

### The Unification Church: An Overview

On Easter Sunday 1936, 16-year-old Yong Moon claims he saw a vision of Jesus Christ. “In that vision, Jesus asked him to continue the work which he had begun on earth nearly 2,000 years before. Jesus asked him to complete the task of establishing God’s kingdom on earth and bringing His peace to humankind” (Unification.org). Moon reluctantly accepted the challenge, changing his name to Sun Myung Moon (Sun Shining Moon) and eventually launching a new religion that blends Eastern faiths, occult practices and Christianity. Moon’s church began as The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity in 1954, and today is officially known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.

#### From prisoner to self-proclaimed prophet

Raised in the Korean Presbyterian Church since his family converted to Christianity in 1930, Moon says he was spiritually tested as a prisoner of war during the Japanese occupation of Korea during World War II. By the time of his release, he claims he spent nine years in the world of the occult, consorting with the spirits of Jesus, Confucius, Mohammad and Buddha. He says he confronted Satan and forced him to reveal the real reason for the fall of man, namely that Eve had sexual relations with Satan and then passed sin on to mankind through sex with Adam. By 1946 he had adopted a peculiar set of new doctrines and began to preach them boldly. That same year he was charged with sexual immorality and heresy and expelled from the Presbyterian Church. Two years later the North Korean Communists took him captive until Allied Forces liberated him in 1950. Within a few years he released *The Divine Principle*, considered the authoritative scriptures for the Unification Church (UC).

The next 50 years were characterized by divorce and charges of cruelty by his first wife; remarriage to Hak Ja Han in what the UC calls the “Marriage of the Lamb,” establishing “The True Family;” a growing following throughout Asia and in the United States; charges of psychological, spiritual and labor abuse by “Moonies;” charges of tax evasion and 18 months of incarceration in U.S. federal prison; the establishment of *The Washington Times* newspaper; a tell-all book alleging sexual infidelity, family abuse, and illegal drug use; and several family tragedies.

#### Messianic claims

Through it all, Moon preached the doctrine of his “True Family” as the model for all people, insisting that his children would reinstitute a pure and perfect godly line of humanity. He also grew emboldened in his claims to be the Messiah. In 1985 Moon revealed for the first time his grandiose self image, boasting in a public speech, “With my emergence as the victorious Lord of the Second Advent for the world, a new order has come into being.” In 2004 he and his wife were crowned by the church as the world’s “Savior, Messiah, Returning Lord and True Parents.” The event was held in the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C.; it was attended by several members of Congress and local D.C. church leaders.

The church is less prominent today than when it burst upon the U.S. scene in the 1970s, yet it retains considerable investments in U.S. property and business, and Moon continues to yield absolute authority over his followers, estimated to number between 1-2 million worldwide. There likely are fewer than 30,000 Unification members in North America.

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## Key teachings

**Authority.** The main tenets of UC doctrine are featured in a number of books, most significantly *The Divine Principle* and *Master Speaks*, a collection of Moon's sermons. Other messages by Moon also are considered authoritative. The UC makes reference to the Bible only to justify its doctrines, even though its doctrines clearly are unscriptural.

**The Fall.** Borrowing from the Yin-Yang dualism of Taoism, Moon's worldview embraces the "give and take action" of creation. God, according to the UC, is the "Universal Prime Energy" who constantly interacts with the universe in what Moon calls the "Four Fold Foundation" of human history. All creation had its origin in God, who then made a division in his creation by making Adam (masculine) and Eve (feminine) according to the "give and take action," which through sexual union would produce a divine bloodline of pure perfect children. In other words, the God-Adam-Eve-child union would complete the four fold foundation.

However, according to the UC, before Adam and Eve could produce their perfect offspring, Satan deceived Eve into having sexual intercourse with him. She then had sexual relations with Adam, resulting in a Satanically sired human bloodline through Cain. Later, with Adam, Eve bore the godly line through Abel.

**Jesus.** Because the human race was now corrupted, God must send a redeemer to restore people to their proper state. The UC says Jesus was sent to "pay indemnity" (suffer) to redeem the human race from spiritual death and to restore the pure godly bloodline of humanity. According to the UC, Jesus accomplished only spiritual redemption – the first phase – of his mission. He failed to complete the second phase (physical redemption) because he was crucified before he could marry and have children. Thus, another redeemer (Moon) would need to come about 2,000 years later to finish the divine mission. Like Jesus, he would suffer – as Moon did as a prisoner of war – but then live a long life, marry a perfect mate, produce perfect children and thus complete the "Four Fold Foundation."

**Salvation.** According to the UC, all people may receive the benefits of Moon's suffering and triumph as Messiah by joining his "true family." One completes the "divine adoption" process by joining Moon's church, pledging total obedience to him, and entering into a marriage relationship blessed by Moon to a mate personally selected by him. Over the years, Moon has conducted mass weddings with thousands of couples taking their vows before him. In most cases, the brides and grooms did not even know each other before their wedding day. To make matters more difficult, after their wedding ceremony, UC couples are required to observe 40 days of celibacy, followed by three days of consummation and then three years of celibacy.

**Financial support.** The UC uses "heavenly deception" in its fund-raising efforts. For example, healthy will solicit funds from wheelchairs. As Moon explains, lying to advance the UC is not a sin because "even God tells lies very often." The annual income from the UC in Japan, the U.S. and Europe in charitable donations is estimated at more than \$150 million.

## Comparing Christianity to the Unification Church

### What the Bible says about God:

There is one true and living God, who exists as three distinct, co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; John 10:30, 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

### What the Unification Church says about God:

God is one person only, with dual characteristics (positive/negative; male/female). He is not omniscient. God is the author of all religions; each one is a part of His attempt at restoration.

“If you want to understand what God is you have only to investigate Father [Moon] to find what God is ... Father is visible God” (*The 120 Day Training Manual*).

### What the Bible says about Jesus:

He is the virgin-born Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:35). He is eternal, the Creator, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Holy Spirit (John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-20; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-13). Jesus died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), rose physically from the dead (Matt. 12:38-40; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:4-8; 1 Peter 1:18-21) and is coming back physically and visibly one day (Matt. 24:29-31; John 14:3; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19:11-16).

### What the Unification Church says about Jesus:

Jesus was a special creation of God – a perfect man who was faithful to God and attained deity; not equal to God.

“One of my most important revelations is that Jesus Christ did not come to die” (Rev. Moon, interview in F. Sontag, *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church*, p. 154). Jesus was to restore the original relationship between God and humanity by marriage. His mission was incomplete because he was crucified before marriage. He is a spiritual, not a physical, savior.

The second coming occurred with the advent of Sun Myung Moon.

### What the Bible says about the Bible:

The Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God, and is His sole written authority for all people (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

### What the Unification Church says about the Bible:

The Bible is one of God’s revelations, replaced by Moon’s superior revelations. The Bible is largely unreliable and interpreted symbolically. The Bible is authoritative only as it is interpreted in *Divine Principle* (Moon’s basic teachings).

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**What the Bible says about sin and the solution:**

Sin is the violation of God's perfect and holy standards. All humans are sinners (Rom. 3:10) and are under the curse of sin – spiritual and physical death (Gen. 2:17, 3:17-19; Rom. 3:23). Only faith in Christ and His work on our behalf frees us from sin and its consequences (John 3:16, 5:24; Eph. 2:8-9).

**What the Unification Church says about sin and the solution:**

Human beings broke their relationship with God through disobedience and misuse of love and are now related to Satan as a result of sexual sin in the Fall. Satan seduced Eve to have sexual relations, resulting in the spiritual fall of man. Eve then had intercourse with Adam, resulting in the physical fall of man. Everyone, then, has Satanic blood and is physically “possessed” by Satan.

To be saved, followers must accept Jesus for spiritual salvation and the Lord of the Second Advent (Moon) for physical salvation. “Father [Moon] took responsibility for our sins.... Therefore, instead of me being tortured, the sinless Messiah was tortured by Satan (through the North Korean Communists)” (*The 120 Day Training Manual*).

“I have the right to forgive another's sins” (*Master Speaks*).

“Do not believe in the Christ upon the cross.... The cross is the symbol of Satan's victory” (*Master Speaks*).

“Christians believe they can simply believe in Jesus and go to church in order to go to heaven.... No one can take you there, you must do it yourself.... Our Leader (Moon) worked for the salvation of the world; you are only required to work for your own salvation. He paid the world's debt, but you pay just yourselves.... Nothing like salvation can come from the cross.... By the crucifixion, everything was denied and lost” (*Master Speaks*).

**What the Bible says about the Holy Spirit:**

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the triune Godhead (Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19-20). The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4).

**What the Unification Church says about the Holy Spirit:**

The Holy Spirit is seen variously as a female spirit (a creature) and an impersonal element or essence. “The Holy Spirit who worked with Jesus was the element of the original Eve.... [a] female element of God.... When you are speaking of the Holy Spirit, it is all right to say ‘it.’ You don't need to say ‘she.’ If it's just wind or power, we can say ‘it’” (*Master Speaks*).

**What the Bible says about life after death:**

Physical and spiritual deaths come upon all people as a consequence of their sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:1). A person becomes spiritually alive when he or she is “born again” by receiving Christ (John 3:3-6; Eph. 2:1-5). At physical death, our souls and spirits separate from our bodies [which go into the grave to await resurrection and final judgment] and enter an everlasting state of blessedness [for those born again] or torment [for those who die in their sins] (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 14:9-11, 20:10).

**What the Unification Church says about life after death:**

All humans will become divine in an earthly kingdom of God. At that time, a perfect relationship with God will be restored.

The existence of death was part of God’s original purpose in creation. “God created man to grow old and turn to dust; this would occur even if man had not fallen” (*Divine Principle*).

**What the Bible says about heaven and hell:**

Hell is a place of everlasting conscious existence, where the unbeliever is forever separated from God (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 14:9-11, 20:10). As for Heaven, all believers have God’s promise of a home in Heaven, will go there instantly upon physical death, and will return with Christ from Heaven to earth one day (Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 19:11-16).

**What the Unification Church says about heaven and hell:**

These are various spirit realms and not eternal places. Everyone will be saved in the end, even Satan and his demons. “The ultimate purpose of God’s providence of restoration is to save all mankind. Therefore, it is God’s intention to abolish Hell completely.... The Bible infers that Satan will be cast out forever. Will he be restored completely? Of course. But ... Lucifer will not be restored to his original position, but will serve in the lowest position” (*Master Speaks*).