

**Introducing: The Unification Church
and the Reverend Moon**

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In the report which follows, a member of the ISI* *Press Digest* staff has reviewed the literature on one of the most pernicious of the various religious cults that have appeared during the past decade. The scientific angle to the Moon story is the series of Unity of Science conferences which have been reported on extensively in *Science*^{1,2} and elsewhere.

Since I have not been personally affected by Moon's cult and others like it, I lack the motivation common to parents who have decided to take action of one kind or another against Moon. I do have close friends, however, whose son is a convert to Scientology, and I know how it has upset them. Apart from my suspicions that Scientology, like the Unification Church, is a racket, I do not feel threatened by it.

When I hear about Rev. Moon, I cannot avoid thinking about the rise of Adolf Hitler. One can argue that Moon is no more or less successful than a Billy Graham or some other 'evangelist.' Even when I heard about Moon's visit with Richard Nixon, I didn't feel threatened. How is one to decide when a 'nothing' becomes a 'something?' It was precisely the extremism of Adolf Hitler that deluded liberals and others into thinking that he could not be acceptable to sensible people. How many must Rev. Moon convert before you and I and all of the others who simply want to be left alone decide that it is time to do something about him?

The trouble with freedom is that you must sacrifice a little of it from time to time to keep it most of the time. Why don't some of the mathematicians out there come up with a formula for calculating the critical mass of a screwball or sociopath? Maybe they can also formulate the right amount of discipline needed to produce Moon-free children. There is a strong probability that too little discipline may produce a drug addict, while too much may produce a Moon addict--or is it vice versa?

Not too long ago there was a best-seller entitled *Small is Beautiful*.³ That's an expression I like in connection with all political and religious cults. When a religious cult becomes powerful enough to buy the Hotel New Yorker and Manhattan Center, I suspect that we are approaching a critical-mass situation. Perhaps it is too early, but some good investigative reporting is needed on Moon.

I wonder if any of the United States Congressmen who were so upset by some of the more abstruse research supported by the National Science Foundation have ever considered funding studies on the rise of religious cults in this country, and the reasons for it. Should the National Academy of Sciences create a blue-ribbon panel to tell us whether the Rev. Moon is a sincere 'evangelist' (whatever you or I think of him and his methods), or whether he is just a clever little man who's found a new way to make a fast buck.

REFERENCES

- 1 Walsh J. Meeting on the unity of science; reflections on the Rev. Moon. *Science* 189:975-6, 1975.
- 2 Holden C. Science and values discussed at Moon sponsored parley. *Science* 190:1073, 1975.
- 3 Schumacher E. F. *Small is beautiful: a study of economics as if people mattered*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.