

Unification Church and Islam

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The relationship between **the Unification Church and Islam** has often been noted, both by scholars and the news media. The *Divine Principle*, the official textbook of Unification Church beliefs, lists the “Islamic cultural sphere” as one of the world’s four major divisions (the others are the East Asian, the Hindu, and the Christian spheres).^[1] An official Unification Church website says:

Unification teaching recognizes the Prophet Muhammad and the religion of Islam that is based on the truths revealed through him as pivotal in God’s providence of restoration.^[2]

Unification Church support for Islamist anti-communists came to public attention in 1987 when church member Lee Shapiro was killed in Afghanistan during the Soviet war in Afghanistan while filming a documentary.^{[3][4]} The resistance group they were traveling with reported that they had been ambushed by military forces of the Soviet Union or the Afghan government. However, the details have been questioned, partly because of the poor reputation of the group's leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.^{[5][6]}

In 1997, the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (which is critical of United States and Israeli policies), praised the Unification Church owned newspaper, *The Washington Times* and the *Times*’ sister publication *The Middle East Times* (along with *The Christian Science Monitor* owned by the Church of Christ, Scientist) for their objective and informative coverage of Islam and the Middle East, while criticizing the *Times* generally pro-Israel editorial policy. The *Report* suggested that these newspapers, being owned by churches, were less influenced by pro-Israel pressure groups in the United States.^[7]

In 1997, Louis Farrakhan, the leader of The Nation of Islam, served as a "co-officiator" at a blessing ceremony presided over by Unification Church founder Sun Myung Moon and his wife Hak Ja Han.^[8] In 2000 the Unification Church co-sponsored the Million Family March, a rally in Washington D.C to celebrate family unity and racial and religious harmony, along with the Nation of Islam.^[9] Farrakhan was the main speaker at the event which was held on October 16, 2000; the fifth anniversary of the Million Man March, which was also organized by Farrakhan.^[10] Unification Church leader Dan Fefferman wrote to his colleagues acknowledging that Farrakhan’s and Moon’s views differed on multiple issues but shared a view of a "God-centered family".^[11] In 2007 Rev and Mrs Moon sent greetings to Farrakhan while he was recovering from cancer, saying: "We send love and greetings to Minister Farrakhan and Mother Khadijah."^[12]

In the 1990s and 2000s the Unification Church has made public statements claiming communications with the spirits of religious leaders including Muhammad and also Confucius, the Buddha, Jesus, and Augustine, as well as political leaders such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Leon Trotsky, Mao Zedong, and many more. This was reported to have distanced the church from Islam as well as from mainstream Christianity.^{[13][14]} From 2001 to 2009 the Unification Church owned the American Life TV Network (now known as Youtoo TV),^[15] which in 2007 broadcast George Clooney's documentary, *A Journey to Darfur*, which was harshly critical of Islamists in Darfur, the Republic of Sudan.^{[16][17][18]} It released the film on DVD in 2008 and announced that proceeds from its sale would be donated to the International Rescue Committee.^[19] In his 2009 autobiography Moon praised Islam and expressed the hope that there would be more understanding between different religious communities.^[20] In 2011 representatives of the Unification Church took part in an international seminar held in Taiwan by the Muslim World League. The purpose of the seminar was said to be to encourage inter-faith dialogue and discourage terrorism.^[21]

See also

- Unification Church and Judaism
- Unification Church and mainstream Christianity

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External links

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

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