

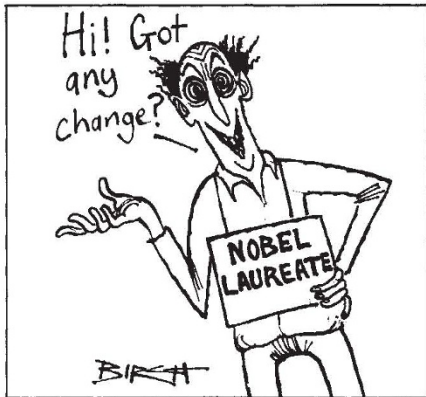
World Unification Church

Mixed motives at conclave

Chicago

UNDAUNTED by 12 years of intermittent controversy, distinguished academics continue to flock to the annual conference on "the unity of the sciences" sponsored by Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. This year's conference, held here last week, heard the Nobel economist F.A. Hayek explain why socialism is the product of a "demonstrable philosophical error". Another Nobel laureate, physicist Eugene Wigner, was the conference chairman. And Robert Mulliken, who won the Nobel prize for chemistry in 1966, also attended.

The presence of three Nobel laureates was something of a coup for the Unification Church, which has spent millions of dollars on efforts to gain a foothold in the academic community. The annual conferences — organized by the New York-based International Cultural Foundation — have been the church's principal vehicle. But the church also supports a think-tank, the Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy, an organization called the Professors World Peace Academy and an academic publishing company, Paragon



House. Last year, the church began to award a biennial scientific prize. The first winner, Eugene Wigner, received \$200,000 (most of which he promptly gave away in the form of research grants).

Reverend Moon's lavish spending on the conferences has fuelled the suspicion of critics who believe the hidden agenda of the meetings is to win respectability for the organization. Last year, British Members of Parliament, complaining that the "Moonies" used coercion to make impressionable young recruits break off their studies, urged British academics to stay away. Conference organizer Morton Kaplan, professor of political science at Chicago University, conceded that many academics decline invitations to attend. But enough top-ranking scientists accept, and many become regular participants.

Why do they go? Scientists attending for the first time say they are impressed by the quality of the speakers and organizers. Luminaries on the organizing committee

for the Chicago conference included Alvin Weinberg, director of the Oak Ridge Institute for Energy Analysis; Karl Pribram, Stanford professor of neuroscience; Frederick Seitz, former president of the US National Academy of Sciences and president of Rockefeller University; Fred Singer, professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia and Nobuyuki Fakuda, president of Japan's University of Tsukuba.

Thomas Donahue, chairman of the National Academy of Sciences' space science board, attending for the first time, said he decided to do so because all the speakers in his session — on atmospheric science — were first class scientists. They included William Kellogg and Ralph Cicerone of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. But Donahue said he doubted whether he would attend again because the discussions accomplished little.

A small minority of those who attend are not aware of the link between the International Cultural Foundation and the Unification Church. A British scientist, Andrew Watson of the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth, was due to take the chair at a conference session but withdrew at the last moment when he discovered the event was sponsored by the Moonies. And Paul Sigmund, director of Princeton's University Latin American studies programme, said he found out about the Unification Church connection only at a planning meeting six weeks after the original invitation.

Most of the 300 participants at the conference were in no doubt about the identity of the sponsor. They explained their presence by describing the event as a rare opportunity to meet fellow academics from a very wide range of disciplines and countries. Kenneth Mellanby, former director of Britain's Monk's Wood Experimental Station and next year's conference chairman, said the conferences were not intended to enable scientists to learn new facts about their own discipline, but to encourage discussions across disciplines and focus on pressing world problems.

All the participants emphasized that the conference organizers made no attempt to influence the content of the papers delivered. Even so, the Chicago conference was not just another academic meeting. For one thing, the Reverend Moon's personal influence was considerable. Moon chooses the title of the conferences and delivers the opening speech. The title is usually grandiloquent and vague, this year "Absolute Values and the New Cultural Revolution". According to Kaplan, the title has little or no practical effect on the programme, although one aspect of Moonie theology, the notion that knowledge can be reduced to a few

unifying principles, is commonly echoed in a discussion group on the philosophy of science and the unity of the disciplines. Reverend Moon's opening address, too, was uncomfortably political for a supposedly neutral scientific gathering. Speaking with passion against communism, he claimed that the KGB and the Japanese Communist Party were organizing attempts to "deprogramme" members of the church.

Finally, the church makes little secret of its desire to use the conferences to make influential friends in academic life. In Chicago, a booth at the conference distributed literature explaining Moon's pending Supreme Court appeal against his conviction for tax evasion. And many of those who attend the meetings are later invited to an all-expenses-paid seminar at which the principles of Moonie theology are explained. In 1983, such seminars were held in Italy, the Bahamas, Thailand and Argentina.

The Chicago conference, smaller than its predecessors, is expected to cost about \$600,000. Participants' air fares and hotel bills are fully paid, and speakers receive a fee of \$500 and another \$500 if they revise their papers for publication. Most speakers nevertheless scoff at the suggestion that they attend for the money. **Peter David**

Institute settles lawsuit

THE Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine in Palo Alto, California, has settled yet another lawsuit brought by a former employee who claimed to have been dismissed from a tenured research position. Dr Fred Westall, who worked at the institute in 1978 and 1979, had accused Pauling of fraud, breach of contract and slander. Under the settlement agreement, none of the parties may discuss the terms of the settlement.

According to court documents filed by Westall, he was offered the research position in February 1978. Westall claimed that in May 1979 he was fired without warning and without a hearing on any charge. Earlier this year, the Pauling Institute settled a suit brought by Dr Arthur Robinson, co-founder and former president of the institute, for \$575,000.

Westall had been a graduate student of Robinson at the University of California at San Diego and had joined the Pauling Institute at his recommendation. His termination at the Pauling Institute came shortly after Robinson's.

Pauling said last week that Westall "was a student of Robinson's" and that with Robinson gone, he believed Westall would not want to stay. "He never worked at the institute", Pauling said, but, citing the secrecy order on the settlement, refused to elaborate. Pauling also said that he had personally contributed "a considerable amount" of the money that went to pay Robinson's and Westall's settlements.

Stephen Budiansky