

Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012) and the Unification Church: On the Centenary of His Birth

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In the history of new religious movements, a phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century, as well as those religions that have a greater historical dimension, a huge role has always been played by charismatic leaders, the founders possessing strong will, who should be able to convey to people the religious ideas that they believe to be the truth, organize the current structures, and maintain viability of the new religious institution.

Similar qualities, according to Max Weber, the German sociologist, are inherent in special charismatic personalities with exceptional abilities, which are defined by others as divine or exemplary, the carrier of which becomes an example to follow and is certainly accepted as a leader.

One of these religious charismatics in the 20th century was Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012), whose centenary was celebrated by his followers in 2020, the founder of the religious organization Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC).

Sun Myung Moon was born in 1920 in Korea to a large peasant family with thirteen children. He was the second son in the family and the fifth in seniority. The family was religious and professed the eclectic principles of Confucianism, Buddhism and shamanism; later they adopted Christianity and became parishioners of the Presbyterian Church. According to Moon, in 1935, at the age of fifteen, he received a revelation from Jesus Christ in which he was called upon [to complete] the mission of the salvation of humankind; in subsequent years this vocation was also confirmed in revelations by other religious leaders of the past: Confucius, Lao Tzu, Buddha, and Muhammad.

May 1, 1954 is the date when the new religious institution began its activities. The church called Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity was opened by Moon in Seoul in a small rented house; later it received the name Unification Church. As a result of missionary activities, already three years later, in 1957, church branches appeared in 30 cities of Korea; in 1958 the first missionary arrived in Japan and in 1959 in America. The church was officially registered in Korea in May 1963.

Despite the presence of the church abroad, there was neither active growth of its membership nor sustainable presence at the international level.

In the West, the movement became noticeable only after the arrival of Moon in the United States in the early 1970s¹.

Until the mid-1960s, Reverend Moon worked and preached in Korea, occasionally visiting other countries, but from 1965, the efforts of proselytical activity shifted from the regional, Asian level to the world level, primarily American and West European. In that year Moon went on the first world tour, during which he visited 40 countries. His next world tour started in 1969, and in 1972 he moved to the United States and from there began managing the church, which acquired a greater institutional character and took up active missionary and social activities in many countries of the world. Young members of the church went out into the streets of cities, met people, told them about Moon's teachings, invited people to events, and raised funds for the goals of the church. In the wake of the hippie movement, anti-war actions, student unrest in Europe and America, a large number of youth came to the church; here they saw a certain alternative to the bourgeois world and the consumer society they rejected.

In addition to religious and social activities, Reverend Moon began making political statements in which he spoke about his anti-communist views, the role and

¹ Barker, Eileen. *New Religious Movements*. — СПб.: Publishing House of the Russian Christian Humanitarian Institute, 1997. — P. 263.

significance of America in the fight against communism as an anti-Christian phenomenon, and its predestination in the world in the global context. All this attracted the attention of the political elite of America and strengthened his position as a social and religious figure. In the mid-1970s, Moon organized a number of significant public events and acted on them with statements of a nationwide nature, which had a wide resonance and were covered by the national media of the United States: On September 18, 1974, he delivered a speech in New York at Madison Square Garden on "The New Future of Christianity"; on June 1, 1976, in the framework of the "God Bless America!" festival in honor of the 200th anniversary of America, he spoke at Yankee Stadium in New York; and on September 18, 1976, he spoke at the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. In his speeches the general idea was the responsibility of America as God's land, which God prepared for uniting all races, nationalities and religions with the help of its Christian spirit and foundation.

In 1975, during his visit to Korea, Reverend Moon organized the largest rally in the history of that country under the slogan "World Campaign for Liberation of Korea," which gathered together more than a million people.

Such big public activities had positive results for the image; they were manifested in the media, in recognition of their social significance, acquisition of political weight and authority among the political and religious elite; this, in

general, also influenced the church positively, which in those years was actively growing.

Over time, interest in the preaching and social activities of Moon began to decrease; he began to be considered a representative of a new religious movement, the reputation of which at that time was extremely low; moreover, his political ambitions began to cause anxiety, and by the end of the 1970s the activities of Reverend Moon and his church were investigated by a committee of the U.S. Congress. The reason for this investigation was that in his speeches, Moon spoke about his immediate tasks aimed at creating a world government, in which he and his church would play the main role. The attempt made in 1981 to exempt the Unification Church from paying taxes as a religious organization, on the basis of U.S. legislation, failed, and in 1984 Sun Myung Moon was imprisoned, accused of tax evasion. A year later, he was released, because the prosecution could not provide the necessary evidence confirming the incriminating crime.

The next stage of Moon's activities as a religious figure occurred at the beginning of the 1990s, when, on August 24, 1992, Moon officially stated that he was the Messiah, and this statement became the new theological principle of the church. In his speech in front of the participants of a church conference, Moon said the following:

“In early July, I spoke in ... cities throughout Korea, at rallies held by the Women's Federation for World Peace.

There I announced that my wife, the president of WFWP, Hak Ja Han Moon, and I are the True Parents of all humankind. I proclaimed that [together] we are the Savior, the Lord of the Second Advent, the Messiah.”

Later, on March 23, 2004, speaking at a gala event in the U.S. Senate’s Dirksen Building, Moon confirmed the previously expressed statement that he is the "Lord of the Second Advent":

“Rev. Sun Myung Moon is none other than the Savior of humankind, the Messiah, the returning Lord and True Parent”².

Moon created numerous non-religious, nonprofit organizations, federations, associations, foundations, etc., which worked in various countries, had international status and set various tasks: economic, educational, cultural, environmental, etc., whose activities were aimed at strengthening peace, trust between countries and peoples, economic well-being, development of cultural and student exchange, etc. Among the more prominent are: Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP); Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU); World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO); International Security Council (ISC); and Universal Peace Federation (UPF). Thus, for example, in 1994 the Universal Peace Federation held in Seoul ... the Second International Conference for World Peace, in which former USSR President [Mikhail S.] Gorbachev,

² Barker, Eileen. *The Unification Church: A Kaleidoscopic Introduction* // Society register, №2(2). 2018. — P. 31

former Chairman of the Supreme Council of Belarus [Stanislav S.] Shushkevich, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan [Apas J.] Jumagulov, and the former Moscow Mayor [Gavriil Kh.] Popov were among the guests of honor.

Not being religious organizations in their statutory activities and not setting proselytical goals, these nonprofit organizations exist independently of the Unification Church and do not have the negative image that the church had in the media, which was mainly associated with widely covered anti-cultural activities when the church was accused of brainwashing converts, forcibly retaining members who wanted to leave, and financial fraud. [As a result of the negative reports,] there were cases of abduction of church members and their mandatory deprogramming. A similar practice was recognized as illegal, and its performers were convicted.

Sun Myung Moon is known for his anti-communist position; for him the ideology of communism had primarily an anti-Christian, anti-religious orientation. There is a well-known revelation of 2002, received by him from 120 communists, in which they revealed that they all abandoned their views and accepted the true teaching. Among them were Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Maxim Gorky, Leon Trotsky, Joseph Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev and others.

The modern Unification Church is an international organization with official registration and has branches in

more than 150 countries of the world: including Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Australia, in the countries of South America and Southeast Asia; the largest number of church members are in South Korea, Japan and the United States. The exact number of followers of the church is difficult to calculate: Such statistics are not carried out, and different sources give different numbers, but presumably we are talking about several million.

The source of the Unification Church is a set of Scriptures, of which the fundamental one is the Divine Principle, and it is accepted as a revelation obtained by the Reverend Moon, which also includes “Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments with elements of other religions, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, shamanism and some of the Korean new religions,”³ essential in the present time. The Divine Principle is the Unification Church’s main theological text, which was written over several years and was first published in 1966 in Korean. The first edition of the Divine Principle in Russian was printed in 1997⁴.

As the researcher V.V. Zabolotneva notes, in addition to the doctrine provisions set forth in the Divine Principle, the book also contains views on historical processes from antiquity to the present based on the Unification Church theology. The author emphasizes that in his activities as a religious and public figure, in his numerous publications

³ Barker, Eileen. *The Unification Church: A Kaleidoscopic Introduction* // Society register, №2(2). 2018. — P. 22.

⁴ Divine Principle. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. — 1997. — 450 PP.

and speeches, “Moon constantly speaks of many social and political problems, acting with initiatives aimed at strengthening mutual understanding between peoples and eliminating poverty and illiteracy”⁵.

In addition to the Divine Principle, the set of Scriptures contains other books that include revelations, spiritual instructions that were spoken in Moon's speeches at various events and meetings with the Church members; they exceed several hundred books.

In 2010, the year of the 90th anniversary of his birth and the 50th anniversary of his marriage, Sun Myung Moon announced the release of eight sacred books that each new member of the church is required to read and which could be used in internal activities within the framework of religious education, as well as for proselytical work by members of the church with relatives and friends. These books reflect the basic principles, attitudes, and theology of the Unification Church, and Moon spoke of them as “the last message to humanity” and the textbooks “representing all things”⁶.

This set of books comprises: 1. *The Sermons of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon*, 615 volumes (1956-2012); 2. *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (1966); 3. *Cheon Seong Gyeong* (2004); 4) *Family Pledge* (1994); 5. *Pyeong Hwa Shin Gyeong* (Peace Messages) (2005-2012); 6. *True*

⁵ Zabolotneva, V.V. *Social Teachings of New Religious Movements: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Research*. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sotsialnye-ucheniya-novyh-religioznyh-dvizheniy-teoretiko-metodologicheskie-osnovy-issledovaniya> (date of application 09.10.2020).

⁶ *The Providential Value of Eight Sacred Texts Inheritance*. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://8books.ru/holybox> (date of application: 01.10.2020).

Family: Gateway to Heaven (2009); 7. *Owner of Peace and Owner of Lineage* (2009); 8. *World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon* (2009).

Speaking to the members of the church, this is what Moon said about this set of Scriptures:

“You will have to read and study these educational books, even when you go to the spiritual world. These are not just words invented by man; these sacred texts and textbooks teach the heavenly path, which God granted to His suffering children for the sake of their salvation”⁷.

After the death of Sun Myung Moon in 2012, the Unification Church entered a new, difficult stage in its existence when the question arose of the successor and the new leader of the church. At that time, there were several people among the possible candidates – Moon's wife, Hak Ja Han, and four of their 14 children: three sons and one daughter. Each of them claimed leadership as the head of a major representation of the church in the world or a church-related non-governmental organization, and in its weight and significance in the hierarchy of the church could eventually become its head. The question of any other candidacy, outside the Moon dynasty, was not considered.

The children insisted they were the direct heirs of Moon and, according to dynasty law, they claimed the role of the leader. Moon's wife founded her right on the

⁷ *Eight Sacred Texts of the Unification Church*. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://8books.ru/about> (date of application: 01.10.2020).

theological basis of the Unification Church – the doctrine of True Parents, which states that in order to be saved and to return to God, it is necessary to enter into a kinship with God through accepting Him and through [receiving] the Blessing of True Parents, as well as to create families and restore the lines of kinship with God that were interrupted due to the sin of Adam and Eve. As the evidence of her right to the leadership of the Church, Hak Ja Han Moon cited the statements of Moon, in which he said:

“In essence, I am the first founder of the church, and Mother is the second founder of the church. Even when I am alone, I represent True Parents. And the same applies to Mother. When she is alone, she personifies True Parents”⁸.

Immediately after Moon's death, she declared her right to lead the church and the continuation of the previously elected course:

“I want to make it clear that I will inherit the victorious foundation of True Father and I will stand in the forefront in order to lead the providence on the Earth”⁹.

Ultimately Hak Ja Han Moon became the only leader of the legacy that Sun Myung Moon left behind. She took a number of steps in relation to transforming the organizational structure of the church and determined its primary goals and directions of activity at the difficult stage

⁸ Quote from Mickler, Michael L. “Gender Politics in the Post-Sun Myung Moon Unification Movement” // [Электронный ресурс]. — URL: https://www.academia.edu/42603305/Gender_Politics_in_Post_Sun_Myung_Moon_Unification_Movement (Дата обращения: 23.11.2020).

⁹ Quote from Mickler, Michael L. “*The Post-Sun Myung Moon Unification Church*” // [Electronic resource]. — URL: https://www.academia.edu/42604343/The_Post_Sun_Myung_Moon_Unification_Church (Date of application: 21.11.2020).

after the death of its founder and permanent leader, Sun Myung Moon, and also took measures to strengthen the public position of the church in Korea and other countries where its position was strong. All this showed Hak Ja Han Moon to be a good organizer and leader, and her status of the head of the church, responsible for its internal and external activities, was certainly assigned to her.

Although it was not possible to avoid the split (two sons retained the structures that were subordinated to them and whose leadership was granted to them previously by their father, Sun Myung Moon), the prevailing part of the Unification Church and various public organizations established by Moon retained the loyalty of the Unification Church and accepted his widow, Hak Ja Han Moon, as the successor of Sun Myung Moon and the new leader of the church.

On the initiative of Hak Ja Han Moon and the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the World Summit 2020 was held in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, right before the start of the COVID-19 lockdown. There were about 7,000 participants from 170 countries, representing politics, science, culture, media, religious and public organizations. The theme of the summit was “Creating World Peace and Reunification on the Korean Peninsula through Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values.” And according to its results, a World Summit 2020 Resolution was adopted, which notes that:

*The Heavenly Unified World is a global community of peace-loving citizens whose tireless efforts in the areas of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values help resolve the conflicts and discords caused by religion, ethnicity or nationality.*¹⁰

In Russia, the Unification Church has been present since 1989 — although, according to the researcher T.N. Kuznetsova, back in the 1970s some employees of foreign companies who worked in the USSR and were members of the Unification Church shared their doctrine principles with those citizens of the USSR with whom they had to cooperate, but all this in a private and unsystematic way. They brought religious literature with them, handed it out to their friends, and established informal relations with officials and employees of various organizations.

A little earlier, in 1968, the church's "Mission Hummingbird" began to carry out its activities, the purpose of which was to work with immigrants from the countries of the socialist camp who emigrated and settled in Western Europe. A few years later, "Mission Butterfly" was organized; its members were already heading directly to the countries of the socialist camp of Europe: Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, including the Soviet Union, promoting ideas of Sun Myung Moon's church, and looking in these countries for those who were interested, as far as possible in those conditions of total state

¹⁰ Report on the Conference World Summit 2020. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://eurasia.upf.org/new/inter/1516-summit2020> (Application data: 10.12.2020).

control¹¹. Such activities contributed to the fact that when political and social transformations began in the USSR which led to ideological and religious pluralism and change in state-confessional relations that developed at that time, the church quickly came out to the public arena. ... And since 1989, the Unification Movement of Moon has become not only widely known, but also popular¹².

In 1989, an important event occurred; it was covered in the domestic media, which expanded the fame of the church positively in the USSR and strengthened its public image. From October 28 to 31, 1989, in Moscow, in the Holy Danilov Monastery, which houses the residence of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Council for the World's Religions (founded by Moon) held a conference on "The Trinitarian Basis of Christian Unity." A representative of the Unification Church, Chung Hwan Kwak, arrived in Russia at the special invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church and had an audience with Metropolitan Filaret (Vakhromeev), who was then, in turn, invited to a meeting of the Assembly of the World's Religions, held in August 1990 in the United States, where he met with Sun Myung Moon and his wife¹³.

On April 11, 1990, an even more significant event for the Unification Church took place: the meeting of Sun Myung Moon with the first and last president of the USSR,

¹¹ *Mission Butterfly. Pioneers behind the Iron Curtain*. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://www.mirboga.ru/blog/oleg-kuzmin/missiya-babochki-pionery-za-zheleznym-zanavesom> (Date of application: 19.11.2020).

¹² Kuznetsova, T.N. *Moonism: Creed, Religious Practice and Lifestyle of the Followers of Sun Myung Moon*. — M., 1999. — P. 331.

¹³ Kuznetsova, T.N. *Moonism: Creed, Religious Practice and Lifestyle of the Followers of Sun Myung Moon*. — M., 1999. — C. 331.

Mikhail Gorbachev. And a day earlier, on April 10, 1990, Sun Myung Moon spoke at the opening of the 11th World Media Conference in Moscow, of which he was the organizer.

Sun Myung Moon, recalling in his autobiography this official meeting with President M.S. Gorbachev, noted that they talked about freedom of religion and its importance for further reforming the country:

*If you try to reform only the material world, without the involvement of God, perestroika will be doomed to fail. Communism is about to end. The only way to save this nation is to allow freedom of religion.*¹⁴

Moon never returned to Russia after that, but in 1995 he was supposed to come to a meeting with his church members in Kyiv, Ukraine. However, his planned arrival caused a negative reaction among parents and relatives of children who had joined the church, and this was widely covered by Ukrainian media, so the meeting had to be canceled. However, his wife, Hak Ja Han Moon, visited Russia in 1992 and 1993. In 1999 she was in Moscow and in 2000 both in Moscow and St. Petersburg as an official representative of the Unification Church and its leader.

On May 21, 1992, in the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity was registered as a religious organization under the registration number 142,

¹⁴ Moon, Sun Myung. *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*. Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Autobiography. — M.: Moscow Printing House, 2010. — C. 259.

and on December 21, 2000, it was re-registered under a new name as the Association of Christian Unification Churches. Ten years later, on September 14, 2010, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation registered a new official name – the centralized religious organization Unification Church – Christianity as Interpreted by the Divine Principle. As of January 1, 1996, thirteen communities were registered in various cities of the Russian Federation¹⁵. In 2006, one centralized and eight local religious organizations were registered¹⁶; and as of December 1, 2012, one centralized and five local organizations were registered¹⁷. By the end of 2018, the situation had not changed.

The church currently continues to carry out its activities, being in a state of stable existence without any tendency to growth. The exact number of followers of the church is quite difficult to establish; the church does not keep a statistical accounting of parishioners, but their number hardly exceeds several thousand people.

In its activities in Russia, the Unification Church adheres to a charter, which sets out its goals and objectives, the basis of which is “a joint confession of ‘Christianity as Interpreted by the Divine Principle,’ promoting the creed of the church, meeting religious needs of citizens. The organization seeks to achieve

¹⁵ Kuznetsova, T.N. *Moonism: Creed, Religious Practice and Lifestyle of the Followers of Sun Myung Moon*. — M., 1999. — C. 339.

¹⁶ Statistics of religious organizations (2006). // *Freedom of Conscience in Russia: Historical and Modern Aspects*. Issue 6. Digest of articles. — M. — СПб.: Russian Association of Religion Researchers. 2008. — P. 389.

¹⁷ Elbakyan, E.S. “New Religions of Western Origin in Modern Russia: General Characteristics and Specific Features” // *New Religions in Russia: Twenty Years Later. Materials of the International Scientific and Practical Conference*. Moscow, Central House of Journalists, December 14, 2012 — M., 2013. — P. 126.

goals, studying the Bible, other scriptures, and the Divine Principle, raising believers in accordance with the Bible and the Divine Principle. Members and believers of the church carry a deep faith in God, honestly working in God's name and for the benefit of Russia and all humankind, creating model and healthy families, and establishing and strengthening interreligious contacts”¹⁸.

The main types of authorized activities of the church include: “worship services, religious rites and ceremonies ... conducting charitable actions and events in medical institutions and hospital institutions, orphanages, boarding houses for elderly and disabled people ... organization and conduct of charitable actions to provide humanitarian assistance to the least protected segments of the population (large families, orphans, disabled people, pensioners, lonely citizens, etc.). ... spreading information related to biblical truths and prophecies, as well as explaining the Bible and touching scientific, historical, social, and other topics, in ways that do not contradict the current legislation”¹⁹.

In general, the attitude to the Unification Church over time changed and ceased to be wary; protests against the activities it carried out and negative publications in the media, which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, came to naught.

¹⁸ The Charter of the Centralized Religious Organization “Unification Church - Christianity as Interpreted by the Divine Principle”. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://unification.ru/ustav/> (Date of application: 17.08.2020).

¹⁹ The Charter of the Centralized Religious Organization “Unification Church - Christianity as Interpreted by the Divine Principle”. [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://unification.ru/ustav/> (Date of application: 17.08.2020).

Now the church is more engaged in its internal affairs, but those public organizations that previously were founded by Sun Myung Moon are actively continuing their activities, independently and/or in partnership with state and public organizations, as well as with religious leaders, politicians, and public figures of many countries of the world.

It is possible to say that the Unification Church is a religious institution for the members of the church and is focused on its internal activities, and that its main external, non-religious activities are focused on implementation of Moon's initiatives to create a fair, peaceful society, uniting all people of the Earth, and conducted by various social movements and foundations established by Moon, primarily by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), which had a general special advisory status at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the UN²⁰, and since 2018, general advisory status at the UN ECOSOC²¹.

In Russia, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) also has its own representation office and conducts large-scale social activities, which are known even more than the church itself and its founder, Sun Myung Moon. Since 2006, the magazine *UPF Today* covers the activities of Universal Peace Federation; since 2008 the Russian

²⁰ Economic and Social Council is the main body responsible for coordination of the economic and social activities of the United Nations and organizations that are part of the UN system. ECOSOC occupies a central place in the activities of the UN system to promote all three aspects of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.

²¹ The status of the Universal Peace Federation at the United Nations [El. resource]. — URL: [http:// https://eurasia.upf.org/about-upf/upfundun](http://https://eurasia.upf.org/about-upf/upfundun) (Date of application: 19.07.2020).

version of the magazine *UPF Today*²² has appeared with a circulation of 1,000 copies.

In the preface to the 2019 issue of *UPF Today* under the general topic “Universal Peace: New Approaches,” written by Konstantin Krylov, general secretary of the Eurasian chapter of the Universal Peace Federation, the author expressed the idea of the importance of non-governmental, non-state forms of communication and cooperation in peacemaking activities, which every year is becoming more and more relevant in the modern, rapidly changing global world.

*We are deeply convinced that peace is achievable through overcoming personal restrictions, by creating harmony between religions and nationalities by means of intercultural dialogue and cooperation. In building peace ‘from heart to heart,’ the main role is played by the non-governmental sector*²³.

One of the incomplete initiatives of the Rev. Moon might be considered his plans related to the reorganization of the United Nations. Moon saw the UN as a bicameral structure:

In addition to the General Assembly, there should be a religious, or cultural, assembly or council. This body would consist of respected spiritual leaders in fields such as religion, culture, and education. The members of this interreligious assembly would need to demonstrate an

²² Website of the magazine *UPF Today*. <https://eurasia.upf.org/publications/upftoday>

²³ *UPF Today*. “Universal Peace: New Approaches.” Winter 2019. [El. resource]. — URL: <https://eurasia.upf.org/publications/upftoday/1520-zhurnal-upf-segodnya-zima-2019> (Дата обращения: 23.11.2020).

*ability to transcend the limited interests of particular religions and cultures and to speak for the spiritual and moral purposes of all humanity. ... [The] two chambers, working together in mutual respect and cooperation, will be able to make great advances in ushering in a world of peace.*²⁴

Speaking about the theological provisions of the Unification Church, the following points can be noted that give an idea of what its followers believe in:

God is a Heavenly Parent and Creator of the spiritual and physical worlds; His goal is to create an ideal world on the Earth. People – men and women – are His creations, who need to get rid of sin and restore true relations with God, as a result of which, it would be possible to build the Heavenly Kingdom both on earth and in heaven.

Adam and Eve, the first people, sinned in the eyes of God, and this caused, for them and their descendants, spiritual death, loss of knowledge about their divine origin and assignment, and as a result – the impossibility of building the Kingdom of God on earth due to their fall.

In order to restore the lost connection with God, it is necessary to spiritually resurrect, return to spiritual life, as a result of which the Kingdom of God will come on earth, with God as the head, who is the True Parent of the entire human family of the world.

²⁴ Moon, Sun Myung. *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*. Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Autobiography. — M.: Moscow printing house, 2010. — P. 353.

The concept of True Parents is an important part of the Unification Church theology. Due to the sin of Adam and Eve, the first family on earth, all their descendants are sinful and cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. In order to avoid this fate and be saved, it is necessary to become part of God's family and be accepted by Him as His children. This is possible through joining the family of True Parents, which are Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Hak Ja Han Moon.

The fundamental basic value in the teaching of the church is family; its maintenance and its strengthening are considered an important component of the believers' life. It is necessary to keep loyalty in marriage; intimate relationships outside of marriage are unacceptable. The church practices rejection of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. In difficult life situations, help is encouraged, both spiritual and material, as well as personal and social responsibility.

Every Sunday there are worship services that are open and free to visit, both by outsiders and members of the church. The church lives according to the law of tithing, in which one-tenth of the total income is brought to God through the church. Fasting is an important spiritual practice, and it is voluntary. The Unification Church lives according to the laws of the country in which it is located and respects the prevailing traditions and customs; believers do not evade fulfillment of their civic duty.

As to the theological provisions of the Unification Church, one can note their syncretism, an orientation to

the Bible as one of the main sources of creed, while having a similarity “with Christian ideas; however, some of them, first of all, the doctrine of the Trinity, the nature of God, the soteriological ideas are rather far from ‘historical’ Christianity”²⁵.

In general, there is limited domestic scientific research related to the Unification Church in Russia – although there is a book by historian T.N. Kuznetsova issued in 1999 – *Moonism: Creed, Religious Practice and Lifestyle of the Followers of Sun Myung Moon*. A well-known domestic religious scholar, Professor I.Y. Kanterov, in his monograph *New Religious Movements in Russia (religious analysis)*, 2006, devoted a separate paragraph to this religious direction. We also will find brief information in the book *New Religious Movements*, 1997, by Eileen Barker, a professor at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (University of London), who studied and wrote a lot about the Unification Church in the United Kingdom. Religious scholar E.S. Elbakyan, in his article on the new religions of Western origin in modern Russia, also mentions Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church.

It is worth noting that the Unification Church and its founder, Sun Myung Moon, being part of the modern religious landscape of Russia, not a numerous religious trend, and with a short history of stay in the Russian religious and sociocultural space, remains an insufficiently

²⁵ Elbakyan, E.S. New Religions of Western Origin in Modern Russia: General Characteristics and Specific Features // *New Religions in Russia: Twenty Years Later. Materials of the International Scientific and Practical Conference*. Moscow, Central House of Journalists, December 14, 2012. — M., 2013. — P. 126.

studied religious phenomenon in the Russian religious studies.

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