struggles because I didn't want to waste my time thinking about the church. But maybe I am bitter, resentful, and negative, and maybe that's not that bad of a thing. I'm still on the road to healing and forgiving, but I also feel that

an anger towards the viciousness of the UC is not simply *just* but also necessary to do the work needed to eradicate these injustices.

I can't continue suppressing what feels like the burden of my identity. I need to embrace it, and not just for my sake, but for those living under the oppression of the church. I carry the weight of my history, yes, but also, to some degree, I carry the weight of the history of all those who have experienced being exploited by the church, as well as the weight of those who are still being abused and exploited by the Moon empire. I have not experienced the level abuse that thousands of other Moonies have, but these people are *my people* and their stories fuel this passion for justice.

These past few months have been eye-opening, to say the least. I have reconnected with old friends from my childhood in the church and made new friends who share this experience, and I've been discovering more and more that there is a need for advocacy and for the church to be exposed fully for what it is. I've felt guilty for awhile for not engaging more with theology and Quakerism, because that is a big part of what I had in mind for this year, but I've found myself tripping into what I see as an "opening" from God. I've accepted what feels like a responsibility but also a fire in my soul.

Though I committed myself to following Jesus at sixteen years old and have long-disconnected myself from much of the Mooniverse (at least socially and organizationally), the Unification Church is still very much a part of my identity. I've come to see it, at least for myself, as a gift and calling. When I think of Christ's "mission statement" in Luke 4:18-19 —"*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor*"—I cannot help but feel that I am where I am supposed to be, or at least going in the right direction.

Soon enough my wordpress here will once again quote George Fox and I will give you an update on my QVS experience, I promise, but I felt a need to share these things and ask for prayer. I don't think anything like a profession will come out of this, but I do consider the running of my blog as a ministry. I know that this ministry is not simply about a blog and may evolve and look differently throughout my life, but I trust that the Spirit is with me in this work to bring justice to the Unification Church. I'm playing a small part in a big, scary game, but I still believe that such a call needs humility and to be nurtured in the Light. I ask for you to hold me in the Light, as I continue to discern what being prophetic with such a call looks like, and even as I sort out my own identity as an ex-UC member.

Thanks, Friends.



**For more information:**

The Fall of the House of Moon by Mariah Blake (The New Republic)

Mike Wallace interviews Nansook Hong on 60 Minutes

How Well Do You Know Your Moon