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# Just What Is The Unification Church?

Second Of Four Articles  
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*"At the age of 16, I had a very spiritual, deep experience encountering Jesus Christ in the Korean countryside. That was the beginning of the revelations.*

*"Ever since that particular encounter, I have been in constant communication with the living God and the living saints in the spirit world, including Jesus, in my own search for truth. This cannot be explained in words too well."*

The above is a quote from the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, South Korean founder and "Father" of the controversial Unification Church, which claims well over two million members worldwide in more than 120 countries and every state in the Union.

Unification Church literature says "the essential doctrine of the Church is called the 'Divine Principle.' It teaches that God originally intended an ideal world of creation, but because of the fall of the first human ancestors this world had never been realized. History is consequently viewed as a restoration process to realize the world of God's original desire, the Kingdom of God on earth. The present time is seen as one of the most crucial in

man's history, one where we must look for God's intervention in human affairs to help us solve the global crisis we face."

Despite the church's inferred goals of world love, peace, unity and harmony, the Unification movement has come under fire in the United States; charges have ranged from routine brainwashing of young recruits to mass suicide training as with the Peoples Temple — allegations Moon vehemently denies.

Is the Unification Church a viable religious group? — or a cult with potentially dangerous implications?

America's First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion, providing strong legal protection for all churches, including Unification.

A House Subcommittee report on International Relations concluded late in 1978 that the Unification Church has "systematically violated U.S. tax, immigration, banking, currency and Foreign Agents Registration Act laws, as well as state and local laws relating to charity fraud." But the church never has been convicted of any major wrong-doing on the national level.

Concern about the activities of the Unification Church began to surface at an increasing rate beginning in 1976. It was then, according to a Congressional Record report, that Sen. James Buckley told his colleagues, "many anxious parents are charging that their children are in effect being brainwashed at various houses maintained throughout the country by this movement.

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"Others claim that its objectives are as much political as they are religious, and that funds which are solicited on a tax-exempt basis for religious or other charitable purposes are actually used for political purposes in contravention of the law.

"...There can be no doubt but that the Unification Church does represent a religious movement and as such is subject to the full protection of the first amendment. On the other hand, the church also operates through a maze of business and non-business organizations that have led a number of observers to charge the movement with evasion of tax laws and worse. That Rev. Moon thinks in political as well as cosmic terms would appear to be self-evident..." the report said.

Moon and the Unification Church deny all charges brought upon the church. He explained his multi-million dollar religious empire in a 1976 interview with Newsweek magazine.

"God has been very good to me," Moon said. "But I am not a millionaire businessman, I am a religious leader. A great deal of blessing has been poured upon me. And many people say whatever I touch turns to gold. To a certain extent, that is true. But I know God gave me this blessing — because God knows nothing belongs to me, not even a penny for my own savings. All the work is (for) God. If I were taking advantage of dedicated

young people, not a single soul would follow me. But they recognize my honesty and dedication.

"Although I have lived most of my life in simple surroundings, whether I like it or not I am becoming an international figure. There are many great people who come to see me; it's a matter of protocol. Then people tell me I need protection and a certain dignity."

While the overwhelming majority of Moon's parishioners leads a life of stark simplicity, the reverend lives in a manner which can only be described as opulent.

Moon resides in a \$625,000 estate in Barrytown, N.Y., a small city located on the Hudson River which also serves as Unification Church headquarters. He has yachts at his disposal and is draped heavily with security.

Moon is known among Unification Church members as "Father" (as in, "Father spoke to the entire assembly on the themes of leadership and sacrifice in the Completed Testament" — New Hope News, the Unification publication).

He has been quoted as saying "I am better than Jesus because Jesus failed," and "I am almost better than God."

"Whatever the Moon movement is," said Buckley, "it is a phenomenon we will all be hearing more of, one of which we all need to develop greater familiarity."

**Next: The Unification Church and its people.**