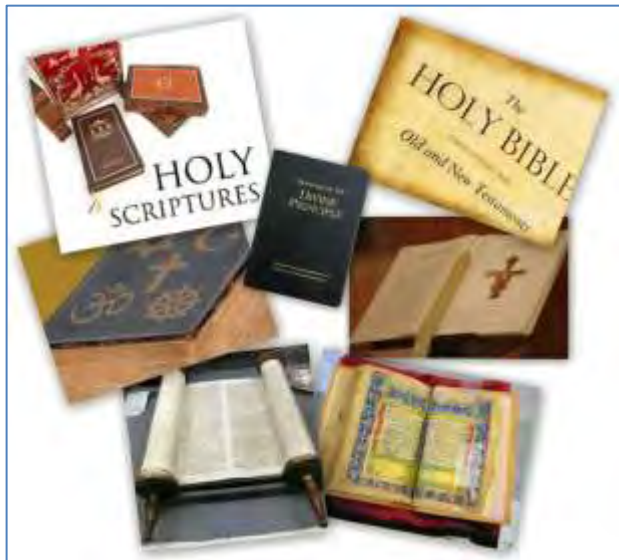


Scripture, Authority and Lineage in Unificationism

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July 4, 2016



Recent events in our movement provide us the opportunity to review mainstream Unification teachings. Not to do so is tantamount to renegeing on our responsibility to “usher in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.”

In this article, I examine the role of sacred texts and spiritual authority, then tackle change of blood lineage theology. Addressing these two areas will enable us to more quickly reach our desired destination. Our destiny is to be in a living relationship with the living God, as explained to us by Rev. Sun Myung Moon in his historic speech, “God’s Hope for Man.”

Sacred scriptures and spiritual authority

According to Rev. Moon, “The Bible is...not the truth itself, but rather is a textbook teaching the truth (*Divine Principle*, p. 105; cf. *DP*, pp. 7, 104).” He did not accept the doctrine of verbal inerrancy of the Bible as taught by fundamentalists and some evangelical churches. He approached the Bible as an authoritative text not to be taken literally in all matters, and open to interpretation. We ought to adopt the same approach regarding any sacred texts sanctioned by our religious authorities.

Prior to his death on Sept. 2, 2012 (Sept. 3, Seoul time), Rev. Moon compiled his “last words I will give to humankind” into eight textbooks which he believed reveal the essence of his teachings, and he admonished his followers that by studying these texts the will of God will be realized on the earth. Since Moon’s passing, his surviving widow, Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon — known by devoted followers as Mother Moon — guided in 2013 the publication of a new three-volume set of holy scriptures, and church officials now encourage followers to study those texts to gain a correct view of God’s will.



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Rev. and Mrs. Moon’s youngest son, Hyung Jin Moon — former president of the FFWPU-USA, former President of FFWPU International, and subsequently, founder of the breakaway Sanctuary Church in Newfoundland, Pennsylvania — challenged church officials’ claims that members must read primarily from those new texts. He insisted that loyal FFWPU members must read only from the original eight textbooks sanctioned by his father in 2010. He even went so far as to call the new three-volume set of Holy Scriptures a satanic imitation of the original eight textbooks approved by his father. Based on an anointing from his parents on three separate occasions in January 2009, Hyung Jin claimed he has the full spiritual authority of True Parents on earth, and called for all Family Federation members to pledge their loyalty to him.

Hyun Jin Moon, second-oldest son of Rev. and Mrs. Moon and former head of several Unification Movement organizations through 2009, wrote a letter in 2011 directed to the worldwide Unification faith community. In it, he claimed institutional leaders of the Unification Church had abandoned True Parent’s teachings, and now all members must listen to his guidance in order to be properly “aligned” with God’s will (Hyun Jin Moon, “Letter to the Worldwide Unification Community,” November 26, 2011). As founder and chairman of the Global Peace Foundation (not affiliated with the Unification Movement), Hyun Jin promotes some of the sacred texts of the Family Federation, such as Rev. Moon’s autobiography, *As a Peace Loving Global Citizen*, and the book *Pyeong Hwa Shin Gyeong* (Peace Messages 1-17). However, those sacred texts are overshadowed by lengthy extemporaneous internal guidance talks he gives to his followers. In them, Hyun Jin consistently reinforces the idea that he is the main central figure charged with the responsibility to educate all Blessed Central Families about the value of the “True Family,” and that he alone holds the correct view of his father’s teachings concerning God’s will.

We will likely continue to see ongoing controversy over what qualifies as sacred and authoritative holy scriptures in the Family Federation, and who is sanctioned to have spiritual authority over the worldwide Unification movement. In the meantime, practicing Unificationists can take solace that one of our guiding values is we do not idolize any sacred text or designated human authority, and that *God’s truth will continue to be revealed within and outside of Unification culture*. This does not mean we hold an “anything goes” attitude regarding truth, but rather we are free to reflect on God’s will without any

obligation to adhere firmly to a dictated line.

Such a value is in line with the principle Rev. Moon taught regarding the need for religious adherents to follow their own conscience:

“...If you carefully study yourself, you will notice that your conscience knows everything that you have to do. In that regard, the conscience within yourself is the greatest teacher of all. You have studied at the Seminary with your teachers here. But the conscience as God’s dwelling place is greater than all of them. It is even greater than your own parents, once you develop and strengthen it” (“Strengthen the Power of your Conscience,” Founder’s Address, Unification Theological Seminary, 1995).

In his autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, Rev. Moon shared the importance of listening to one’s heart and taking time for meditation and prayer:

“The teacher with whom we have the closest relationship is our heart. Our heart is more precious to us than our closest friends and even more precious than our parents... For a person to polish his heart to the point that it becomes as clear as crystal, he absolutely must spend time in direct conversation with his heart in an environment where he is away from the world and alone with his heart. It will be a time of intense loneliness, but the moment we become close to our hearts is the time of prayer and meditation. It is a time when we can take ownership over our hearts. When we isolate ourselves from the noise around us and allow our thoughts to settle, we can see into the deepest parts of our hearts...” (pp. 231-32).



Reverend and Mrs. Moon praying circa 1972

Blood lineage

Rev. Moon’s change of blood lineage theology is based on the doctrines of traducianism and original sin formulated by the early Church fathers. Some in the Unification tradition believe his teaching on change of blood lineage must be taken literally, claiming the blood supply in the veins of fallen human beings must be physically purified for complete salvation to be achieved. Others hold the view that Moon was speaking symbolically when he made references to the necessity for fallen humanity’s blood lineage to be changed.

Divine Principle teaches the sin of Adam and Eve is biologically transmitted to all human beings through physical procreation (pp. 61-65). Furthermore, it claims Jesus’ death on the cross did not fully eradicate the sin of Adam inherited by all of Adam’s

descendants:

“...no matter how devout a believer may be, he cannot attain physical salvation through redemption by the cross of Jesus. His original sin, which has been passed down through the lineage from Adam, is not eliminated at its root, and will not be until Jesus returns again to complete the work of salvation both spiritually and physically” (*DP*, pp. 118-19).

Regarding the five references to physical salvation made in *Divine Principle*, not one of them needs to be interpreted literally to mean the physical blood supply of a fallen human being must be changed (*DP*, pp. 118-19, 121, 171, 280, 392). In Rev. Moon’s speech, “Change of Blood Lineage: The Real Experience of Salvation by the Messiah,” reference to purifying blood lineage has to do with changes that occur in one’s beliefs, attitudes, heart, faith and behaviors, and not with altering the physical elements of the blood supply (pp. 41, 45-46, 52-53).

In 1987, I corresponded with UTS Professor of New Testament Theology, Dr. Young Oon Kim. I submitted to her 21 questions based on my study of her book, *Unification Theology*. One question dealt with the importance of Rev. Moon’s bloodline. She replied: “Scholars conclude that the N.T. genealogies attributed to Jesus conflict and are unhistorical. They have no importance in [Christian] theology. We should be interested in Jesus’ message and mission rather than a secondary matter like genealogy. The same approach should be applied to Rev. Moon’s case.” (personal correspondence between Dr. Kim and the author)

Emphasizing purification of physical blood as a means of completing salvation runs counter to *Divine Principle's* teaching on the temporal nature of the physical body and permanency of our divine spirit self (DP, p. 46). When Jesus taught the kingdom of heaven is within man, it is unlikely he was making reference to one's physical blood supply, or any other attribute belonging to the temporal physical body (Luke 17: 20-21). If our physical body is a temporary vehicle used to express our eternal divine essence, our concern ought to be directed towards the cultivation of our eternal spiritual qualities, rather than on a temporary physical attribute like one's blood supply.

Rev. Moon always admonished his followers to remember the most powerful force in the universe is a force that cannot be measured, weighed, calculated or calibrated: the invisible power of true love. To argue one's physical blood carries the spiritual qualities that God gives, and the "best of the best" physical bloodlines produce greater divine qualities, is to claim God does not impart to all of His children in equal measure their divine qualities at the time of conception.

Conclusion

Twenty-first century Unificationism can prosper by adhering to a view that truth is not static and exactly the same for everyone — like a rock you pick up in the sand — but rather, some aspects of truth are contingent on how we interpret what we see and what we choose to believe. It is incumbent on practicing Unificationists to insist the ultimate authority and basis for understanding God is not to be found in any sacred text or through any human agency.

Efforts made to objectify God through a book, teaching, or a human authority are to be rejected and denied. If not, we run the risk of adopting a lower-level religious impulse — one that tempts the practitioner into believing true authority lies outside of oneself, and not on the inside, where "the conscience within yourself is the greatest teacher of all."

Unification culture needs to adopt a more focused and sophisticated intention to address how the individual can "hear God's voice" speaking from within, and how one can "know with certainty" that God has "answered my prayer." In particular, we need to explore more intimately the highest expression of prayer: meditation.



To know the eternal divine qualities of a human being, we must look beyond what we can see with our physical eyes to the "kingdom within man."

We can start by seeking remedy to some of the difficulties many people face regarding conventional prayer such as:

1. People often feel that they are trying to communicate with a God *outside* of oneself;
2. Prayer often seems to be a "one-way" conversation, where the answer to prayer is a hit and miss venture, limited to faith and a belief that somehow, in some unknown way, prayer will be answered;
3. Prayer is expressed usually at certain designated times, such as over meals, at times of worship, on special occasions and religious holidays, or when doing a "prayer condition," and;
4. Prayer is often a request for some kind of physical betterment, or for fulfillment of a self-interest.

Is there a higher experience of prayer, whereby we can know for certain God has answered us — each time we pray? Is there a state of consciousness we can consistently experience in which we are aware moment to moment of our inseparable oneness with our eternal Father-Mother? If the "kingdom of heaven is within," how can we better understand what that kingdom is comprised of, and how to access it for greater power, knowledge and love? Is there a scientific basis to the idea the kingdom of heaven is within humankind? These are the next areas for exploration and growth that need to be adopted in Unification culture.

Our American movement needs to focus on helping each individual cultivate the divine qualities that reside within. Our attention (faith) needs to be placed on the three major elements Rev. Moon identified in "God's Hope for Man": eternal love, eternal life and ideals. These elements do not reside in the physical body and point to invisible mind and heart qualities that reside in our divine immortal essence.

Our invisible divine qualities are awaiting cultivation and development while we occupy our transient and temporal physical body. What we want to be remembered for is how we were able to awaken and inspire in others those qualities that cannot be locked up in boxes where “thieves can break in and moths can eat up” (Matt. 6:19).

Jesus lives in the hearts and minds of over two billion Christians around the world, yet his physical body is no longer present on the earth, and he never had physical children. Sun Myung Moon lives in the hearts and minds of millions of people, but he too is no longer with us on earth, and most never met his physical children. Jesus and Rev. Moon are remembered not for attributes of the physical body, but for those eternal soul qualities which never die.

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