

Unification Church and Judaism

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The relationship between the Unification Church and Judaism has been marked by some controversy. The *Divine Principle*—the main textbook of Unification Church beliefs—has been accused of containing antisemitic references. Statements by Unification Church founder and leader Sun Myung Moon that Jewish victims of the Holocaust were paying indemnity for the crucifixion of Jesus have also been described as antisemitic. Unification Church leaders, including Mose Durst and Andrew Wilson, have disputed this and have urged better relations between church members and members of the Jewish community.

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History

The Unification Church was founded in South Korea in 1954. The *Divine Principle*, written by Moon and other church members and first published in 1966, is the main textbook of Unification Church beliefs.^[1] Moon considered the *Divine Principle* to be the "Completed Testament" which followed the Old Testament and the New Testament.^[2] Its teachings are based on the Bible, but include new interpretations not found in Jewish and Christian tradition.^[3]

In 1975 Moon founded the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, New York partly in order to promote better relationships between the Unification Church and other religions, including Judaism.^[4] A rabbi was hired to teach the Old Testament, along with other professors from various Christian denominations.^{[5][6][7]}

In 1976 the American Jewish Committee released a report by Rabbi A. James Rudin which stated that *Divine Principle* contained "pejorative language, stereotyped imagery, and accusations of collective sin and guilt."^[8] In a news conference presented by the AJC and representatives of Catholic and Protestant churches, panelists stated that the text "contained over 125 anti-Jewish references." They noted Moon's public then-recent condemnation of "antisemitic and anti-Christian attitudes", and called upon him to make a "comprehensive and systematic removal" of antisemitic and anti-Christian references in the *Divine Principle* as a demonstration of good faith.^[9]

In 1977 the Unification Church issued a rebuttal to the report, stating that it was neither comprehensive nor reconciliatory, but rather had a "hateful tone" and was filled with "sweeping denunciations." It denied that the *Divine Principle* teaches antisemitism and gave detailed responses to 17 specific allegations contained in the AJC's report, stating that allegations were distortions of teaching and obscuration of real passage content or that the passages were accurate summaries of Jewish scripture or New Testament passages.^[10]

In 1984 Mose Durst, then the president of the Unification Church of the United States and himself a convert from Judaism,^[11] said that the Jewish community had been "hateful" in its response to the growth of the Unification Church, and placed blame both on the community's "insecurity" and on Unification Church members' "youthful zeal and ignorance." Rudin, then the national interreligious affairs director of the

American Jewish Committee, said that Durst's remarks were inaccurate and unfair and that "hateful is a harsh word to use."^[12] In the same year Durst wrote in his autobiography: "Our relations with the Jewish community have been the most painful to me personally. I say this with a heavy heart, since I was raised in the Jewish faith and am proud of my heritage."^[13]

In 1989 Unification Church leaders Peter Ross and Andrew Wilson issued "Guidelines for Members of The Unification Church in Relations with the Jewish People" which stated: "In the past there have been serious misunderstandings between Judaism and the Unification Church. In order to clarify these difficulties and guide Unification Church members in their relations with Jews, the Unification Church suggests the following guidelines."^[14]

Moon made some controversial statements about the Holocaust, that its victims were paying indemnity for the crucifixion of Jesus.^[15] Some commentators, including David G. Bromley, a sociologist and expert on new religious movements, have suggested that this is a reason for the Unification Church being "considered anti-Semitic."^{[16][17][18]} The Unification Church has also been criticized for saying that the First World War, the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the Cold War served as indemnity conditions to prepare the world for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.^[19]

See also

- Unification Church and Islam
- Unification Church and mainstream Christianity

References

1. "Divine Principle" (http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Divine_Principle), New World Encyclopedia
2. The Moonie Family (http://worldview.carnegiecouncil.org/archive/worldview/1978/10/3102.html/_res/id=sa_File1/v21_i010_a002.pdf), Leo Sandon Jr., 1978, *Worldview Magazine*, published by the Carnegie Council
3. Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains, By U. S. Department of the Army, Published by The Minerva Group, Inc., 2001, ISBN 0-89875-607-3, ISBN 978-0-89875-607-4, page 1–42. Google books listing (<http://books.google.com/books?id=6gDQfnMUI6gC>)
4. Yamamoto, J. I., 1995, *Unification Church*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House ISBN 0-310-70381-6 (Excerpt (http://www.zondervan.com/media/samples/pdf/0310703816_samptxt.pdf))
5. Dialogue with the Moonies (<http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/apr1978/v35-1-criticscorner3.htm>) Rodney Sawatsky, *Theology Today*, April 1978. "Only a minority of their teachers are Unification devotees; a Jew teaches Old Testament, a Christian instructs in church history and a Presbyterian lectures in theology, and so on. Typical sectarian fears of the outsider are not found among Moonies; truth is one or at least must become one, and understanding can be delivered even by the uninitiated."
6. Where have all the Moonies gone? (<http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/02/002-where-have-all-the-moonies-gone-45>) K. Gordon Neufeld, *First Things*, March 2008, "While I was studying theology, church history, and the Bible—taught by an eclectic faculty that included a rabbi, a Jesuit priest, and a Methodist minister—most of my young coreligionists were standing on street corners in San Francisco, Boston, and Miami urging strangers to attend a vaguely described dinner."
7. Helm, S. Divine Principle and the Second Advent (<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1163>) *Christian Century* May 11, 1977 "In fact Moon's adherents differ from previous fringe groups in their quite early and expensive pursuit of respectability, as evidenced by the scientific conventions they have sponsored in England and the U.S. and the seminary they have established in Barrytown, New York, whose faculty is composed not of their own group members but rather of respected Christian scholars."
8. Rudin, A. James, 1978 A View of the Unification Church (http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/7A46.PDF), American Jewish Committee Archives
9. *Sun Myung Moon Is Criticized by Religious Leaders; Jewish Patrons Enraged* (http://www.ajcarchives.org/ajc_data/files/7a37.pdf), David F. White, *New York Times*, December 29, 1976
10. Response to A. James Rudin's Report (http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/7A44.PDF), Unification

Church Department of Public Affairs, Daniel C. Holdgeiwe, Johnny Sonneborn, March 1977.

11. "Religion: Sun Myung Moon's Goodwill Blitz" (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,966889,00.html>). *Time Magazine*. April 22, 1985.
12. "Unification Church seen as persecuted", *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 15, 1984, page 4
13. To Bigotry, No Sanction (<http://www.tparents.org/library/unification/books/tbns/TBNS-09.htm>), Mose Durst, 1984
14. Guidelines for Members of The Unification Church in Relations with the Jewish People (<http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Publications/Other-Pub/Uc-jewish.htm>), Peter Ross and Andrew Wilson, March 15, 1989.
15. Reports include: –
 - ■ *Jewish currents*, Volume 30, 1976, p5
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 - ■ *Parliamentary debates: Official report*, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, 23 February 1977, vol 926 p1593 THE UNIFICATION CHURCH (Hansard, 23 February 1977) (http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1977/feb/23/the-unification-church#S5CV0926P0_19770223_HOC_406)
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 - ■ *Religious education*, Volume 73, 1978, p356
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 - ■ *Cults in America: programmed for paradise*, Willa Appel, 1983, p171
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 - ■ *Anti-cult movements in cross-cultural perspective*, Anson D. Shupe, David G. Bromley, 1994, p42
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 - ■ Feher, Shoshanah. *Passing over Easter: constructing the boundaries of Messianic Judaism*, Rowman Altamira, 1998, p. 36.
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 - ■ *Heartbreak and Rage: Ten Years Under Sun Myung Moon*, Gordon Neufeld, 2002, p173
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 - ■ Sun Myung Moon forms new political party to merge divided Koreas (<https://www.au.org/church-state/may-2003-church-state/people-events/sun-myung-moon-forms-new-political-party-to-merge>), Church & State, May 01, 2003
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 - ■ Bad Moon on the rise (<http://dir.salon.com/story/news/feature/2003/09/24/moon>), John Gorenfeld, Salon Magazine, Sep 24, 2003
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 - ■ *False dawn*, Lee Penn, 2004, p121
16. *Anti-cult movements in cross-cultural perspective*, Anson D. Shupe, David G. Bromley, 1994, p42; Feher, Shoshanah. *Passing over Easter: constructing the boundaries of Messianic Judaism*, Rowman Altamira, 1998, p. 36.
17. "Stephen, for example, burned with indignation over the ignorance and disbelief of the Jewish leaders, and he condemned their actions, calling them murderers and rebels (Acts 7:51-53). Christians since then have commonly shared the same feelings as the disciples of Jesus' day. If Jesus' death had been the foreordained outcome for the fulfillment of God's Will, then it might have been natural for the disciples to grieve over his death, but they would not have been so bitterly resentful over it, nor so angry at those Jewish leaders who caused it." *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (<http://www.webcitation.org/query?url=http://www.geocities.com/unificationism/DivinePrinciple-toc-b.html&date=2009-10-25+23:34:26>), HSA-UWC, 1996 (ISBN 0-910621-80-2).
18. Moon said: "By killing one man, Jesus, the Jewish people had to suffer for 2000 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." *MASTER SPEAKS* (no official translation was done), 2/14/74
19. Helm, S. Divine Principle and the Second Advent (<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1163>) *Christian Century* May 11, 1977 "Thus, while the two world wars may appear from a human point of view to have been evil, from the point of view of God's plan for restoration they were good and necessary. The defeat of the "satanic side" in each case cleared the path for a more nearly complete foundation for the Kingdom of God. These two cataclysmic conflagrations of our century, which broke the back of the liberal Protestant faith in progress, do not appear to trouble the adherents of Divine Principle, by and large members of a generation conveniently undistressed by stark memories of those "triumphs" for the heavenly side. This sanguine schematization of the Holocaust has not, understandably, reassured Jewish critics of the movement. There remains, of course, one final conflict, the resolution of which will provide the worldwide unity upon which the last four-position foundation can be perfected. This is the struggle between "Abeltype" democracy and "Cain-type" communism. Divine Principle is indecisive at this point. It may not be necessary for democracy to

destroy communism (the sole bearer, in its view, of a "materialistic" philosophy) by force. It may be accomplished in a battle of ideology. The Unification Church seeks to forge the necessary ideology while at the same time supporting a militarily supreme West, just in case. This final conflict is imminent, for the Lord of the Second Advent has appeared in Sun Myung Moon, and the atheistic communist system is the "Antichrist" of the final days."

External links

- Judaism (<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Judaism>), article in Unification Church sponsored encyclopedia.

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