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Article

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THE UNIFICATION CHURCH: A KALEIDOSCOPIC INTRODUCTION²

Abstract: The Unification Church, or the Unificationism, also known as HAS-UWC (Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity) or ‘Moonies’ (the term deemed now as disrespectful) but originating from the name of the founder Sun Myung Moon, who set up this Christian religious movement in Northern Korea in 1954 has approximately 3 million followers worldwide. Its existence and popularity are a global phenomenon, interesting not only for sociologists of religion but for politicians, philosophers and people of faith. The impact of this movement and the two-way social change remain a rare subject of study and this paper aims to fill the gaps and to discuss contemporary situation in regards to its followers.

Keywords: Unificationists, Moon, religious movement, socialization, social reproduction.

Introduction

For over six decades, the Unification Movement has defied any single classification. When attempting to see patterns in the movement’s historical development, one can observe not so much stages as phases or themes that embrace a number of *leitmotifs* interwoven in a fugue composed of sometimes complementary, sometimes opposing themes. Rather than providing a chronological account of the history of the movement, this introductory chapter sketches some sociological motifs (messianic cha-

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² This is a shortened and slightly updated version of an article published *Acta Comparanda Subsidia VI*, 2018, pages 19–55. I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of this volume for permission to publish this version and to a number of both present and former Unificationists for their generous help in the preparation of this chapter.

rismatisation; prophetic millenarianism; utopian politicisation; organisational bureaucratisation; generational denominationalisation; and schismatic fragmentation) that have, variously, come into ascendancy at particular times and places as Unificationism has acted out its complicated, complex and sometimes confusing history as part of the world's religious landscape.

Briefly, as background information, it can be recounted that the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC), known more simply as the Unification Church (UC) or Unification Movement (UM), was formally founded in Seoul, South Korea, in 1954 by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012).³ Having gathered a small group of disciples around him in Korea, Moon sent his first Unification missionaries to Japan and then to the West in the late 1950s. Although there were some scores of converts to the movement during the 1960s, which may have expanded to a couple of hundred or so by the end of the decade, it was not until Moon and his family settled in the USA and conducted a series of nation-wide speaking tours in the early 1970s that the Unification Church became widely known in the United States and Europe.⁴

Like many of the other high-profile new religious movements (NRMs) of the period, the Unification Church attracted a membership in the West that was disproportionately young, white, well-educated and from the middle classes (Barker 1984). These youthful converts, referred to in popular parlance as 'Moonies',⁵ soon became a familiar sight as they fundraised and witnessed to potential recruits in public places. They also attracted widespread public attention on account of the mass weddings or 'Blessings' where hundreds or even thousands of couples were married in ceremonies presided over by Reverend Moon and his wife.⁶ The publicity was not favourable, however (Bjornstad 1976; Edwards 1979; Enroth 1977; 1979; Heftmann 1983; Levitt 1976; Martin 1985; Underwood 1979). In a survey carried out by Rex

³ For details about the early life of Moon and the Church in Korea, see Breen 1997; Introvigne 2000; Matczak 1982; Moon 2010; Sontag 1977.

⁴ For information about the movement's early life in the West, see Barker 1978; 1984; Bromley and Shupe 1979; Cozin 1973; Lofland 1966; 1977; Mickler 1980b; 1990; Salonen 1982; Wood 1979; 2001.

⁵ Although Moon himself stated that his followers should be proud to be called Moonies (and around the late 1970s I obtained a badge declaring "I'M A MOONIE AND I ♥ IT!" which was reproduced among a number of lurid press-cuttings on the cover of my book, *The Making of a Moonie*), Unificationists now find the term derogatory, and for this reason, unless the term is used within a quotation, I shall refer to members of the movement as Unificationists.

⁶ Whilst originally the Blessings were only for Unificationists who had fulfilled certain 'conditions', later they included non-Unificationists – on 10 April 1992 forty Muslims took part in a Blessing (Mickler 2000: 370). My husband and I were among the many who found themselves being invited to get Blessed sometime in the 1990s; my husband politely turned down the offer.

Weiner and Deanne Stillman (1979: 246) towards the end of the 1970s, just over a thousand Americans born between 1940 and 1952 were given a list of 155 names and asked how they felt about each of them. Only 3 per cent of the respondents had not heard of the Reverend Moon.⁷ Only 1 per cent admitted to admiring him. The owner of no other name on the list elicited less admiration, and the only person whom a higher percentage of respondents did not admire was the ritual killer Charles Manson.⁸

Before long, anxious parents were paying large sums of money to have their (adult) children extracted from the movement. Bewildered that their sons and daughters could give up a promising future to follow a Korean evangelist who expected them to spend long hours fundraising and recruiting members, and who would marry them to someone whom they had met only hours before and with whom they quite possibly did not share a common language, the only feasible explanation appeared to be that the movement was using some kind of brainwashing or mind-control techniques that were well-nigh irresistible and irreversible – and the only way to rescue the victims was to have them kidnapped and deprogrammed.⁹

Despite the high visibility of the converts and the widely publicised photographs of all those couples getting married, Unificationism did not reach the high numbers of members that both it and its opponents have claimed (Barker 1984: 27). In fact, during the late 1970s and 1980s it is unlikely that the number of members in the West ever exceeded a few thousand; in Britain and other European countries it was only a few hundred at most.⁹ The exaggeration in numbers was due partly to the high profile of Moon and the long hours the members spent peddling and witnessing in public places, partly to the fact that converts were more likely to be counted than defectors, and partly because, while the movement wanted to demonstrate how successful it

⁷ It is possible that were the survey to be repeated today with the same age group it would be more likely to be just 3 per cent who *had* heard of him.

⁸ For information about the Manson Family, see Bugliosi 1977; Guinn 2013; and Nielsen 1984.

⁹ For further information on deprogramming, see Barker 1989: Appendix II; Bromley and Richardson 1983; 1988; Coleman 1985; Dubrow-Eichel 1989a; 1989b; 1990; Enroth 1977; Fefferman 2010; Patrick 1976. ⁹ In 1997, one estimate of the number of members in the USA was 3,000 (Fisher and Leen 1997b). In Europe, the numbers increased to 2,000 after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Barker 1984: 64-65; 1997). There were possibly 10,000 or so members in Japan. In Korea and later in the West the figures became increasingly difficult to ascertain as it was more families than individuals who were associated with the movement, and when the second and subsequent generations arrived there was no consensus as to whether the children should be counted. Also, membership became far more ambiguous (see below). According to some figures reported at a Unification conference, in January 2014 there were 115,862 worship attenders, almost half of whom (49,103) were in Japan, and just over a quarter of whom (27,690) were in Korea. North America (USA + Canada) claimed 5,663 attenders and Europe claimed 3,191. West Africa claimed 13,585. Roughly double the total were said to be 'regular members'. (Personal communication from a North American member)

was being (and was in denial about the fact that converts were frequently leaving), the media and the increasingly vocal opponents of Unificationism wanted to demonstrate what a threat the movement was and that, unless they were deprogrammed, Unificationists were incapable of escaping once they had been captured.¹⁰

But what was little understood was the extent to which the movement could have a positive attraction for these young people. It offered them something that they felt, or could be easily led to feel, was lacking in their lives (Barker 1984). Exactly what this was could differ from person to person, but one important factor that has frequently been ignored, yet which drew a considerable number and possibly played a significant role in attracting the majority of young people to the Unification Church, was its religious teaching.

Unificationism as a Religious Movement

The Reverend Moon tells a story of how, as a boy of fifteen or sixteen,¹¹ Jesus appeared before him and said “God is in great sorrow because of the pain of humankind. You must take on a special mission on earth having to do with Heaven’s work” (Moon 2010:50). Numerous encounters with Jesus followed and Moon was to receive further revelations about the nature of God and His creation.

With the passage of time, Moon started to tell others about his various revelations and these were written down by disciples, eventually comprising what came to be known as the *Divine Principle*, which contains most of the basic beliefs of Unificationism.¹² This provides an interpretation of the Old and New Testaments with traces of other religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism and some of the Korean new religions with which Moon had associated in the 1940s and ’50s (Breen 1997; Nevalainen 2005). It then goes on to disclose further revelations following the time of the Gospels. It is impossible to do justice to its complexity here but, briefly, in the opening chapter, creation is seen in terms of complementary opposites:

¹⁰ The so-called ‘anti-cult movement’ of the period focussed almost entirely on the Unification Church, the Children of God, the Church of Scientology and ISKCON. (Giambalvo *et al.* 2013; Patrick 1976; Shupe and Bromley 1980)

¹¹ The Korean calendar differs from the Western calendar which can cause some confusion in dating.

¹² Originally produced in Korean as *Wolli Haesul* then as *Wolli Kangron*, and there are several versions of *Divine Principle* in English and a number of other languages. The second English edition (Moon 1973) was widely used, later in conjunction with Moon (1996) during the movement’s early days in the West. See also Barker 1984: Ch 3; Bryant and Hodges 1978; Chryssides 1991; Kim 1997; Kim 1987; Quinn 2006; and http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Divine_Principle#Other_Unification_Church_texts

positive and negative units come together in a complementary relationship which, in turn becomes a unit that combines with a further unit to create yet another whole, and eventually we have male and female units, then, at the most complex level, man and woman.¹³ Chapter Two explains that God created Adam and Eve with the intention that they would mature in the Garden of Eden until they were ready to be joined together in a God-centred marriage, when they would have children who would eventually populate a world with the fundamental unit of a God-centred family. However, the Archangel Lucifer (represented in the Book of Genesis as the serpent), whom God had entrusted to act as a guardian to Adam and Eve, became jealous of God's love for Adam, and seduced Eve on the spiritual plane, and Eve subsequently seduced Adam physically before they were ready for God's Blessing in marriage. The Fall was thus not literally eating a fruit, but tasting and gaining knowledge of the forbidden fruit of sexual intercourse; in other words, it entailed the misuse of love, the most powerful of all forces. As a consequence, the resulting children inherited a fallen nature (original sin) and were born into families that were Lucifer-centred, rather than God-centred.

In other chapters, the whole of history is interpreted as attempts by God with the help of certain key persons to restore the original ideal of a Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Jesus was to have played a crucial role as the Second Adam, but his mission failed as he was killed before he was able to marry the new Eve and establish a God-centred family. Subsequently, a number of parallels are drawn between the time of the original Fall to Jesus' death and then from the time of Jesus' death up to the twentieth century, reaching 'the Conclusion' that a new Second Adam or Messiah would be born in Korea sometime between 1917 and 1930.

Although *Divine Principle* undoubtedly contains most of the basic premises of Unification thought, Moon continued throughout his life to offer up further revelations, much of which centred on the role that he and his family played in laying special foundations for the restoration of God's Kingdom and overcoming the power of Satan (Lucifer). The most important foundation for Moon's victory over Satan was his second marriage in 1960 to Hak Ja Han (1943-). Reverend and Mrs Moon were now able to fulfil their role as 'True Parents' and their children to be 'True Children'.

¹³ In some ways, these complementary units resemble the Taoist Yin Yang.

Unificationism as a Spiritual Movement

Although in many ways *Divine Principle* and Moon's pronouncements were concerned with claims about the historical and contemporary world, it would be a mistake not to recognise that Unificationism has a profoundly spiritual dimension. This has been interpreted as owing much of its origin to Korean shamanism, particularly so far as ritual sexual practices are concerned (Nevalainen 2005; Yu and Guisso 1988).¹⁴ The spiritual interpretation of dreams is a practice that has been common with Moon and many of his more 'spiritual' followers.¹⁵ Others have seen Unificationism as incorporating more Western spiritualist features, Moon's early association with the spiritualist Arthur Ford (1969) being but one well-publicised example. Although not central to the movement, spiritual healing has been reported on numerous occasions and several members are believed to have special healing powers.

Unificationism has a fundamental belief in the spirit world and the significance of the relationship between its inhabitants and those who are living in this world. To quote Dr Young Oon Kim, one of Moon's closest early disciples who was greatly influenced by the works of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), and who was responsible for establishing one of the first Unification centres in the USA (Lofland 1997; Mickler 1980b):

... the existence of [the] spiritual dimension can be shown from parapsychological evidence, which seems to indicate a regular interaction between the physical and extrasensory worlds. ... As man cannot realize his full potentialities without uniting with God, the visible world cannot actualize its true value unless it forms a positive continuing relationship with the spirit world.

Unification theology makes faith in human immortality an essential feature of its doctrine of creation. We do not simply continue to exist after death. From the beginning and throughout our lives, we live in both worlds. (Kim 1987: drawn from section on *Living in Two Worlds*)

¹⁴ There are numerous allegations of Moon having performed ritual sexual practices that were practiced in several messianic groups in Korea between the 1940s and '60s, especially one referred to as pikareun (pigarum) in which women were believed to have their wombs purified through sexual intercourse with the Messiah (Nevalainen 2005).

¹⁵ During the time I spent doing research at Camp K, a Unification workshop in California, before breakfast each morning we were asked to recount our dreams and these were interpreted for us to explain what, we were told, was their true significance.

The centrality of the spirit world was well illustrated when one of Moon's sons, Heung Jin (1966-1984), was killed in a road accident (Moon 2010: 200). Moon is reported as having proclaimed that Heung Jin's sacrifice had prevented a great calamity happening to either the Korean nation or to Moon himself (Beverley 2004: 47). It was, furthermore, announced that Heung was doing important work in the spirit world, including teaching Jesus (*ibid.*). A few weeks after Heung Jin's passing into the spirit world, Moon married him to (Julia) Hoon Sook Pak (the daughter of Colonel Bo Hi Pak, one of Moon's closest lieutenants), who is a highly accomplished dancer and is now the Director of the Universal Ballet of Korea (Moon 2010: 201).

While Moon was undoubtedly considered the most significant person communicating with the spirit world, there have been many others who have attested to receiving messages and who were taken seriously by the members. Some of these were in a relatively 'ordinary' position in the movement, but others have held key roles. One such was Mrs Hyo-Nam Kim, who was believed to channel messages from Mrs Moon's mother.

Another person who had previously been highly influential for a while was a young church member from Zimbabwe, named Cleophas Kundioni, who, in 1988, claimed to be the embodiment of Heung Jin. Initially, Moon endorsed these claims and Cleophas came to be known as Black Heung Jin or Second Heung Jin. After some time, however, Cleophas was imposing harsh punishments on members who were expected to confess their sins to him; one of his more severe beatings resulted in Colonel Pak being hospitalised.¹⁶ Eventually, Cleophas' violence and womanizing resulted in Moon's announcing that Heung Jin's spirit had returned to the spirit world. Cleophas returned to Africa, where, it is said, he established a breakaway movement with himself as the Messiah (Hong 1998: 153).

Importantly, after death everyone goes to the spirit world where they will be reunited with their spouse if she or he has died first,¹⁷ and with their ancestors, who may need 'liberating' (see below). Not all spiritual personalities are important, but members have frequently claimed to be aware of their presence – there are the good spirits who have been observed as a kind of aura protecting the Blessed children,

¹⁶ Dan Fefferman "Black Heung Jin Nim" August 15, 2000. <http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Feffermn/Fefferman-BlackHJN.htm>; <http://howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/tagged/black+heung+jin>

¹⁷ Although marriage is for life in both this and the spirit world, Unificationists can have a 'comfort wife or husband' on this earth to meet their physical needs until they re-join the partner with whom they were originally Blessed.

and there are the evil spirits who attack miscreant members – or sociologists: ‘Satan invades’ I have been warned on several occasions during my research.¹⁸

Unificationism and Religious Rituals and Practices

Compared to many other religions, Unificationism initially had relatively few rituals, but it does have some, and these have grown considerably in number over the years and are seen as making a fundamental contribution to the restoration of God’s Kingdom on earth (Kwak 1980; Kim 1985).

Possibly the most significant ritual is the Holy Wine Ceremony, which takes place as “an indemnity condition by which human beings who were born from Satan’s world are re-born by True Parents.”¹⁹ This is the time when the couple, who had inherited fallen nature because of the original fall, undergo a change in their blood lineage.²⁰ The Holy Wine Ceremony takes place after the ‘matching’ when a couple becomes engaged. Originally, those who were deemed qualified to partake in the Blessing would gather in a large room, men on one side and women on the other. Moon would then select a man and a woman, who would step outside the room to decide whether to accept Moon’s proposal (most, though not all, did). Later, rather than a matching ceremony, the task of selection was left to some of the senior leaders, the couple’s parents, or, more recently, even the participants themselves.²¹ Whilst the matchings and the Holy Wine Ceremony were private occasions, restricted to Unification participants, the marriages themselves, or, as they are known, the Blessings

¹⁸ A post on a site that consists of postings by former and disillusioned members alleges that reports of sales by the Unification Church in Japan of a special shampoo to deal with evil spirits in your hair is not a spoof. <http://howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/post/65502219774/unification-church-shampoo-for-evilspirits-this> Elsewhere on the same site, one can read about the sale of houses in the spirit world:

Cost in Japan 1.600.000 yen. [\$14,500];

You must buy the house quickly, because all the houses near to God are getting sold;

If you wait you will be far from God.;

Even if you are not yet blessed, you can buy quickly.

40 days after you buy the house, construction starts on the real house in the spirit world. <http://howwell-doyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/post/60906347183/daemonim-is-selling-these-spirit-worldhouses>

¹⁹ <https://bfm.familyfed.org/wp-content/uploads/Conducting-the-Holy-Wine-Ceremony.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.unification.net/gww/gww-04.html>

²¹ Details of members available for Blessing can now be uploaded by potential matchmakers and partners on the internet. <https://bfm.familyfed.org/forms/>

are semi-public affairs, when hundreds or even thousands of couples line up and would have had Holy Water sprinkled on them by him and Mrs Moon.^{22,28} These have been recognised as spectacular occasions by the media, with pictures of the amassed couples being shown throughout the world.²³

A further ritual related to a first-generation couple's marriage is the Three-day Ceremony, during which the marriage is consummated. This ensures that "the children born from this couple will not have Original Sin. They will be born pure and sinless like Adam and Eve as second generation."²⁴ Involved in the ceremony are various items considered to be of spiritual significance: Holy Handkerchiefs for ritual purification; Holy Salt; Holy Robes; Holy Song Book and a Holy Candle.²⁵ Also incorporated in the ceremony is a further Unification ritual: the reciting of the Family Pledge.²⁶ Then, once a child is born, "Blessed couples should hold the child dedication ceremony on the morning (7:00 a.m. is the recommended time) of the eighth day after birth" (Kwak 1980: 169).

Holy Salt plays a central role in the lives of members. Made according to precise instructions, it is used for purification purposes, and it is usual to find containers of Holy Salt in such places as the kitchen and bathroom of Unification homes and centres. "The value and significance of the Holy Salt is to eradicate or annihilate or exterminate what is satanic, and if you use Holy Salt you are always sanctified" (Kwak 1980: 47). Holy Salt has also played an important ritual role in the establishment of Holy Grounds in well over a hundred selected places around the world. These are seen as a way of regaining land for God. (Kwak 1980: 5970; Salonen 1982).

Mention might also be made of the special Holy Days that have been celebrated by Unificationists. These include True God's Day;²⁷ True Parents' Day; True Children's Day; the Day of All True Things. Unification calendars mark these and special events and achievements of the movement as well as the anniversaries of Blessings

²² The Blessing ceremonies are not legally binding and couples have to attend a registry office, or its equivalent, for a civil ceremony in order to become legally married.

²³ See, for example, https://ichef-1.bbci.co.uk/news/624/cpsprodpb/D6DE/production/88360055_0315612701.jpg

²⁴ <https://bfm.familyfed.org/wp-content/uploads/3-Day-Ceremony-2014.pdf>

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Kwak 1980: 21-38. Several different versions of the Pledge exist. <http://www.tparents.org/library/unification/topics/traditn/0-Toc.htm> Members have been expected to rise to perform the Pledge ritual at 5am on Sunday (the first day of the week) and the first day of the month, and the year. See also Bramwell (2018) for a discussion of the significance of the Family Pledge.

²⁷ In 2013, Mrs Moon announced that True God's Day would be known as True Heavenly Parent's Day. <http://familyfed.org/news-story/holy-days/the-48th-true-heavenly-parents-day-11123/>. ³⁴ <http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Topics/Calendar/0-Toc.htm>

and the birth (and death) of members of the True Family.³⁴

Unificationism as a Charismatic Movement

The term ‘charismatic’ has many meanings and is often used loosely to refer to a pop singer or some television celebrity. In the context of this chapter, the concept is employed in the way it was defined by the German sociologist, Max Weber, as:

a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.
(Weber 1947: 358-9)

Weber’s interest was in distinguishing between different kinds of legitimate authority. His three ‘ideal types’²⁸ are charismatic, traditional and legal-rational authority (Weber 1947: 328). Traditional authority relies on an acceptance that this is the way things have always been done, and a leader is both enabled and constrained by what is perceived to be historical precedence. Unificationism, as a new religion had no direct history; however, Moon certainly drew on Confucianism and traditional Korean culture including its shamanic practices, and with the passage of time he also sanctioned a considerable number of beliefs and practices as being part of the ‘Unification Tradition’ (Kwak 1980; Kim 1985).

Legal-rational authority is based on a system of rules that are in accordance with known principles by those who are occupying recognised roles that give them authority in particular matters; it is the kind of authority to be found in bureaucratic organisations. It is certainly the case that, as it grew, there developed within Unificationism a hierarchical authoritarian structure in which members were expected to defer to their immediate leader (or Abel figure) about certain matters,²⁹ and their Abel figure was expected to defer to his or her Abel figure – and so on, up a more or less clear structure, with Moon at the apex.³⁰

²⁸ Weber uses the analytical tool of the ‘ideal type’ not to suggest that the type is ideal in any evaluative way, but ideal in the sense that it is defined in a clear manner so that it can be used for comparative purposes, even though such a pure ideal is unlikely to exist in reality.

²⁹ <http://www.unification.net/1976/761101.html> ; <http://www.unification.net/1981/811028.html>

³⁰ For a Unificationist’s discussion about the potential tension between obedience and conscience, see Dan Fefferman “Before Absolute Faith and Obedience: A Case for the Primacy of Conscience.”

However, there can be no doubt that the authority which Moon wielded within the Unification movement was predominantly charismatic. As a charismatic figure his authority was not restricted by either rules or tradition; furthermore, his authority could extend over more of his followers' lives than would that of, say, a Pope or Archbishop of Canterbury: he could direct where they lived; how they lived; what work they did; whom they married; when and how they would consummate their marriage; what they wore on special occasions; that the men were clean-shaven; and so on.... and any of this could be changed without a moment's notice. Of course, in practice, not all these decisions were inevitably made by Moon or, via his authority, by the members' immediate leaders. Members could and might even be encouraged to 'do their own thing' and, with the passage of time, the tight control over individuals' lives loosened considerably. The fact remains, however, that, at least at the beginning, members believed that Moon had the right to tell them what to do because of his special relationship with God and his role as the Messiah.

As Bryan Wilson (1973: 499) has argued, "Charisma as a term expresses less a quality of person than of relationship." In other words, the followers have to agree to grant a charismatic leader authority over them; they have to accept that he has a special quality. And there have been plenty of instances in which a Unificationist has become disillusioned and left.³¹ At the same time, it has been possible to observe a process within the movement that has led to the creation and maintenance of Moon being perceived as a charismatic leader, a process that I have termed 'charismatisation' (Barker 1993). This has manifested itself in a number of different ways, such as the circulation of mythical stories about Moon's early life;³² his sacrificial nature and caring for others; how deeply he felt God's and the world's suffering; and how 'human' he was (presumably most of us being human, it is only necessary to point this out if the person concerned might be assumed to be other (more) than human). Members who had never actually seen Moon (apart from through the ubiquitous photographs that were to be found in every home) can believe not only that they knew him personally, but that he knew them personally. Others, who had attended a talk that Moon has given, would recount how he had looked straight at them, and

<https://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Feffermn/Fefferman-Conscience.htm>.

³¹ There are, of course, many reasons why people have left the Unification movement, only one of which is that they no longer accept that Moon should be granted a charismatic authority over their lives (Bromley 1988; Wright 1987)

³² Mythical does not imply untrue in this context, but something that conveys a special, deeper meaning than the most obvious one.

they had had an immediate awareness that he knew exactly who they were and what they were feeling. But above all, Moon's followers believed that he was the Messiah, chosen by God to restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and they had to play their role by doing whatever he needed of them.

Unificationism as a Messianic Movement

Although *Divine Principle* does not explicitly state that Moon is the Messiah, and although, in the presence of non-members, members were unlikely to claim that he was before 1992, there can be little doubt that from the earliest days they have believed that he was indeed the Lord of the Second Advent whom God had chosen to restore His Kingdom on earth. When, in 1979, at the end of a 41-page questionnaire, I asked 425 Unificationists the (admittedly loaded) question "At what point did you first accept that Father is the Messiah?" less than one per cent (three people) said they were still not certain. A few (4 per cent) did not answer the question, but no one adopted the option that they did not believe Moon was the Messiah. (Barker 1984: 83)

By 1992, however, Moon was revealing more information about the Messiahship, now conceived as a mission for True Parents (Mickler 2000: 379). Then, in a speech given at a banquet in Seoul on 24 August 1992, before over a thousand selected participants from various conferences that had been taking place, Moon declared:

In early July, I spoke in...cities around Korea at rallies held by the Women's

Federation for World Peace. There I declared my wife, WFWP President Hak Ja Han Moon, and I are the True Parents of all humanity. I declared that we are the Savior, the Lord of the Second Advent, the Messiah. (*op cit*: 383)

Later, on the 23rd of March 2004, a 'Peace Awards Banquet' was held at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington. Members of Congress were among the guests. Following an introduction by Congressman Danny Davis (D. Illinois), Rev. and Mrs. Moon proceeded to the front stage area, flanked by escorts from various religious traditions underneath a large portrait of the U.S. Capitol. Archbishop George Augustus Stallings and Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R. Maryland) carried in the royal robes and, after a polite bow, offered them to Rev. and Mrs. Moon. Rev. Jesse

Edwards and Congressman Davis entered with crowns and, likewise, after bows, offered them to Rev. and Mrs. Moon who were fitted by their son Hyun Jin and his wife, Jun Sook. (Mickler 2016) Then, it is reported that:

Mr. Moon said emperors, kings and presidents had “declared to all heaven and earth that Reverend Sun Myung Moon is none other than humanity’s savior, messiah, returning lord and true parent.”

He added that the founders of the world’s great religions, along with figures like Marx, Lenin, Hitler and Stalin, had “found strength in my teachings, mended their ways and been reborn as new persons.”³³

Unificationism as a Millenarian Movement

Unificationism is not a millenarian (or millennial) movement in the sense that there is an expectation of Jesus (or Moon) ruling for a thousand-year period as foretold in the Book of Revelation. It is, however, in the sense that a dramatic and fundamental change in society will be brought about with the advent of a Messiah and the Restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Periods of time have always played an important role in Unification beliefs, and Moon has continually talked about particular foundations for the restoration having been laid and victories over Satan having been won. In the early years there was an expectation that the year 1967 would see a dramatic change. This date means nothing to most Unificationists nowadays; however, when talking to a couple of long-time members, I have been told there was considerable anticipation at the time and that several members left disappointed when nothing obvious happened.³⁴

Nonetheless, the urgency associated with millenarian movements has been evident throughout most of Unification history. Not only has Moon periodically announced another foundation had been achieved, there has always been a goal towards which the members were to work. It is, incidentally, noteworthy that all three leaders of the main schismatic movements (see below) are renewing expectations of imminent achievements.

³³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/03/world/asia/rev-sun-myung-moon-founder-of-unification-church-dies-at92.html>

³⁴ Moon did, however, offer an explanation of why 1967 had been a special date. On God’s Day (1 January) 1968, Moon announced that Hak Ja Han had successfully completed her 7-year course and could now stand in the position of True Mother. So for the first time, there were “True Parents”. 1967 was significant because it had marked the end of the first seven-year period of the True Parents’ marriage.

Unificationism as a Utopian Movement

It could be argued that there has been a gradual shift from Unificationism being less of a millenarian movement to its being more of a utopian one. Unlike members of some other religions with a strongly millenarian belief who have envisaged a future where they mingled with angels and played with lions, when Unificationists were asked in the late 1970s what they thought the world would look like in the year 2000, most of the answers were of a thisworldly rather than a supernatural nature – rather abstract generalizations: everyone would love each other, there would be trust between people and cultures, children would be happy, crime, and in particular pornography, would be completely eradicated. On being pressed, a few gave some more practical details—we would no longer need passports; everyone would study the *Divine Principle* at school. It was also envisaged that there would be world peace and the unification of Korea and of all religions.³⁵

The most important change for the future has always been that there would be a world made up of ideal, God-centred families who were no longer encumbered by original sin. However, while the first Blessed children were seen as very special and different from all other children when they initially arrived, it was not long before it was realised that, even if their blood lineage had been changed as a result of the Holy Wine ceremony, the children had not been born perfect. The dashed expectations were particularly challenging in the case of the True Children who did not appear to behave in the way that children should behave in an Ideal Family (Barker 1983; Hong 1998). I found myself being offered a more nuanced interpretation of *Divine Principle* as the members realised that they had not really understood the limitations involved in the Holy Wine Ceremony – it was not going to be that easy. True children, they still have to go through the growth period just as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They still have the freedom to choose. God instructed Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit.

Engaging with Society

It is very rare, indeed almost impossible, for any minority religion not to be engaged

³⁵ Conversely, my control group (which consisted of young adults who were not Unificationists but whom I asked many of the questions I asked the Unificationists for comparative purposes) frequently said that they didn't think there would *be* a year 2000 (Barker 1984: 223).

with society. Those that reject the world most forcefully are still likely to depend on the wider society for defence, economic exchange and new members. Even if, perhaps especially if, they cut themselves off geographically and socially and become self-sufficient so far as food and shelter are concerned and rely on their own children for a continuing membership, the wider society is likely to interfere with them.³⁶

As already intimated, Unificationism in general and the Reverend Moon in particular have been viewed with suspicion since the early beginnings by state authorities, relatives of converts, the media, anti-cult movements and the public at large. Whether it wanted to or not, Unificationism had to contend with society. But, despite the fact that Roy Wallis categorised it as a ‘world-rejecting movement’,³⁷ the Unification Church has, from the start, taken an initiative in engaging with society. At grass-roots level, representatives of the movement were sent as missionaries throughout the world, sometimes in teams as, for example, part of the One World Crusade, “the engine of the Unification Church’s evangelistic activities from 1972 through 1974” (Mickler 2000: 79),³⁸ and, later, as individuals or families to establish local centres, when they were instructed to visit 360 households, offering practical services such as mowing the lawn, doing shopping or cleaning windows. Moon himself was certainly a highly visible figure, touring around the United States and elsewhere, speaking at large Rallies and meeting persons of note in a wide range of professions. And while such contacts were undoubtedly intended to spread Unificationist religious beliefs and values and build a broader concurrence based on what were considered to be universal principles and values, the political angle was rarely far from the surface.

Unificationism as a Political Movement

From an early age, Moon lived in a situation of political unrest. With the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1910, Japan had taken control of Korea until it was defeated at the end of the Second World War, when Soviet forces took control to the north of the 38th parallel and the American forces took control to the south. In August 1945,

³⁶ Jim Jones’ People’s Temple in the Guyana jungle is but one example of a religion that tried to ‘get away from it all’ with tragic consequences (Hall 1996; Krause 1998; Moore 2003; Wessinger 2000).

³⁷ “The world-rejecting movement expects that the millennium will shortly commence or that the movement will sweep the world, and, when all have become members or when they are in a majority, or when they have become guides and counsellors to kings and presidents, then a new world-order will begin, a simpler, more loving, more humane and more spiritual order in which the old evils and mistakes will be eradicated, and Utopia will have begun.” (Wallis 1984: 9)

³⁸ “One World Crusade, Inc. (OWC) was <http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Books/40Years/40-2->

South Korea became independent, and in November of that year North Korea too became an independent state. Five years later, the North invaded South Korea but was driven back by United Nations forces from the United States and elsewhere. China then entered the war and an uneasy military stalemate was eventually established and exists to this day.³⁹

Moon had been born in what is now North Korea, before and during the Korean War he had been interned in the Hungnam prison camp between 1948 and 1950, but once the camp was liberated by the Allies, he managed to make his way to the South, and, for the rest of his life, one of his major concerns was the unification of Korea; and to achieve this the Heavenly side of democracy had to overcome the satanic side of communism throughout the world by means of a Third World War.

While Moon made it clear that the Third World War was inevitable, he did explain that there were two ways for the War to be fought. First, the satanic side could be subjugated by weapons, but such external subjugation would have to be followed by inward subjugation. The second way would be

... to subjugate and unify the Satanic world directly by a wholly internal fight through ideology without any external fight by weapons.... Which kind of world would actualize one world would be decided according to the success or failure of man's carrying out his own [five per cent] portion of responsibility." (Moon 1973: 491)

It is not surprising therefore, that fighting communism played a central role in Moon's political forays throughout his lifetime.⁴⁰ In 1968, the International Federation for the Victory Over Communism was established in Korea, the American arm of which was founded in 1969 as the Freedom Leadership Foundation (FLF). This adopted a hawkish position on the Vietnam War (Wood 1979; 2001) and was particularly active throughout the 1970s and '80s, especially, but by no means only, in Washington DC where it cultivated a wide range of politicians and organisations eager to take advantage of enthusiastic Unificationists offering their help and funding for several anti-communist ventures. It also established a newspaper, the *Rising Tide*, which challenged communism and its activities.⁴¹ One well-publicised FLFled

³⁹ Although there has recently been a meeting between the heads of North and South Korea (May 2018).

⁴⁰ The unification of Korea continues as an important goal for Moon's eldest living son, Hyun Jin Preston Moon, who heads one of the current Unification factions (Moon 2016). See also Introvigne (2018)

⁴¹ <http://www.causafoundation.org/voc.html>

project was the public support given to Nixon at the time of the Watergate affair. Another prominent organisation, which Moon established in 1980, was CAUSA (1980), the primary work of which was to teach ‘Godism’, a God-centred world view (CAUSA 1985). CAUSA was particularly active in Latin America, where it not only gave seminars on Godism, but also supported right-wing factions that were fighting to overcome communism.

Space does not permit coverage of the multiple ‘Victory Over Communism’ organisations, seminars, rallies, publications and lobbying in which Unificationism has invested time and money, but mention should be made of the well-publicised meetings that Moon had with heads – and, even more frequently, previous heads – of dozens of states and other people of influence around the world. Amongst the more notable of these, were exchanges with such right-wing personages as Richard Nixon; ex-Presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush Sr.; Canadian ex-premier Brian Mulroney; former British Prime Minister Edward Heath; US Senators Jesse Helms and Orrin Hatch; Ronald Reagan’s defence secretary Caspar Weinberger; the former NATO chief general Alexander Haig; and the Moral Majority leader, the Reverend Jerry Falwell.⁴² Even more remarkable, however, was the fact that Unificationists managed to arrange a meeting with the USSR’s President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990 and then with North Korea’s President Kim Il Sung in 1991.

Unificationism was by no means always accepted in its promotion of political activities. In the late 1970s, the movement as a whole came under the scrutiny of the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the United States House of Representatives Committee on International Relations. Chaired by Representative Donald M. Fraser of Minnesota, the Committee was interested in investigating Unificationist connections with the Korean CIA, especially the use that was being made of the Little Angels children’s dance troupe founded by Moon, in acting as a propaganda tool for the Republic of Korea (Fraser 1978: 43ff). Colonel Bo Hi Pak robustly denied the charges (Pak 1999a; 199b),⁴³ and the Committee was unable to come up with any conclusive proof of ‘Un-American activities’ – and incapable of deterring the movement from continuing its political pursuits.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was seen by many Unificationists as a victory for the movement, but there continued to be the need for the unification of Korea

⁴² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/02/rev-sun-myung-moon>

⁴³ Public interpretations of the incident ranged from sympathetic (Sherwood 1991: Ch. XIV) to accusatory (Anderson 1986: 66-68; Boettcher 1980: 320-321).

and political activities continued in various ways. Unificationists and the Unification-funded *Washington Times* had campaigned for Ronald Reagan's election as President and subsequently they supported his administration; they advocated intermediate-range missiles in Europe and the Strategic Defence Initiative,⁴⁴ and they championed the violent revolt of the Nicaraguan Contras (Mickler 2003). In 1981 Moon announced a plan to build an International Peace Highway that would eventually remove national boundaries and bring humanity together.⁴⁵ In 2003 it was announced at a Unification Rally in Seoul that a new Family Party for Universal Peace and Unity had been formed. The Party's President, Chung Hwan Kwak,⁴⁶ announced that the Party would not be running candidates in the South Korean elections the following year, but would instead focus on publicizing itself and its goals, and that chief among these would be promoting the reunification of Korea.⁴⁷ Moon's son, Hyun Jin, who is also Kwak's son-in-law, published a book in 1916 sub-titled *A Vision for a United Korea*.

It is impossible to list all the subsidiary organisations, but their scope is impressive, some being directly and obviously connected with Moon's political ambitions, others less obviously, but none the less indirectly so. To mention but a few, they include: Ambassadors for Peace; the American Freedom Coalition; the Association for the Unity of Latin America; the Chinese Evangelical Association; the International Cultural Foundation; the International Family Association; the New Ecumenical Research Association (New ERA); News World Communications; the Religious Youth Service; the Universal Peace Federation; the Women's Federation for World Peace; and the Inter Religious Federation for World Peace.⁴⁸ CARP (the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles), a student organisation that played a significant outreach role, was founded in Korea as early as 1955; it then expanded to Japan in 1964, and in 1973 spread throughout America then Europe, becoming a

⁴⁴ Popularly referred to as 'Star Wars', Nixon's SDI involved the militarisation of space.

⁴⁵ http://www.uk.upf.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=515:rev-moons-grand-vision-of-peace-connecting-the-world-across-the-bering-strait-the-korea-japan-tunnel-and-the-international-highwayproject&catid=36:peace-and-development&Itemid=58

⁴⁶ Reverend Kwak was one of Moon's closest aides, but became estranged from Moon shortly before the latter's death and is currently closely allied with Preston Moon, who is married to one of Kwak's daughters. See Introvigne (2018).

⁴⁷ <https://www.au.org/church-state/may-2003-church-state/people-events/sun-myung-moon-forms-new-political-party-to-merge>

⁴⁸ For an impressively long list of Unification associated organisations, see <https://www.culteducation.com/unif121.html>.

⁵⁷ <https://carplife.org/our-mission/>

familiar feature on campuses as a means of recruitment to the movement throughout the world.⁵⁷ Finally, a whole series of conferences were organised by the movement to which leading experts in, for example, the fields of science,⁴⁹ theology,⁵⁹ the media, academia, sport and politics were invited to exchange ideas in luxury hotels, all expenses paid. (Barker 1979; ⁵⁰Horowitz 1978)

Unificationism as a Cultural Movement⁶⁰

The Little Angels is but one of the many cultural activities associated with Unificationism. It was founded as early as 1962. Mention has already been made of the Universal Ballet, which had Julia Moon first as its prima ballerina and later as its Director. The Kirov Academy of Ballet (formerly the Universal Ballet Academy) is a ballet school founded by Moon in Washington, D.C. in 1989.

In 1972 the Unificationist International Cultural Foundation acquired the New York City Symphony Orchestra. But Moon's interest in music was not confined to the classics. It is said that he "went out one day and bought sixty-one brand new instruments to create the core of four new brass bands".⁵¹ The Go World Brass Band drew audiences throughout the world, with Unificationists specialising in enthusiastic jazz performances. Other musical ventures included The New Hope Singers which had approximately 50 members in the 1970s. Mention might also be made of the Holy Songs that Unificationists, including Moon himself, have composed and frequently sung on both internal and public occasions (Holy Spirit Association 1972).⁵²

There have been a number of accomplished artists who are or have been members of the Unification Church. One of these painted a series of murals depicting episodes in Moon's life around the gallery of the *New Yorker* foyer. Another is Jan Parker, who now lives in Hawaii but whose work I greatly admired when he lived in

⁴⁹ The International Conference on the Unity of Sciences (ICUS) met annually from 1973. It was through being invited to the London ICUS in 1974 that I first met the Unification Church. (Barker 1984: 12)

⁵⁰ These were known as the God Conferences and the participants included a wide range of theologians and religious studies professors. Several influential black pastors played a prominent role at these meetings. ⁶⁰ There is a sense in which the Unification movement, at least around the 1970s, could be seen as a countercultural movement. It was one of the most prominent movements that were offering a disillusioned middle-class youth an answer to the problems of the world. Indeed, one of the frequently employed questions that Unification missionaries would ask potential recruits was whether they had any answers to the mess the world was in; then, when they received a negative answer, they would suggest that they did have an answer, so why not come along to dinner and learn about it?

⁵¹ <http://www.unification.net/1978/780706.html>

⁵² <http://www.euro-tongil.org/swedish/english/holysongs.htm>

London in the 1970s.⁵³ In 2014 the Unification Church Artists' Association boasted 472 members.⁵⁴ Another area into which Unificationists have ventured has been the film industry, most notably when it produced *Inchon*, starring Sir Laurence Olivier as General McArthur leading the amphibious landing of the Americans in 1950.⁶⁵

Unificationism has also been heavily involved with various sporting ventures, including football, the martial arts and skiing. Of particular interest to the Moon family were equestrian events, with Preston Moon competing in the Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992 Olympics as part of the South Korean team. So far as Moon himself was concerned, fishing was a favourite sport that developed into one of the many Unification business enterprises.

Unificationism as a Business Enterprise

Although Unificationism began from modest beginnings, it was able to grow and prosper with hundreds of ventures bringing in billions of dollars, possibly tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars over the years. In the West, much of the early income came from personal donations and fundraising by members, frequently selling (or asking for donations for) candles, flowers, literature and other items on the streets and in other public places – sometimes for sixteen or more hours a day. Joining a Mobile Fundraising Team (MFT) would become a way of life, possibly for ten or more years, during the 1970s and '80s, and it was not unusual for an individual to average nearly \$1,000 a week in the US. (Mickler 1980a: 225)

However, the bulk of Unification wealth has always been generated in Asia, both in Korea and, most importantly, in Japan. According to a 1997 report in the *Washington Post*,

A detailed analysis by the Far Eastern Economic Review in 1990 valued the church's landholdings in South Korea alone at more than \$1 billion. A single property on Seoul's Yoido [*sic*] Island was said to be worth \$250 million...

[However] It is Japan, not Korea, that provides the bulk of the church's wealth -- as much as 70 percent, church observers estimate. A former high-ranking Japanese church member told *The Post*

⁵³ <https://www.saatchiart.com/janparker>

⁵⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UnificationChurchArtistsAssociation/members/> ⁶⁵ <https://www.cineplex.com/Movie/inchon/Photos>

in 1984 that \$800 million had come from Japan into the United States in the previous nine years [1975-1984].

Japanese church members have long turned profits selling ginseng products and religious items such as miniature stone pagodas -- products imported from Moon companies in Korea. (Fisher and Leen 1997a)

Another report claimed that Japanese members regularly raised \$4000 per month each, and that over 100 million dollars was raised by their efforts every year, 90 per cent of which was sent to support Unification ventures elsewhere.⁵⁵

Considerable amounts of Unification income have been invested in real estate. In America the movement purchases included such properties as The New Yorker Hotel, the Manhattan Center, the Belvedere Estate in Tarrytown and various other properties throughout not only the States, but also much of Europe and Latin America, where vast swathes of Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil were purchased, and where, reportedly, Moon claimed he was building , 'a kingdom of heaven on earth, a new Garden of Eden.'⁵⁶ Real estate was also acquired in Japan and South Korea, with, perhaps most impressively of all, Cheongpyeong, a small town to the east of Seoul, housing a large complex of facilities including the Heaven and Earth Training Center,⁵⁷ where various Unification events take place, including Ancestor Liberation and Ancestor Blessing ceremonies.⁵⁸

Not altogether surprisingly, this widespread accumulation of land and properties was by no means always welcomed. Back in the early '90s, *The New York Times* reported that the Church had demanded a personal apology from a developer named Donald Trump when it was trying to buy a property in which Trump had an interest and one of his associates had asked how local inhabitants would feel "when a thousand Moonies descend on Palm Beach every weekend?"⁵⁹

One of the most lucrative businesses in which Moon and later his son, Kook Jin (Justin 1970-), were engaged was the manufacture of armaments (Mickler 2013a). Although Moon advocated peaceful means of Unification and overcoming (satanic) atheistic communism, he appeared to have no intention of leaving it to chance. At the

⁵⁵ <http://www.geocities.ws/craigmaxim/w-1b.html>

⁵⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/28/world/suspicion-following-sun-myung-moon-to-brazil.html?mcubz=0>

⁵⁷ <http://en.cptc.kr/>

⁵⁸ <http://um-uk.org/files/2016/09/20160830-88-Cheongpyeong-2-day-WS-Schedule-Eng.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/26/nyregion/unification-church-insists-trump-apologize.html>

height of the Cold War, he warned that if “North Korea provokes a war against the South Korean people,” his followers would organize a “Unification Crusade Army” and “take part in the war as a supporting force to defend both Korea and the free world” (Mickler 2003). Unification movement-owned factories in Korea manufactured M-1 rifles and the Vulcan Cannon. Starting in the early 1990s, Kook Jin has been building up his own armaments empire at the centre of which is Kahr Arms.⁶⁰ This is part of an inter-related set of companies that include N.Y. Saeilo, a subsidiary of Saeilo (Korea) Inc., which in turn was part of the Tongil Group in Seoul, South Korea (Jarvis 2011).⁶¹ Among the many groups associated with Tongil,⁷³ is the Ilwha Company, which has world-wide sales of various ginseng products that are said to have not only healing effects for the body, but also to have spiritual properties.⁶²

The Unification-related International Oceanic Enterprises include Master Marine Inc., which involves ship-building and a sea-food processing plant.⁷⁵ In 2006, the *Chicago Times* ran an article on the connection between the Unification Church and the True World Group which it referred to as a commercial powerhouse that built fleets of boats, ran dozens of distribution centres and supplied most of the nation’s estimated 9,000 sushi restaurants on a daily basis (Eng *et al.* 2006). Several other kinds of restaurants are run by Unificationists, one being the Tick Tack Diner on the ground floor of the New Yorker Hotel.⁶³

Among the other hundreds, or, probably thousands of Unification-related ventures, are or have been the Christian Bernard jewellery chain; Pyonghwa Motors; a titanium mine; golf courses; computer firms; photography shops; candle factories; travel firms; publishing houses and numerous journals and magazines (such as *In-*

⁶⁰ Justin (Kook Jin) has chosen to support his brother Sean (Hyung Jin Moon), who heads the Sanctuary Church faction of Unificationism and is a forceful advocate not only of the right to bear arms, as guaranteed by the US Second Amendment, but also the desirability of all citizens owning and knowing how to use firearms as a means of self defence. See, for example, <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1120290311602&ca=f09d39d2-a89e-4412-a7257d472b48561f>

⁶¹ <http://www.tongilgroup.org/eng/mastart/mastart.php> Tongil Industries Co., Ltd. was formerly known as TIC JINHEUNG CO.,LTD. and changed its name to Tongil Industries Co., Ltd. in April 2006. The company was founded in 1988 and is based in Changwon-si, South Korea. Tongil Industries Co., Ltd. operates as a subsidiary of Tongil Group. <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=100714377> ⁷³ ‘Tongil’ is Korean for ‘unification’, the name of the Unification Church in Korean being ‘Tongilgyo’, <http://www.encyclo.co.uk/meaning-of-Tongil%20Group>

⁶² Sontag (1977: 143-4) recounts how during a break in his interview with Moon, ginseng tea was served and Moon talked about how honeyed ginseng invigorated him. Salonen, one of the American leaders, then told how Japanese leaders of the ginseng tea trading company had said “Under Father’s direction we need two religions. We need *Divine Principle* for the spirit and ginseng tea for the body”.

⁷⁵ *Rome News Tribune* 27 November 1985.

⁶³ The hotel, now the Wyndham New Yorker, is no longer run by the Unification Church, although several of its offices are located there.

sight and *The World and I*). The first daily newspaper the movement launched was *Sekkai Nippo* in Japan in 1975. Two years later the *News World* (later renamed the *New York City Tribune*) appeared on the streets of New York. This was joined by a Spanish-language daily, *Noticias del Mundo* for the New York Hispanic community. One of the most influential dailies, *The Washington Times* began publication in 1982. Further publications have appeared throughout the entire American continent and the Far East, as well as the *Middle East Times*, a cable television network, and a news service, Free Press International.⁶⁴

However vast and extensive as Unification economic resources may be, it is worth remembering, as Bromley (1985: 270) pointed out, that they could seem dwarfed by comparison with those of some of the other more mainstream churches; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (popularly known as the Mormons) being an example in point. It is also worth noting that several Unification ventures have operated at a loss. *The Washington Times* would not appear to have ever been expected to make a profit; figures vary as to just how much it ran at a loss, one report claims it reached \$35 million a year (Fisher and Leen 1997b). Another factor to be taken into account is that Unification businesses were affected negatively with the Asian stock market collapses of 1987 and 1997, though the True Sons, Kook Jin (Justin 1970-) and Hyun Jin (Preston 1969-) are astute business men who have contributed, variously, to the recovery and growth of much of the Unification business empire.

Finally a word might be added about the distribution of Unification wealth. Despite the fact that I have frequently been told by members that it is not the case, there can be little doubt that the Moon family has benefited considerably from the riches that the movement has accumulated. Close associates of Moon, mainly the Korean inner circle, and others in positions of leadership have also benefited materially. Rank and file members, however, especially in Japan and the West who converted in the early years, frequently donated whatever assets they had and worked for long hours with little or no remuneration. As they grew old, many have found themselves without any pension or health insurance (Barker 2012). The poverty that these early converts are experiencing is likely to be less severe for subsequent generations now that the majority of members are no longer expected to work for the movement, and

⁶⁴ Bromley (1985) gives a detailed account of Unification financial structure in the mid-1980s. See also <https://www.culteducation.com/unif121.html> for a list of many of the Unification associated organisations.

⁷⁸ <https://uts.edu/index.php>

those that do are now likely to receive competitive salaries with at least some insurance for the future. There are, however, many Blessed children who have left the movement and feel bitter about having to support their ageing parents.

Unificationism as an Educational Movement

Moon always recognised the value of education – several of his early disciples in Korea had joined from Ewha University in Seoul. As mentioned in the opening section, converts to the Unification Church in the West were disproportionately from middle-class families. Some had joined during a gap year, others had dropped out of college to join the movement, but yet others had graduated with a Bachelor's degree. In the 1970s the movement acquired a 250-acre property in Barrytown, Upstate New York that had belonged to the Christian Brothers. This was turned into the Unification Theological Seminary,⁷⁸ which began offering two-year courses to graduate Unificationists in 1975, and which became accredited in 1996 by Middle States Commission of Higher Education. Although the UTS is Unification owned and many of its staff and faculty are Unificationists, it has a long history of inviting non-Unificationist theologians and other scholars to teach and take part in seminars and conferences, the proceedings of which have sometimes been published.⁶⁵ It also produces the *Journal of Unification Studies*.⁶⁶ For several years, many of the UTS graduates were sent by the movement to pursue Doctoral programmes at Ivy League universities.⁶⁷ At the time of writing, the UTS has a three-year Master of Divinity course, has begun to grant doctorates in theology,⁶⁸ and has recently launched on-line courses.⁶⁹

From around the 1970s, an increasing number of Blessed children were being born. At that time, Moon expected the mothers to leave their children in order to serve as fundraisers and missionaries.⁷⁰ Children were handed over to the care of minders and a number of small nursery schools were established. One such in the

⁶⁵ See, for example, Bryant and Foster 1980; Bryant and Hodges 1978; Quebedeaux 1982; Quebedeaux and Sawatsky 1979.

⁶⁶ <http://journals.uts.edu/component/content/article?id=2:from-the-editor>

⁶⁷ The True Children received their education at top American universities, some of them reaching doctoral level.

⁶⁸ Many of the UTS courses are now taught at its annex in New York City rather than at the Barrytown campus.

⁶⁹ <https://uts.edu/online>

⁷⁰ Not all mothers were prepared to part from their children, but many did, sometimes regretting having done so later, especially when the children were old enough to express their resentment at having been abandoned. (Barker 1983)

UK was at Cleeve House just outside the Wiltshire village of Seend.⁷¹ Some of these nurseries and schools had trained child minders and/or teachers; others did not. When they were old enough, the children usually attended non-Unificationist schools (often keeping their religious affiliation a secret). Some, however, were sent to the Little Angels School, which, beside teaching ballet, was a co-educational boarding school, later called the Sunhwa Arts High School.⁸⁷ Here the Blessed children from the West were expected to become proficient in the Korean language.⁸⁸

Other educational establishments associated with, if not formally connected to the Unification Church include the New Hope Academy in Maryland, USA,⁷² the University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, CT, which the Professors' World Peace Academy took over and injected with Unification funds in the 1990s,⁷³ and the Sun Moon University in South Korea, which was established in 1989.⁷⁴

Is Unificationism a Cult?

The term 'cult' has been used in a variety of different ways. Sometimes it refers to the veneration or devotion directed towards a particular figure or object; thus, a Marian cult implies devotion to the mother of Jesus. Sometimes it refers to a secular craze or vogue, such as a television series. In sociology it is used in a number of technical ways to describe a religious group that, unlike the church or the denomination, but like the sect, is in tension with society; however, unlike the sect it is not a schismatic movement but may be defined as a religious innovation (Stark and Bainbridge 1979). Unificationism could fit into such a definition. Alternatively, the cult may be seen as 'characteristically a loose association of persons with a private, eclectic religiosity' (McGuire 1997: 144). Unificationism would be less likely to be classified as a cult in this sense. But whatever definitions are used to define a cult for purposes of sociological enquiry, the concept is neutral so far as any moral evaluation is concerned.

This is not the case when the term cult is applied to a religious (or political) organisation in popular parlance. Here 'cult' is clearly conveying that the group is 'a bad

⁷¹ Cleeve House was also used for Unification workshops and is currently offering accommodation to the public for Bed and Breakfast, wedding receptions and conferences. <http://www.cleeve-house.com/>

⁸⁷ <https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Sunhwa%20Arts%20School> ⁸⁸ Non-Unificationist children could also attend.

⁷² <http://www.newhopeacademy.org/>

⁷³ <http://www.bridgeport.edu/>

⁷⁴ <http://tulip.sunmoon.ac.kr/english/main.do>

thing’. No religion calls itself a cult; it is a recognised term of abuse.⁷⁵ There have been numerous descriptions of what is meant by a cult in this sense, but the one thing that they have in common is a negative evaluation. Not infrequently the negativity is explicit in that the adjective ‘destructive’ is added. Often there is a list of characteristics, some but not all of which would be found in a cult.⁷⁶ Among the many items on such lists are a charismatic leader; criminal activities; a focus on making money and recruiting new members and the use of brainwashing or mind-control techniques. As a sociologist, my preference is to consider Unificationism as a new religious movement rather than a cult, but before doing that, let me address some ‘cult issues’. I have already included a brief discussion about Moon as a charismatic leader and about Unification involvement in financial affairs, but it is worth (very briefly) considering Unificationism as a criminal movement and examining the charge of brainwashing.

Unificationism as a Criminal Movement

When speaking of a particular religion as a criminal movement, reference may be being made to the activities of the leader, the explicit directions of the leadership, the leadership turning a blind eye to members’ criminal actions, or members performing criminal activities expressly against the directions of the leadership. It is not always obvious what is the case in any particular instance; the distinction is, nonetheless, one that is worth bearing in mind.

The Unification Movement and organisations associated with it, its leadership and other members have all been involved in criminal and/or civil litigation throughout the world over the years. Moon himself has been imprisoned on a number of occasions – starting from the 1940s before the HSA-UWC was founded. His own account of these episodes has tended to differ substantially in a number of instances from that of his enemies.⁷⁷ Then, in America in the 1980s, he again found himself in prison.

⁷⁵ Confusingly, in French, traditional religions are referred to as *cultes* whereas religions that are disapproved of are termed *sectes*.

⁷⁶ Frequently the list includes the list that Robert J Lifton (1961: Ch. 22) used to describe, not the characteristics of a cult, but the techniques used in trying to persuade captive prisoners of war to accept Chinese propaganda. For examples of ways in which cults have been typified, see: http://www.csj.org/infoserv_cult101/checklis.htm ; <http://www.decision-making-confidence.com/destructive-cults.html> ; <http://www.quackwatch.com/02ConsumerProtection/cult.html> ; <http://www.caic.org.au/general/cult-crit.htm>

⁷⁷ Compare, for example, Moon (2010: 89ff); and <http://howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/search/prison>

⁷⁸ F.2d 1210 (1983): *United States of America, Appellee, v. Sun Myung Moon and Takeru Kamiyama*,

On this occasion he was sentenced to eighteen months' for tax evasion.⁹⁵ Several other religious organisations filed *amicus curiae* briefs on Moon's behalf as they felt that his crime of banking Church money in his name then failing to declare it as income and pay taxes on the interest was something that pastors of other religions commonly did (Sherwood 1993: Ch.10).

Accusations and rumours have long circulated about the criminal activities of the movement and its members. The alleged crimes have ranged from street selling without a peddler's licence through zoning violations to burglary and murder.⁷⁹ Charges of tax evasion have been brought against the movement in a number of countries (Hong 1998: Sontag 1977).⁸⁰ When a Unificationist was convicted for poaching protected baby sharks, he is said to have implicated Moon in the illegal activity.⁹⁸ Several members and former members have talked about smuggling money across national borders (Hong 1998: 173); I have been told by a former Unificationist that she was instructed to sew money into her petticoat; another said he had carried a suitcase packed with notes through customs. I have heard directly and indirectly of Unificationists entering into marriages that they had no intention of honouring in order to acquire visas for other Unificationists. In August 2006 it was widely reported that around 700 Unificationists had broken into the office of a newspaper company, destroyed the computers and other objects as well as violently attacking a photographer and a reporter.⁸¹ It has been alleged by several former Unificationists, and by his son, that the movement was responsible for the death of Professor Tahk (Tark) Myeong Hwan, a Korean scholar who was reportedly attacked on a number of occasions for refusing to stop publishing material exposing Moon and his Church.⁸²

Among the more consequential activities leading to criminal charges and large fines have been the Japanese members' spiritual sales. (Yamaguchi 2001: 48)

Two years later, reported that "In over ten cases in Japan the civil courts have found the Unification Church liable for activities related to persuading people to make donations" Yamaguchi (2003: 225). The fines that the Church was ordered to Defendants-Appellants. Nos. 755, 765, 766 and 1153, Dockets 82-1275, 82-1279, 82-1277, 82-1357 and 821387. United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit. Argued March 23, 1983. Decided September 13, 1983. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/U.S._v._Sun_Myung_Moon_718_F.2d_1210_\(1983\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/U.S._v._Sun_Myung_Moon_718_F.2d_1210_(1983))

⁷⁹ Many of these accusations can be found on a site fuelled primarily by disillusioned former members: <http://howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/05/15/Moons-church-in-France-charged-with-income-taxevation/3953453441600/>; (see Hong 1998: 144) ⁹⁸ <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2007/2/1/297282/>

⁸¹ <http://www.religionnewsblog.com/16047/unification-church-attacks-newspaper>

⁸² <http://howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/post/147190205303/tahk-myeong-hwan-was-offered-abribe-of-450000>

pay ranged from \$60,000 to \$500,000 (*ibid.*: 228-9.) These sales have now almost completely ceased, much to the relief of a number of Western Unificationists who were embarrassed by the practice.

Although they have not been as litigious as the Church of Scientology, Unificationists themselves have instigated court proceedings on several occasions. This was not least when the illegal kidnapping of members was being conducted for the purpose of deprogramming.⁸³ Sometimes, however, it has been assumed that the case was brought against the movement, when it was actually the movement that brought a case against the defendant. One such example was the *Daily Mail* case in the UK in the early 1980s. The *Mail*, a nationwide tabloid, had published a story accusing the Church of brainwashing and breaking up families. The leader of the British movement sued the paper for libel, but lost and the movement had to pay considerable damages (Barker 1984: 121ff).⁸⁴ The verdict was upheld by three Lords of the Court of Appeal. Unusually, the jury not only found the *Daily Mail* was justified in its accusations, but also requested the Attorney General should revoke the charitable status of two Unification organisations. As a consequence, another case ensued against the Church; on this occasion, however, the Church won and kept its charitable status.

The libel case was just one instance that fanned anti-Unification sentiment. Even when no criminal action could be proved, it was assumed ‘proved’ that the Church was a danger to society. In March 1982, for example, eight Members of the European Parliament tabled a motion (unsuccessfully) for a resolution which began:

The European Parliament, deeply concerned by the distress and family break-ups caused by Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church;

1. Welcomes the media’s relentless exposure of the Moonies’ activities;
2. Urges public authorities throughout the Community to ensure that the Moonies are not given special tax benefits, charity status, or other privileges;
3. Calls upon its Committee ... to report on the activities of Sun Myung Moon’s followers in the Unification Church and the danger to society that

⁸³ The practice has by now been almost entirely abandoned in favour of voluntary interventions (Giambalvo *et al.* 2013), although it has continued in Japan. (Fautré 2012)

⁸⁴ <http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Marshall/Marshall-810700.htm> ; <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/01/world/moon-s-sect-loses-libel-suit-in-london.html?mcubz=0>

they represent.⁸⁵

Of course most religions have had members who have engaged in criminal activities. An obvious example is the amount of child abuse that has taken place within the Catholic Church and, indeed, most, if not all other mainstream religions. It is not usually the case that the religion has explicitly encouraged this, but the crime of the Catholic Church itself was not reporting the paedophiliac priests to the police; it frequently turned a blind eye or moved them to some other place where they were able to offend once again. But, although there may have been the isolated case, sexual child abuse is not a crime associated with the Unification movement, although I have heard people who know nothing about the movement apart from the fact that it has been labelled a destructive cult assuming, because it has happened in some ‘cults’,⁸⁶ that it also occurs in Unificationism.

In short, it is clear that Unificationism has been involved in a variety of criminal activities; but it could be argued that that in itself cannot distinguish it very satisfactorily from other religions that are deemed not to be cults, but ‘real religions’.

Unificationism as a Brainwashing Movement

Brainwashing is, of course, a metaphor. No Unificationist has ever had his or her brains literally scrubbed out, ready for some new-fangled beliefs to be implanted. This is not to say that Unificationists have not exerted considerable influence on potential converts, inviting them for a weekend, then week-long seminars or workshops where they would have little if any contact with non-members. Nor does it mean that Unificationists have always been totally honest about who they were or that Moon was their leader.⁸⁷ However, the idea that Unificationists were in command of irresistible and irreversible methods of mind control was just not true – however much they might have liked it to be.

In a study I conducted, in the late 1970s when accusations of brainwashing were⁸⁵ Mrs Wiczorek-Zeul *et al.*, ‘Motion for a Resolution on Distress Caused by Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church’, *European Parliament Working Document* PE 77.807, 9 March 1982.

⁸⁶ The Children of God is one new religion where the leadership was directly involved in and even encouraged underage sexual activity at one period (Barker 2016; Jones *et al.* 2007) and at one time the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) allowed unfettered sexual child abuse to take place at several of its gurukulas (boarding schools) (Rochford and Heinlein 1998). Both these movements eventually took radical steps to prevent the continuation of such practices (Barker forthcoming).

⁸⁷ The concept of Heavenly Deception, sometimes seen as an acceptable means for an end desired by God, was associated particularly with Californian Unificationists in the 1970s and ’80s. (Barker 1984: 176)

reaching their height, I found that, of over a thousand potential converts who were interested enough in the movement to agree to attend a residential workshop, only 10 per cent actually joined as a full-time member for over a week. Clearly the Unificationists' efforts had not been irresistible. I also found that after one year half of those who had joined had left, and after two years only 4 per cent of the original 1,017 were still full-time Unificationists (Barker 1984: 146). Clearly any mind control techniques were not irreversible.⁸⁸¹⁰⁶ Moreover, I was later to find that around 90 per cent of the first cohort of second-generation (Blessed) children had left the movement. Were the (evidently apocryphal) saying of Ignatius of Loyola, "Give me the child for the first seven years and I will give you the man" true, it might be argued that Catholic socialisation was far more effective than that of the Unification Church.

It would seem that those who use the concept of 'brainwashing' are more likely to refer to an outcome which they find incomprehensible and of which they disapprove, rather than referring to the actual process that leads a person to reach a certain decision.

Unificationism as a New Religious Movement (NRM)

As I suggested earlier, the concept of a new religious movement seems to be a more useful means of categorising Unificationism than that of a cult.⁸⁹¹⁰⁷ It is not that the concept of NRM is without difficulties; it can be fraught with them. However, if one defines a new religion as one that consists predominantly of a first-generation membership, many of those difficulties can be circumvented and we are given some clues as to what we might at least look for in a movement so defined. (Barker 2004)

First, by definition, the movement consists largely of converts, and converts tend to be more enthusiastic, even fanatic, than people who have been born into a religion. This has been very obviously the case with Unificationists.

Secondly, an NRM is likely to attract an atypical representation of the general population. In the past, such movements have frequently appealed to the socially, po-

⁸⁸ In another study carried out independently around the same time, Marc Galanter came up with almost identical results (Barker 1984 146; Galanter 1980).

⁸⁹ However, it can be argued that when someone leaves a controlling NRM and is bewildered by the situation in which they find themselves, unable to comprehend why they ever joined, concepts such as cult and even 'mind control' (though undue influence could be preferable) can help with the initial orientation and relieve any feelings of guilt for things they may have done. With the passage of time, however, it is arguably healthier to go beyond a reliance on the 'c' word to explain the past. clues as to what we might at least look for in a movement so defined (Barker 2004).

littically or economically oppressed. The Unification Church, like many other NRMs that emerged during the second half of the twentieth century, appealed disproportionately in the West and in Japan to young adults from the middle-classes.

Thirdly, NRMs are usually founded and led in the initial stages by a charismatic leader who is accorded a charismatic authority by his (or her) followers. As we have discussed above, Moon was accepted by Unificationists as a charismatic Messiah.

Fourthly, NRMs can adopt a dichotomous world view. Clear distinctions are drawn theologically between Godly and satanic; morally between good and evil; temporally between before and after; and socially between them and us. Such distinctions have been evident in the Unificationist view of the world, especially in the early days.

Fifthly, NRMs tend to be treated with suspicion and fear by the wider society. Despite the fact that Moon managed to secure contacts, and indeed admiration from a number of notables, it was undoubtedly the case that Unificationists were generally treated with, at best, mistrust, and at worst, loathing.

Sixthly, and finally, NRMs will usually change far more rapidly and radically than older, more established religions. Frequently they will become less extreme and more accommodating towards society – a process referred to by sociologists as denominationalisation. (Niebuhr1957)⁹⁰

Unificationism as a Denominationalising Religious Movement

Although the Unification Church has never completely denominationalised, it has undergone momentous changes since its beginnings in the immediate post-World War II period, one of the most significant changes being the arrival of a second generation who, rather than having converted to an NRM were born into one.

The change in the demographic structure of the movement was spectacular. In the West in the 1970s a graph showing the numbers of Unificationists at different ages, showed very few under the age of 18, then a spike of those in their early to mid-20s, dropping to relatively few aged 30 or over. By 2007, the average age of Unificationists was, as 40 years earlier, around the mid-20s, however, there were relatively few of that age, but there were two spikes, one around the age of 15 and the other, a

⁹⁰ It should be noted, as Bryan Wilson (1970) has demonstrated, that not all NRMs (or 'sects') denominationalise. The Amish, the Hutterites and Jehovah's Witnesses are examples of non-denominationalising religions.

slightly smaller spike,⁹¹ around the age of 50. Space does not permit a detailed examination of the consequences that this change in the demographic profile had made, but it requires only a little thought to imagine some ways in which a movement with young, healthy and enthusiastic converts with no dependents would differ from a movement with middle-aged parents and young teenage children. With the passage of time, the demographic profile can be expected to become increasingly similar to that of the population as a whole.

Another change that occurred from around the late 1980s and early '90s was that Western Unificationists were less likely to live in the movement's centres or a fundraising van than to live as nuclear families in their own homes.⁹² Furthermore, only a few now work for the movement full time, though some volunteer in their spare time. This, and the general experience of maturing, contributes to a weakening of the strictly dichotomous world view; grey areas and qualifications have become more tolerated; membership itself can become ambiguous, especially among the adult second generation who may not accept much or even all of the teachings, but still like to associate with the friends with whom they grew up and who may still want to be Blessed with another Unificationist. While, as mentioned earlier, the first cohort of Blessed children left in droves, the movement was considerably more careful in its socialisation of the second cohort of the second generation. Whilst an organisation such as CARP had existed (and still exists)⁹³ for college and university students, HARP (High School Association for the Research of Principles) was founded for children of high school age; STF (a Special Task Force) enabled high school graduates to spend one or two years fundraising and doing missionary work; and various workshops and summer camps have been arranged for young people to meet together and learn about Unification beliefs and practices (including the meaning of the Blessings) on a regular basis.

Although Moon remained a central figure until (and indeed after) his death, his authority over all aspects of the lives of the younger generation is decidedly less than it was for their parents. Although there are still hierarchical structures with clear lines of leadership, first the True Children and then other 'second gens' have been moving into positions of leadership and decision-making. There have been attempts to in-

⁹¹ This spike had diminished over the years due to the turnover in membership.

⁹² Often Unificationist homes cluster in a particular location, enabling members to meet for worship and social occasions.

⁹³ <https://carplife.org/>

roduce a greater democratisation in at least parts of the movement. To some extent this has resulted in frustration for the would-be reformers who complain that they encounter well-nigh insuperable problems with long-term members who are used to accepting decisions from above and who are not used to innovating.

There can, however, be no doubt that, very generally speaking, the Unificationism of the twenty-first century has been less ‘in your face’ with more accommodation to the norms of the wider society, which, again very generally speaking, no longer sees it as the threat it once did and which, even more generally speaking, seems largely unaware of its existence. In fact, Unificationism’s pugilisms are now more likely to be found within than without the movement – or, rather, movements.

Unificationism as Fragmented Schismatic Movements

There have been schismatic movements throughout the lifetime of Unificationism, but these were rarely more than an irritation and did not threaten the overall organisation. Originally the eldest True Son of Reverend and Mrs Moon, Hyo Jin, was the heir apparent, but partly on account of his behaviour (Hong 1998) and then because of his death, it looked as though the next son, Preston (Hyun Jin), would be the successor. Before Moon’s death, however, a rift had developed between Preston and his father, which resulted in Moon proclaiming that he would be succeeded by his youngest son, Hyung Jin (Sean 1979-) (Bramwell 2016; Kim 2017; Mickler 2013b).¹¹² Following Moon’s death, however, Mrs Moon declared that it was she who was now the rightful leader:

Having made the spirit world as his abode, the True Father is now freely going in and out of the physical and spiritual worlds and working towards spreading the Cheon Il Guk.¹¹³ Being the true identity of God of the Night, he will come to the physical world the second time and dispense his providence together with True Mother, who will continue with the providence on earth as the true identity of God of the Day... (Hak Ja Han’s speech 17 September 2012, quoted in Kim 2017: 246).

There are now three main factions of Unificationism. Mrs Moon heads the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) from her base in Korea. Her justification for carrying on the work started by her husband was first that Moon had

made it clear that Messiahship depended not on one man but on True Parents and she was an integral element in that partnership. Her claims have, however, become stronger of late, with statements suggesting that it was actually she who raised her husband to his position rather than the other way round as Moon had maintained. She has, furthermore, declared that she is the Only Begotten Daughter (Bramwell 2016; Wilson 2015).

Preston heads the Global Peace Foundation (which he originally founded as the Global Peace Festival Foundation in 2009) and the Family Peace Association from Seattle, Washington State along with UCI in Washington DC.¹¹⁴ His justification for taking over the movement after his father's death is that he is the eldest son and that patrilineal succession is fundamental to everything that Moon taught (Bramwell 2016: 18).¹¹⁵ A further qualification claimed by Preston is that he has fulfilled his own 'portion of responsibility' by gaining merit through his global providential peace work.

Thirdly, once his mother, whom he has now referred to as the Whore of Babylon (Moon, Hyung Jin 2016),¹¹⁶ rejected his leadership, Sean founded the Sanctuary Church, based in Pennsylvania, and enjoys the support of his older brother, Kook Jin (Justin). His justification for succeeding his father is that his father had crowned him as his heir and successor back in 2009¹¹⁷ – a claim repudiated by followers of Preston and, more recently, the FFWPU.

¹¹² See also Fefferman (2018).

¹¹³ "What is Cheon Il Guk? It is the world level." Sun Myung Moon's speech, 31 January 2003.

<http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon03/SM030131e.htm>

¹¹⁴ Originally called the Unification Church International, ownership of the UCI is being hotly contested by the FFWPU, which is currently claiming in litigation that it holds ultimate legal control. The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification International, et al., Plaintiffs, v. Hyun Jin Moon, et al., Defendants District of Columbia Superior Court Civil No. 2011 CA 003721 B

¹¹⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_ztei3OBEE

¹¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15jHsHJ78R8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-wuoqE2EgVM>. In September 2017, Sean declared that he has now married his father to a new bride, Hyung Shil Kang, who had previously had a spirit world Blessing to St. Augustine, and who has now

been declared to be the True Mother.

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1120290311602&ca=-da02e9d7-ad76-43c2-a79a32ce441a89c8>; <https://vimeo.com/235194285>.

¹¹⁷ <http://sanctuary-pa.org/index.php/successor/>. See also the statement Moon signed in 2010: The Authority of The True Parents of Mankind From Now Will Be Represented By The Youngest Son. <https://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon10/SunMyungMoon-100605.htm>.

The rivalry between the groups is fierce. The disagreements centre on a number of fronts: theological justifications for their respective claims to the Unification inheritance; legal disputes about control of various Unification organisations;⁹⁴ and the allegiance of followers.

As a result of the splits, many long-lasting friendships have been wrecked – there are families that have been rent asunder as one family member has joined one group and another family member has joined a different one. Even Blessed marriages have been wrecked. Some Unificationists are uncertain exactly where their allegiance lies, and have moved to the margins of the movement, not wanting to commit themselves too completely; others feel that they have been disconnected and have become more or less ‘solitaries’; yet others have disconnected themselves from Unificationism altogether or, occasionally, joined one of the other small schisms in Japan or elsewhere.

Unificationism in the Future?

Few, if any, of the new religions that emerged in the post-World War II period have made such an impact on so many fronts. Few have attracted such vitriolic hatred, and few have attracted such unbridled admiration. Unificationism has been uniquely innovative in many arenas, and it has made an enormous difference to the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals – be they members, former members or non-members. How much it has affected the world in general is hard to gauge – probably not as much as its members believe; it would, nonetheless, be foolhardy for history to ignore its achievements, for better or for worse.

It would be foolhardy also to predict what will happen next, but it seems unlikely that there will be any unification between the warring factions in the immediate future. What will happen after Mrs Moon dies is unknown, but there are rumours

⁹⁴ I remarked some time ago to one of the lawyers involved in the legal battles that his firm must be earning billions from the litigious procedures. “No, only millions,” he replied. I assumed that he was joking, but have since been told that the case was costing Preston’s ‘side’ around \$750,000 a week.

that she might be preparing the eldest son of her now deceased first son, Hyo Jin (1962-2008), by his second wife, Yun Ah Choi, thus skipping a generation in the True Family lineage.

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