JEWS AND JUDAISM IN REV. MOON'S DIVINE PRINCIPLE

A REPORT

by

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THE PERIL OF REV. MOON

There are several levels of significance implied for the American people, and, especially for the Jewish community, in this study of the basic text of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's movement -- the first systematic study, to our knowledge, that has been published of the "sacred scriptures" of Moonism.

The first is that Rev. Moon is contributing to a theologically reactionary mentality whose traditional fixations on anti-Semitism have been repudiated in recent decades by virtually every major Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Evangelical group and leader -- from Vatican Council II, the World and National Council of Churches, to Dr. Billy Graham and the Southern Baptist Convention. At a time when the majority of enlightened Christian leadership throughout the world is laboring to uproot the sources of the pathology of anti-Jewish hatred which culminated in the Nazi holocaust, Rev. Moon appears to be embarked on a contrary course of seeking to reinfect the spiritual bloodstream of mankind with his cancerous version of contempt for Jews and Judaism. On this level, therefore, this document is published as a clinical diagnosis intended to expose the Moon infection in order that both Christian and Jewish leadership will be vigilant to the need for combatting any effort of Rev. Moon and his followers to enter the mainstream of American religion and culture with his horrendous baggage of bigotry.

A second consideration is that we are now dealing not only with an ersatz spiritual phenomenon but one that has potentially serious political implications as well. The recent revelations that Rev. Moon and his Unification Church are allegedly involved as a front group for the South Korean Intelligence Forces in this country who are charged with illegal lobbying and bribery raise the serious issue of whether Moon's anti-Semitism is intended to be used for the ideological objectives of his political backers. If that is the case, then the American people must be alert to the emergence in the Moon phenomenon of an ideological campaign whose antecedents trace back to the Nazis and to Stalinist Communism. Those totalitarian movements consciously and cynically employed anti-Jewish hatred as a major vehicle for real-
izing their apocalyptic goal of undermining the Biblical and democratic values of Western civilization. The troubling question cannot be evaded: why are Rev. Moon and his political backers resorting to the Nazi model of exploiting anti-Semitism for ideological purposes? Every American Congressman, Senator and public official who is approached by the Moon movement ought to be alert to this ideological land-mine of fanatic hatred when courted for support by Rev. Moon and his backers.

And finally, this document is intended for the consciences of Jewish young people who, most incredibly, have been enticed or seduced to become a "Moonie." It has been estimated that nearly thirty percent of the Moonies today are Jewish young men and women who have been subjected to this latest form of totalitarian brainwashing. During the Korean War, 1951-53, the Communists captured 3,778 American soldiers and subjected them to psychological coercion which involved, first, a "mind-conditioning" phase in which the American prisoners were intensively persuaded to hate their own country, and, second, a so-called "suction" phase in which they were taught that life was superior under Communism and they should spread the gospel of Communism. Whatever the psychological or sociological reasons for their attraction to Rev. Moon's movement, at some time in their search for personal meaning Jewish youth must confront the evidence of this document whose central message is that they are being asked to find salvation in a "third Messiah" whose gospel is the hatred for and destruction of their own people, their religion and culture, their very families. In the face of this understanding of what Rev. Moon is really teaching about Jews, a continued involvement in his movement can be nothing other than an exercise in self-hatred and self-debasement. Surely, young Jews and Christians have other, more humane alternatives for finding meaning for their existence and self-fulfillment.

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The Rev. Sun Myung Moon is a Korean-born (1920) religious leader who moved to the United States in 1973. Since then, his teachings and beliefs have received extraordinary attention in the Western World as he embarked upon a widespread and highly visible campaign to gain new members for his Unification Church. It has been a campaign filled with bitter controversy, including a Congressional investigation of Rev. Moon's tax-exempt status and an acrimonius court case that was instituted by the parents of a new convert to his church. In the past three years nearly 30,000 Americans, most of them under thirty years of age, have flocked to Rev. Moon's banner and have become active and committed members of the Unification Church. Rev. Moon claims a worldwide membership of over 600,000.

While public attention has been focused on many aspects of his movement, very little has been said about his -- and the Unification Church's -- attitudes and beliefs regarding Judaism and the Jewish people as reflected in Divine Principle, the basic text of Rev. Moon's movement.

A systematic analysis of this 536 page document* reveals an orientation of almost unrelieved hostility toward the Jewish people, exemplified in pejorative language, stereotyped imagery, and sweeping accusations of collective sin and guilt.

Whether he is discussing the "Israelites" of the Hebrew Bible or the "Jews" as referred to in writings of the New Testament period, Rev. Moon portrays their behavior as reprobate, their intentions as evil (often diabolical), and their religious mission as eclipsed.

There are over 36 specific references in Divine Principle to the Israelites of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) -- every one of them pejorative. The "faithlessness" of the Israelites is mentioned four times on a single page (p. 330).

*The work has gone through several revisions and enlargements since it was first published in Korean nearly 20 years ago. This study is based on the 1974 English edition, published by the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1611 Upshur St., N.W., Washington, D.C.
Moreover, the accusation is leveled collectively: "The Israelites all fell into faithlessness" (p. 315). "All the Israelites centering on Moses fell into faithlessness" (p. 320). "The Israelites repeatedly fell into faithlessness" (p. 343). (Emphasis added.)

In similar fashion, Divine Principle records some 65 specific references to the attitudes and behavior of the Jewish people towards Jesus and their role in his crucifixion —again, every one hostile and anti-Jewish. Thus, not only were the Jewish people of Jesus' day "filled with ignorance" (p. 162), "rebellion" (against God) (p. 359), and "disbelief" (p. 146 et passim), but they "betrayed" (p. 453), "persecuted" (p. 155), and "derided" Jesus (p. 135), finally "delivering him to be crucified" (p. 200). Rev. Moon goes even beyond the infamous deicide-"Christ killer" charge against the Jewish people. In two separate instances in Divine Principle (pp. 357 and 510), the founder of the Unification Church specifically links the Jews with Satan in bringing about the death of Jesus:

As a matter of fact, Satan confronted Jesus, working through the Jewish people, centering on the chief priests and scribes who had fallen faithless, and especially through Judas Iscariot, the disciple who had betrayed Jesus.

Nevertheless, due to the Jewish people's rebellion against him, the physical body of Jesus was delivered into the hands of Satan as the condition of ransom for the restoration of the Jews and the whole of mankind back to God's bosom; his body was invaded by Satan.

The anti-Jewish thrust of Rev. Moon's writings about the ancient Israelites and the Jews of Jesus' time carries forward into his interpretation of Jewish history and of the current status of Jews and Judaism in our own time. There are some 26 pertinent reference in Divine Principle. Once again, in tone and in substance, they are viciously anti-Jewish, reflecting the worst aspects of traditional Christian displacement theology, and viewing the persecution of Jews across the ages as punishment for their sins. Thus, "The Jewish nation was destroyed" (p. 431); due to "the Israelites' faithlessness, God's heritage (has
been) taken away from the Jewish people" (p. 519), and "the chosen nation of Israel has been punished for the sin of rejecting Jesus and crucifying Him" (p. 226). Rev. Moon brings his teachings up to modern times.

Jesus came as the Messiah; but due to the disbelief of and persecution by the people he was crucified. Since then the Jews have lost their qualification as the chosen people and have been scattered, suffering persecution through the present day. (p. 147).

The sole mention of the Nazi Holocaust is found on page 485:

Hitler imposed the strict primitive Germanic religious ideology by concluding a pact with the Pope of Rome, thus founding a national religion, and then tried to control all Protestantism under the supervision of bishops throughout the country. Therefore, the Catholics as well as the Protestants were strongly opposed to Hitler. Furthermore, Hitler massacred six million Jews.

It is true that many of Rev. Moon's most virulent teachings about Jews and Judaism have their parallels (if not their sources) in a tradition of Christian anti-Jewish polemic which stretches from the early Church Fathers to the Oberammergau Passion Play. St. John Chrysostom (d. 407 C.E.) wrote of the Jewish people: "Of their rapine, their cupidity, their deception of the poor...they are inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil...they are impure and impious..." Tertullian (d. 222), another Church Father, attempted to refute Judaism, especially the permanent validity of the Mosaic covenant. St. Justin (d. 165), one of the first Christian leaders to link the Jewish people with the crucifixion of Jesus, wrote: "The tribulations were justly imposed upon you, for you have murdered the Just One." St. Hippolytus (d. 235 or 236) taught that Jews will always be slaves because "they killed the Son of their Benefactor." Origen (d. 254), echoed the deicide and punishment theme: "We say with confidence that they will never be restored to their former condition. For they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Saviour of the human race..." Chrysostom believed the rejections and dispersion
of the Jews was the work of God, not history: "It was done by the wrath of God and His absolute abandon of you."4 A fourth century Christian historian, Sulpicius Severus, wrote: "Jews are beheld scattered through the whole world that they have been punished on no other account than for the impious hands which they laid on Christ."

All of these themes -- the "faithlessness" of Israel, the abrogation of the Covenant, collective guilt and punishment -- come together in the Oberammergau Passion Play, which is presented every ten years in Germany. Thus, Jesus is represented as renouncing Judaism: "The Old Covenant which my Father made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has reached its end." (1970 version, pp 41 f.) In the Bavarian pageant, the Jewish crowd cries, "Drive him with violence that we get on to Calvary.... On, drive him with blows...He deserves crucifixion..." (1970 version, pp. 106 and 109.) The so-called "blood curse" is clearly directed at the entire Jewish people:

"Chorus: Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
The blood of His Son will yet avenge on you the Lord.
People: His blood be on us, and our children!
Chorus: Be it then upon you, and your children" (1970 version p. 99.)

These and many other examples attest to the anti-Jewish sources in Christian tradition from which Rev. Moon has obviously drawn. But in recent years, Christian church leaders have made vast efforts to come to grips with this anti-Jewish legacy, to repudiate its most negative and hostile elements, and to affirm the ongoing validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people.

Thus, the Roman Catholic Church in its Declaration on non-Christian Religions (1965), affirmed that responsibility for Jesus' death could not be laid to the Jews of his time or to the Jews of today, and asserted: "...the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from Holy Scriptures." The Lutheran Council in the USA, representing three Lutheran bodies, advised in
1971: "Christians should make it clear that there is no Biblical or theological basis for anti-Semitism. Supposed theological or Biblical bases for anti-Semitism are to be examined and repudiated." The twelve-million member Southern Baptist Convention resolved in 1972 "...to work positively to replace all anti-Semitic bias with the Christian attitude and practice of love for Jews, who along with all other men, are equally beloved of God." The newly-revised Book of Confession of the Presbyterian Church in the United States affirms:

We can never lay exclusive claim to being God's people as though we have replaced those to whom the covenant, the law and the promises belong. We affirm that God has not rejected His people, the Jews. The Lord does not take back His promises.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati, in 1971 guidelines, declared: "The Jewish people is not collectively guilty of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, nor of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. The Jewish people is not damned, nor bereft of its election. Their suffering, dispersion, and persecution are not punishments for the crucifixion or the rejection of Jesus..."

These are among the many indications of a growing sense of responsibility among Christian leaders to teach positively and fairly about Jews and Judaism. It is profoundly unfortunate that these developments find no echo and no acknowledgement in Rev. Moon's teachings. Having drawn upon the most anti-Jewish elements in Christian tradition, Rev. Moon has totally ignored the conscientious efforts of Christians to correct them.

Moreover, the Holocaust, when one-third of the Jewish people was murdered by the Nazis, is gratuitously mentioned by Rev. Moon, and nowhere in Divine Principle do we find any calls for repentence or for self-examination in the face of six million dead. The United Methodist Church, in a 1972 statement, expressed "clear repentance and a resolve to repudiate past injustice and to seek its elimination in the present." But not Rev. Moon.
Two leading Christian bodies, the National Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York are sharply critical of Rev. Moon's teachings.

A working paper prepared by the Faith and Order Commission of the NCC asserts that many principles of the Unification Church differ substantially from accepted Christian theology and the Commission finds serious fault with Rev. Moon's major beliefs:

Divine Principle contains a legalistic theology of indemnity in which grace and forgiveness play little part. The central figures of providence fail even when they are not believed -- a vicarious failure is certainly not central to Christian affirmation. That is, Christ failed because the Jews did not believe in Him and put Him to death. That is double indemnity indeed, and its penalties are continuing anti-Semitism and the requirement that another savior come to complete the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Jorge Lara-Braud, a member of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the Faith and Order Commission's Executive Director, and Dr. William L. Hendricks of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth were the principal authors of the working paper.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York has warned its priests about the "acute dangers" that the Unification Church presents for believing Christians. "It is important to bear in mind that several points of Rev. Moon's teaching are in direct conflict with Catholic theology, and therefore render his movement suspect for Catholic participation," Father James L. LeBar, an official of the Archdiocesan Communications office, said in a letter to pastors.

When referring to Jews and Judaism, we are confronted with over 125 examples of an unrelenting litany of anti-Jewish teachings. Nowhere in Divine Principle does Rev. Moon acknowledge the authenticity and integrity of Jews or Judaism, either ancient or modern. From Abraham until the present day, Jews are seen only
as a people, devoid and emptied of any genuine faith and spiritual qualities. "The inner contents are corrupt" (p. 532.) The Jewish people are depicted as collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus as allies of Satan. They have been replaced by a "second Israel" (who interestingly enough, must soon be replaced by the "third Israel"; the followers of Rev. Moon.) Further, the Jews have lost God's "heritage" and are still being "punished" for their many, many sins.

Rev. Moon's Divine Principle is a feculent breeding-ground for fostering anti-Semitism. Because of his unrelieved hostility towards Jews and Judaism, a demonic picture emerges from the pages of his major work. One can only speculate on what negative and anti-Jewish impact Divine Principle may have upon a follower of Rev. Moon.

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Production Liturgique et Judaisme, by Dassetto Felice, Centre de Recherches, Socio-Religieuses, Universite Catholique de Louvain, Louvain, Belgium, 1975. 145 pages.


For information about these publications, write to the Interreligious Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee, 184 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022.