

Head of Unification Church to Talk at Lisner Auditorium

Young Hwi Kim
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The appearance here this weekend of the founder of a new avowedly post-Christian religion marks the beginning of a major effort to recruit American members for the movement, the Unification Church one of its officials said this week.

Young Wei Kim, who is president of the Unification Church in Korea, the movement's native country, predicted that by the end of 1974, 2,000 full-time evangelists for the movement would be crisscrossing the country in 50 buses preaching the message of Unification.

Kim is in the United States serving as interpreter for the movement's founder, Sun Myung Moon, who is to lecture at Lisner Auditorium at 2 pm today and Sunday and at 8 p.m. Monday. Moon, who is a former Presbyterian, explained in an interview that his teachings are based on a series of revelations he received from God beginning in 1936 when he was 16 years old.

At the center of Moon's complex teaching is his conviction that a new age has dawned and that the return of the messiah, born again as a baby is imminent. He holds that the new messiah will marry, as Jesus would have had he not been crucified, because the family is the basic unit of society.

It is in the context of family love-parental love mutual love, filial love-that human beings learn the nature of divine love, members of the Unification Church believe. When a person is fully experienced in human love "he is qualified to perceive and receive God's love," Moon said.

"Most religions put the emphasis on life in the hereafter. We emphasize life on this earth," Moon explained through his interpreter. "God intended a kingdom of heaven on earth."

The Divine principle, as Moon calls has revelation, offers a key to the meaning of history, especially that portion of the human story recorded in the Bible, that has proved particularly attractive to educated young people.

In the United States, for example, where the Unification Church has attracted about 4,000 followers according to church figures, about 90 per cent of the members are college graduates. Most members are in their early 20s the church says. Moon's largest following is in Korea, where he estimates he has about 300,000 disciples, making the church a major force. The church claims a world membership of 500, 000 in 25 nations.

One of the most dramatic of Moon's religious acts was his officiation in 1970 of mass wedding in Seoul that united 790 bridal couples simultaneously. Among those married in the ceremony was W. Farley Jones, Washington, the president of the Unification Church in the United States.