

A VIEW OF THE UNIFICATION CHURCH

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Even as the Unification Church has every right in our pluralistic society to present its claims within the religious marketplace of ideas, so do we have every right to examine and analyze those claims in the light of our own studies, experiences, and faith commitments. I deeply believe that a religious movement must be judged not only by what it teaches but also by what it does; the deed is just as important as the creed. The Unification Church is no exception.

My paper will thus examine two aspects of the Unification Church: 1) Its specific teachings about Jews and Judaism and 2) the impact and results of the Unification Church's teachings upon a significant number of its members.

In my study, ("Jews and Judaism in Reverend Moon's Divine Principle", The American Jewish Committee, December 1976) I assert that "my systematic analysis of this 536-page document (Divine Principle) reveals an orientation of almost unrelieved hostility toward the Jewish people, exemplified in pejorative language, stereotyped imagery, and sweeping accusations of collective sin and guilt. Whether he is discussing the 'Israelites' of the Hebrew Bible or the 'Jews' as referred to in writings of the New Testament period, Reverend Moon portrays their behavior as reprobate, their intention evil (often diabolical), and their religious mission as eclipsed. There are over thirty-six specific references in Divine

Principle to the Israelites of the Hebrew Bible--every one of them pejorative." Three examples citing collective faithlessness make the point: "The Israelites all fell into faithlessness (p. 315)," "All the Israelites centering on Moses fell into faithlessness" (p. 319), and "The Israelites repeatedly fell into faithlessness" (p. 343). (Emphasis added)

Unification Church supporters claim that such references actually reflect the Hebrew Bible and present a fair description of early Israelite communal life. For me, it is a limp and highly defensive argument. In all cases of alleged Israelite errors and stubbornness, the hope of redemption and atonement was always present. The Hebrew Bible credits the people with the ability to repent. Divine Principle seeks to discredit the ancient Israelites in order to transfer God's heritage to another people. Incidentally, the words "faithless" and "faithlessness" nowhere appear in the Hebrew Bible.

In similar fashion, Divine Principle records some sixty-five specific examples and references reflecting the attitudes and behavior of the Jewish people towards Jesus and its role in his crucifixion--again, every one of them is hostile and anti-Jewish. A few examples will suffice: "...due to the Jewish people's disbelief in Jesus, all were destined to hell" (p. 146), ..."we can see that Jesus' crucifixion was the result of the ignorance and

disbelief of the Jewish people... (p. 145)", "As a matter of fact, Satan confronted Jesus, working through the Jewish people, centering on the chief priests and scribes who had fallen faithless, and especially through Judas Iscariot, the disciple who had betrayed Jesus (p. 357)", "Nevertheless, due to the Jewish people's rebellion against him, the physical body of Jesus was delivered into the hands of Satan as the condition of ransom for the restoration of the Jews and the whole of mankind back to God's bosom; his body was invaded by Satan (p. 510)". The last two statements, linking the Jews to Satan, go beyond even the infamous deicide charge-- "Christ killer"--that has been hurled for so long against the Jewish people.

Apologists for the Unification Church claim that the Divine Principle passages dealing with this controversial subject have only indicted the "Jewish priests and leaders", not the people. Yet the record speaks otherwise: the "Jewish people" in their collectivity are implicated time and time again in Divine Principle. The four examples cited here are illustrative of many other selections.

The anti-Jewish thrust of this theological document carries forth into an interpretation of Jewish history and of the current status of Jews and Judaism. There are nearly thirty such references and all are hostile, generally reflecting the worst aspects of traditional Christian displacement theology, and viewing the persecution

of the Jews across the ages as punishment for their sins. Thus "Due to the Israelites' faithlessness, the Jewish nation was destroyed (p. 431)." "God's heritage has been taken away from the Jewish people (p. 519)," and the "chosen nation of Israel has been punished for the sin of rejecting Jesus and crucifying Him (p. 226)." Reverend Moon brings the readers up to modern times:

Jesus came as the Messiah; but due to the disbelief of and persecution by the people he was crucified. Since then the Jews have lost their qualification as the chosen people and have been scattered, suffering persecution through the present day. (p. 147)

Indeed, Moon declared in 1971, "By killing one man, Jesus, the Jewish people had to suffer for 2,000 years. Countless numbers of people have been slaughtered. During the second World War, 6 million people were slaughtered to cleanse all the sins of the Jewish people from the time of Jesus." In Moon's linkage of the Nazi holocaust to the Jewish rejection of Jesus we have the total obscenity, the wicked result of a system of indemnity gone wild. This statement is a murderous update of the ancient malevolent deicide charge.

But there is more. Last December, the New York Times carried a full page advertisement signed by Reverend Moon in which Moon notes that if only the Jews had been members of the Unification Church they would have been spared Hitler's actions. So, even in their death, the 6,000,000 slaughtered Jews are treated as theological pawns to be moved about on a Unification Church chessboard.

Thus, in Divine Principle and in other Unification Church

documents, we are confronted with over 130 examples of an unrelenting litany of anti-Jewish teachings. Nowhere in Divine Principle does Reverend Moon acknowledge the continuing validity and authenticity of Jews and Judaism. From Abraham until the present day, Jews are seen as a people devoid of any genuine faith and spiritual qualities. "The inner contents are corrupt (p. 532)", Moon says of Judaism. He depicts the Jewish people as collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus as allies of Satan. Jews have been replaced by a "second Israel" (who, interestingly enough, must soon be replaced by the "third Israel", the followers of Reverend Moon). Furthermore, the Jews have lost God's "heritage" and are still being "punished" for their many sins. The Unification Church's basic teaching document is a feculent breeding ground for fostering and fomenting anti-Semitism.

The Unification Church's response to my charges of anti-Semitism blandly noted that "Because there are almost no Jews in Korea, there was no danger of a careless phrase (sic!) abetting anti-Semitism as it might in other countries..." I believe I have shown that the anti-Semitism in Divine Principle is more than a "careless phrase", and a total insensitivity to the Jewish people is patently clear in this tepid defense. Apparently it is all right to malign a group that does not dwell in one's midst.

One must ask why the Unification Church has the need to trans-

mit such hostility and anti-Semitism. In its announced attempt to build a new religious order, the Church states that "When a brighter light appears, the mission of the old one fades. Today's religions have failed to lead the present generation out of the dark valley of death into the radiance of life, so there must now come a new truth that can shed a new light." (p. 10). But as a student of religious history, and as a Jew, I must ask "What does the Unification Church intend to do, first, in a theological way and, then, in a political way with those religious communities who have seen the "brighter light" but who have chosen to remain faithful to their "mission of the old?" Historically, Jews and Judaism have often stood alone against many of the world's "brighter lights", and many times the price for such action was death. That is why I, unlike some other observers of the Unification Church, am appalled and deeply concerned about the extant anti-Semitism in the Church's teachings. Although it claims to wish to unite the human family in love and truth, the Unification Church continues to transmit in its sacred text and in other writings the same teachings about Jews and Judaism that have historically resulted in expulsions, pogroms, and murder.

Surely, we have the right to demand that the Unification Church, which professes a "New Adam", a new life, not teach the same pathological untruths that earlier forms of Christianity did. If the Unification Church truly seeks to heal the human family, then its first obligation is to prevent the spread of anti-Semitism in all

its forms. What is needed now is a complete revision of Divine Principle that eliminates every vestige of anti-Jewish teaching. No religion can bring harmony and peace to the world if its own soul is corrupted and filled with the poison of anti-Semitism.

And what about the non-Jewish world that does not accept the "new light" of the Unification Church mission? Does the Unification Church, which uses the principle of religious pluralism to justify its right to exist itself, allow for pluralism of belief? The statements of Reverend Moon are not encouraging. In an article in the New York Daily News of November 30, 1975, it is reported that Reverend Moon made the following statement at a private gathering:

So from this time, every people and organization that goes against the Unification Church will gradually come down or drastically come down and die. Many people will die--those who go against our movement.

So much for the creed of the Unification Church; now let us look at the deed. What is the impact of the teachings of the Church on its members? How are the ideals of improving the world, of uniting mankind, carried out in the concrete actions of the Church and its followers?

I am convinced that the Unification Church uses dishonest recruiting techniques, hiding behind nearly seventy front groups, of which "Collegiate Association for the Research of Principle," "Creative Community Project", and "New Education Development Systems,

Inc." are three of the best known. Recruiters never identify themselves with Reverend Moon or the Unification Church until the potential member has already made a commitment. By the time the recruit realizes what he is really involved in, he is often so confused and disoriented from intensive weekend retreats, long seminars, sleeplessness, constant frenzied activity which is tightly supervised, non-nutritious food, and "love-bombing" that he may not have the will or strength to refute the demands of the group at that point. The skillful Unification Church members play on the recruit's guilt, forcing him to renounce and remove himself from his past life, including job, school, and family. They weaken his identity, then, with strong guilt-oriented and approval-oriented sanctions, remake his identity according to Unification Church theology and role models.

After his initiation the new recruit is frequently put to work in what is called a "Mobile Fund-Raising Team." He may work up to 18 hours a day, 7 days a week, collecting funds from the public, carrying out what is termed "heavenly deception" upon a generous and unsuspecting public. The new Unification Church member usually lies by stating that the collected funds are for various social welfare projects when, in fact, the large amounts of money go directly to Reverend Moon's New York City bank to support the Church's many real estate and media operations. Much of it goes also to support an increasingly luxurious life style for Reverend Moon and

his chief aides, while the new Church members live in almost abject poverty, without privacy, often without adequate medical or dental care, and without proper nourishment. Berkeley psychologist, Dr. Margaret Singer, has interviewed over 250 former Unification Church members. Her most shocking finding was the "psychological turning off of the hormonal process." She has seen "repeated cases of menstruation ceasing in women and of men's beards ceasing to grow." Dr. Singer concludes: "These young adults have narrowed down their thought processes, constricted their vocabulary ...and wouldn't let their negative feelings show because of extreme pressure from those around them."

The Unification Church's theology and ideology has produced some disturbing actions among its members. Ellen Galligan remembers her MFT speeding across Michigan on a remote highway where one might pass another vehicle perhaps only once an hour. One early morning they passed an accident and they saw a "person flagging us down. Another man was standing there with blood all over his face. Our driver woke up our team leader, who said, 'Don't stop. Keep on going.' You see we had to drive the whole night to get to the city the next morning for fund raising, and it was more important to keep going. There was never any concern about other people. I guess we just considered it was idemnity for salvation for them." In case after case, it is clear that the Unification Church's zealous preoccupation with raising money transcends every other activity, even

one of stopping on a lonely highway to assist an injured person.

Tony Gillard, a former Church member, "worked the ghettos. I would go in a migrant camp and take the last dollar from a poor family," he says. "I did the same thing on Indian reservations." Gillard, a black, was once brought before Rev. Moon for special praise because of his outstanding fund raising ability. "The Unification Church had its 'house nigger'", Gillard notes, and he now considers the Church racist.

The record of forced separations of parents from children, monitored telephone conversations, intercepted mail, and even the threat of violence is now too well documented over and over again by former Church members to be dismissed as the usual "sour grapes" that any former group member may feel. The following story has been repeated by other Church members.

A CARP leader became involved in a serious automobile accident because of sheer fatigue (a common condition among many members). Faced with the possible loss of his legs and a serious operation, the Unification Church "Family" felt it could no longer tend to the young man's needs. The Church called his parents, the "agents of Satan", and they came to help their son. The Unification Church's theology of love and caring apparently does not translate itself into the real world of accidents, illnesses, and medical operations.

Why do I deal with specific names and cases? What do they have to do with the cosmic theological claims of the Unification Church? I believe a clear pattern has emerged that shows the Unification Church, in its actual practice, to be an organization that is obsessed with raising money by means of "heavenly deception", and through the efforts of thousands of drone-like members.

Earlier in this paper I called for the Unification Church to completely revise all its teaching materials in order to eradicate every vestige of anti-Semitism. I have two additional proposals to make. I urge that the Unification Church open its financial records to the general public and submit them to an independent audit so that the Church's members as well as others can clearly learn how the Unification Church's funds are raised and how they are spent. Only in this way can it begin to gain the credibility it so obviously and desperately seeks. Only in this way can the serious questions of fiscal integrity be resolved. If the Unification Church seeks to participate in our pluralistic religious society, these basic steps of openness and candor are absolutely necessary. Anything less than total public disclosure will only fan the flames of doubt and suspicion, and will prevent the Unification Church from gaining the sense of public legitimacy it craves.

I would also urge that a high level "blue ribbon" commission be appointed to investigate fully the many charges of human rights violations carried out by the Unification Church against its members.

Such an independent commission would be composed of academic, legal, medical, and religious leaders who would undertake a comprehensive investigation of the Unification Church's recruiting and educational methods and practices, as well as the Church's treatment of its members. Even as we profess our deep commitment to the cause of human rights throughout the world, so, too, we must be just as vigorous in our own land in this struggle. If the Unification Church is, in fact, violating the human rights of any of its members, and if it is using coercive measures, then immediate legal remedial steps must be taken. If the alleged violations are not taking place, then I would be among the first to call for a cessation of the charges and counter-charges that are currently swirling about the Unification Church. Such charges, if false, do a grave disservice to all parties concerned.

As I indicated earlier, the Unification Church is free to proclaim its version of religious truth. It is free to press its claims and its doctrines. It is not free, however, in our society to perpetuate and transmit any form of anti-Semitism to its members. That grotesque pollution of the human spirit will continue to erode the Unification Church's foundation. It is also not free to collect sums of money in America without any public accountability or disclosure. Such a closed system as currently practiced runs counter to the spirit of our open and pluralistic society. Finally, the Unification Church is not free to violate the human rights of any

potential or actual members. This is totally unacceptable, and it flies in the face of the Church's professed doctrine of justice, love, and compassion, thus undermining the theological basis of the Church.

In Divine Principle we read: "Today's religions have failed to lead the present generation out of the dark valley of death into the radiance of life, so there must now come a new truth that can shed a new light." (p.10) That is the claim of the Unification Church, but I am deeply convinced that no new truth can emerge from a group whose teachings foster anti-Semitism, whose financial dealings are hidden from public view, and whose methods and style violate the human rights of others.