

## *The Moonies*

The Unification Church is the original and official name of this new religious movement founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The Unification Church according to Moon is the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. Despite its relatively small size compared to major cults like the Mormons, it has received considerable publicity and media attention because of its controversial beliefs and practices.

The Unification Church is founded in Korea 1954 by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. The members are often called 'Moonies', who addressed Rev. Moon as "Father" and Mrs. Moon "Mother". The controversial theology of the Unification Church is a mixture of Christian, Taoist and some oriental religious ideas that is based on Moon's book entitled "Divine Principle", which teaches that the original purpose of creation was to set up a perfect family, in a perfect relationship with God.

This was thwarted by the Fall of Man, and history is seen as a continuous attempt to restore the original plan, now said to have found its fulfillment in Reverend and Mrs. Moon, who are to raise sinless children around the world unified by the Holy Spirit.

The Unification Church teaches that marriage is essential for spiritual fulfillment, and marriage partners are sometimes chosen for members by Reverend Moon, although individuals are free to reject a chosen partner. Marriage, which takes the form of mass blessings by Reverend and Mrs. Moon, is the most important ritual of the church; it is preceded by the wine or engagement ceremony.

Moon was a South Korean industrialist who founded the Unification Church to expand his business connection although he claimed that he gave up his business after he founded the church. From 1973 he launched a major mission in the USA and elsewhere. The Unification Church has been criticized for its manipulative methods of recruiting and keeping its members. He was convicted of tax fraud in the USA 1982. Moon has allegedly been associated with extreme right-wing organizations, arms dealing and manufacturing, and connected with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

In the 1970s, the Unification Church was criticized for its methods of recruitment and alleged 'brainwashing', as well as for its business, far-right political, and anti government journalistic activities. Moon was born to Presbyterian parents in Korea in 1920. He claims that on Easter Sunday, 1936, while in prayer on a Prayer mountain, Jesus appeared to him and revealed that he had been chosen to complete the work which Jesus had begun.

This experience was the first in a series of revelatory encounters with God in which Moon states that he received new truth for a new age. The new revelations and teachings of Rev. Moon were subsequently set forth in the Divine Principle, the spiritual manual of the Moonies, first published in 1957. Moon officially established his new church in 1954 with the avowed purpose of bringing salvation to the world and initiating a truly international family.

The doctrine of the Unification Church is highly eclectic and mystical in nature. It reflects the peculiarities of Korea's religiously fertile soil and Moon's lifelong interest in spiritualistic phenomena. The presence of much biblical and Christian terminology in Unification theology has led casual observers to conclude that Moon's church is just another variant of Christianity. The Bible was widely used but always out-of-context.

However, Moon himself has admitted that his teachings are heretical from the standpoint of traditional, orthodox Christianity. He maintains that because of sectarian divisions and the inability of conventional churches to meet the needs of today's complex world, God desires to communicate a new revelation of truth which, assisted by the spirit world and the movement's loyal followers (popularly known as "Moonies"), will bring about a spiritual revolution. Such a movement will result in the true, lasting unification of the family of man and the world.

At the core of Unification theology is Moon's teaching on the fall of Adam and Eve. According to the Divine Principle, the primary theological document of the Unification Church, no one has truly understood the fall until Moon's revelation, which brought illumination and clarification to the existing biblical account.

Moonies believe that Lucifer seduced Eve and that this sexual union caused the spiritual fall of mankind as well as the fall of Lucifer. Eve then entered into a sexual relationship with Adam, which resulted in the physical fall of man.

This dual aspect of the fall, spiritual and physical, requires a restoration to God which is likewise both spiritual and physical in nature. The Unification Church teaches that God's original intention for mankind at the time of creation was for men and women to mature to perfection in God, to be united by God in a marriage centered on God's love, and to produce perfect children, thereby establishing a sinless family and ultimately a sinless world. God's plans were thwarted by the fall, however, and it then became God's desire to restore all things in order to bring about the earthly and heavenly kingdom of God.

In order to accomplish this, the Moonies teach that a Messiah, a Christ, is required. According to the Divine Principle, God finally found an obedient man, Jesus, who came in Adam's place to restore mankind. Moonies teach that Jesus was not God, but a perfect man without original sin. God's intention was for Jesus to take a perfected bride in Eve's place, marry, and produce sinless children.

The Moonies claimed that a perfect marriage is one that is matched, assigned and coordinated by God. Therefore, God appointed Moon and his wife as the divine match makers who can make perfect selection of heavenly spouses. The Unification Church has conducted mass weddings of cross-cultural couples in many countries.

For the followers of Moon, the selection process is divine rather than mystical and illogical. Ultimately, other perfect families would be formed and God's plan for the restoration of the whole of society would be accomplished. This is the essence of the Divine Principle, God's plan for the restoration of humanity, which once was hidden but, the Moonies believe, now has been made plain.

A central teaching of the Unification Church is that God's will was thwarted by the crucifixion of Jesus. Moonies teach that it was not God's original intention that Jesus die.

In this sense Jesus failed to complete his mission; he did not marry; he did not achieve physical redemption.

Because Jesus saved mankind spiritually but not physically, it is necessary, according to Unification doctrines, for another Messiah, the Lord of the Second Advent, to bring about physical redemption. This will occur during the messianic age (also referred to as the completed testament age or the new age), which is now upon the earth.

The Divine Principle implies that the Lord of the Second Advent will be born in Korea and that all religions will unite under him. The Unification Church members. Unification Church members feel that the Messiah is already on earth, although many are reticent about publicly declaring that Sun Myung Moon is that Messiah.

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