

Unification Church as Seen Through the Eyes of a Beholder

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This evening I shall share with you what it's like to have an interview with a reporter from Time magazine. I had one Friday. It started off with this question, "Why does the Unification Church appeal to so many young people today?"

This was my answer: Because it gives to the youth of America today a worldview and a sense of citizenship in all of human society. Because Unification theology represents a universal religion in which Eastern and Western religions can come together. Because the Unification Church offers young people today a sense of the sacred, both of the earth on which they live and of life itself. Because the Unification Church taps the roots and touches the instincts of young people today for devotion to country, for regard for family, for respect for sexual morality, for discipline to excellence, and for the expression of individuality. And especially because it is intensely humanitarian and it is God-centered.

The next question was: "How is Unification theology different from Christianity?" I responded, ask me first, "How is Unification theology similar to Christianity." She said O.K.

This is the answer I gave: It believes intensely in the possibility of the Kingdom of God. He believes and stands for the providence of God in human history. He stands for the importance of the Bible as the revealed word of God. And it stands for and proclaims the centrality of Jesus Christ.

To how is it different, I gave this answer: Its attitude towards other religions is different. He seeks to find out not how we are different from other religions but seeks to determine how other religions may be complementary to Christianity and how they may come to an understanding of each other. In the second place, Unification theology is different from traditional Christianity in that it has a more positive attitude towards the world of science. Even though Christianity today is making great strides toward unity with the world of science, still there remains a basic conflict between religion and science. But in Unification thought there is no conflict.

The third difference is that Unification theology is non-Trinitarian. "What does that mean?" the reporter asked. And so I went into somewhat of a discourse on what the trinity means. Then I concluded: the

emphasis is on the humanity of Jesus rather than on his divinity.

I said the fourth point of difference is the greatest difference: Unification theology believes that the consummation of history will be focused in the Far East rather than in the Middle East.

Question number three: "What do you think of Reverend Moon? I have read somewhere that members pray to Reverend Moon as though he were God the Father."

To this question and comment my response was: I have listened to them pray hundreds of times and I've never heard that kind of address. I can say with absolute certainty that when they pray they address God as Father and there is a distinct difference between God as Father and Reverend Moon.

"But they call him Father! Don't they think of him as God?" No, I said, and I went into a discourse on that. The reporter continued, "Is he John the Baptist? Is he the Messiah? Who is he?"

Parenthetically, I imagine this reporter would be confused if he believes everything he reads in the press, because Reverend Moon has been depicted recently as an agent of the government of South Korea, a Korean war lord in league with a business tycoon in Japan who took bribes from Lockheed, as head of a munitions factory, a shotgun factory, a rifle factory, the distributor of ginseng tea labeled by a New York Times reporter as an aphrodisiac that doesn't work. (That reporter tried it and didn't like it.) Or he is a sinister Oriental who runs the biggest laundry in the world. There's a sign in that laundry: "Totally responsible for any article left over 21 days."

Well, who is Reverend Moon? He is a man, a man of God, a man called to our times to present to our society and our world a message about the prospects for the possibility of the Kingdom of God and of His righteousness on this earth. So much for the interview with Time, but to me, that's the most exciting thing that's come along in my lifetime and in yours.

I have seen a good share of the world of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. I have seen and talked to and looked into the eyes and into the hearts and felt the pulse of many of the members of the Unification Church. It's been my honor and great privilege to be the professor of biblical studies in Unification Theological Seminary, and these students are as fine as any academic students in the world. But the world of the Unification Church that I see is the direct opposite of that world of the Unification Church which I read and hear reported. And so, consistent with the current policy of media negativism, it is unlikely that my positive statements will appear in print, in Time. (Editor's note: They did not.)

I'd like to leave you with a couple of quotations from the New Testament. First of all, in I Corinthians, the Apostle Paul, in speaking of the future and wondering about the future as we do, say, "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, neither has the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." That's the key to it all. Then the words of the Apocalypse from the Seer John. He felt loneliness, trepidation, and a great deal of frustration, I'm sure, in his isolation on the Isle of Patmos. He also had a great conviction and a great vision that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever." To that I join with him and all of you in saying in my heart, Hallelujah.