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Are the 'Moonies' In Diocese to Stay?

First in a series

By MARTIN TOOMBS

Of all the religious cults flourishing today, Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church seems to be the largest and the most feared. It has been accused of brainwashing, kidnaping, tax evasion, immigration violations, and being a new Nazi Youth Movement. Unification Church members have been in Rochester before, and on many college campuses in the diocese, but now they have caused considerable new concern by opening a center in Savannah, on Rt. 31 on the eastern edge of Wayne County.

"Rev." Moon's Church claims 7,000 full-time members, and a nationwide chain of centers for recruitment and fund raising. Moon, the 56-year-old founder of the church, is a Korean who speaks little English. He started his church in Korea, and brought it to the United States in 1972. "Moonies," as the church members have come to be called, live an austere lifestyle dedicated to prayer to "Father Moon" and fund raising.

It was the fund raising that first brought the group in Savannah to the attention of the local residents.

A truck with 250 cases of candy bars stopped at the Methodist church and asked where the "Unification Church" was. Rev. Neale Bachman, the minister, didn't know, but soon found out that they were renting a house on Rt. 31 east of the village. The house had been for sale, listed in the \$70,000 range, the church reportedly is renting it from an agency for \$500 a month.

Bachman and James Hutchinson, the pastor of the Christian Center in Savannah, decided to investigate, and arranged to meet Scott Hoffman, the team leader at the house. Hoffman assured them they were not in the area to recruit new members, but to raise money. He pointed out that the location halfway between Rochester and Syracuse is advantageous to them.

The Moonies were friendly to Bachman and Hutchinson, and patiently listened to questions. Yoshico, the female housekeeper, appeared to them to be exerting control, even though she never spoke. If one of the Moonies started to argue, she would make a sign to cut them off. Hoffman told the ministers that those at Savannah were from the main training center in Barrytown, in downstate New York. Church

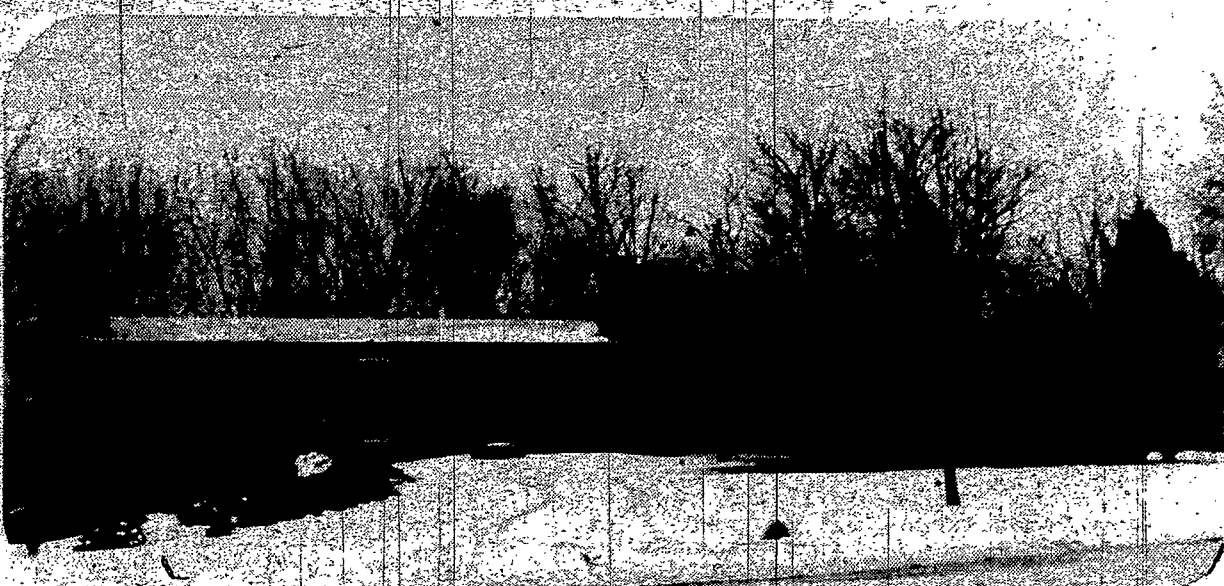


Photo by Martin Toombs

This is the house rented by the Unification Church on Rt. 31 in Savannah which they are using as a center for fund-raising activities.

members in training are brought to Savannah for two weeks of fund raising and then taken back.

Hoffman also gave a book on Moon's theology to Hutchinson. Apparently as a result of his interest, Hutchinson received a call from a minister in New York City a few days later. He invited Hutchinson to come to New York for a dinner given by the church specifically for ministers.

Courier-Journal attempts to contact church members directly were blocked. Yoshico refused to

open the door at the house, signaling that she was sick. A telephone call to the house resulted only in a claim that Hoffman was gone for two weeks, and no one else was able to speak for the group.

While in Savannah, the church members are taken to surrounding communities in vans, where they sell the candy bars door to door. They aren't immediately recognizable, but they have been identifying themselves as from the Unification Church in Savannah. (Nationally, it has been charac-

teristic for Moonies not to tell where the money is going, claiming that it is used for "youth work" or "drug abuse centers.") They sell the candy from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; the money is all turned over to the team leader. All of their basic needs are then provided; a Moonie needs only to follow orders to be sure of his food and lodging.

When not selling, Moonies pray; one morning their prayers carried to a neighbor's yard, who then called the police. Other than that,

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Photo by Susan McKinney

At the ceremonies were Father Michael Conboy, Bishop Hogan and Fathers Vasile, Vogt and Falcone.

Permanent Diaconate Nearer, Task Force Inaugurated

At an unusual liturgy last week at the Pastoral Center, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan inaugurated a task force charged with establishing the permanent diaconate in the diocese.

At the Thursday, April 1, rites, Bishop Hogan prayed, "May His presence among us be celebrated again and again in the service we undertake — the work of restoration to permanency of that which was instituted to be a unique and constant, visible sign of the presence of Him who came not to be served but to serve."

In his homily the bishop noted that the work of the group "centers on a restoration of an institution which flourished for five centuries and then began a rapid decline until it was practically dead by the Eighth Century."

"The reason for the decline," he said, "was the disassociation of the order from its principal purpose — service of the community — a service of charity to the world."

The rites included the blessing and distributing of sprigs of wheat to task force members as a sign of selfless service. During the action the bishop prayed, in the words of Jesus, "Unless a wheat grain fall on the ground and die, it remains only a single grain; but if it die, it yields a rich harvest."

Task Force members include: Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, executive director; Father Sebastian Falcone, coordinator; Father John Rosse, Sister Elizabeth Hughes, RSM; Father Benedict Ehmman, Jose Maleva, Father Jerome Robinson, OP; Father Otto Vogt,

Father Louis Vasile, Sister Patricia Norton, RSM; Frank Staropoli, Mrs. Mary Dombeck, Father Daniel Torrey, Dr. Joseph Torma, Mrs. Nancy Rubery, Father Elmer Heindl, Father William Amann.

Pastoral Changes Announced

The Pastoral Office announced Monday the appointment of Msgr. John E. Maney to the pastorate of St. Mary of the Lake in Ontario, and of Father Andrew J. Kalafsky as pastor of St. Mary of St. Mary of the Lake in Watkins Glen and St. Benedict in Odessa.

Msgr. Maney, who has been at Corpus Christi, Rochester for 21 years, is due at Ontario June 23, to take the place of Msgr. Gerard J.

Arrangements for the Chrism Mass at St. Peter & Paul's Church on Tuesday, April 13, at 8 p.m. are being finalized by the Chemung/Schuyler Region Planners.

Bus transportation has been coordinated for those who wish to travel to the Southern Tier in a group. A reserved seat may be had by contacting the offices of the regional coordinators.

Those driving private cars to Elmira are directed to take the Church Street Exit off Route 17. After reaching the Elmira Psychiatric Center, the modern building visible from Church Street on the left, motorists are advised to turn left on Washington Street, move to Market Street and then watch for appropriate signs directing them to the various parking areas. Motorists coming from other directions are urged to look for the same landmarks on the east side of Elmira. St. Peter & Paul's Church is directly across from St. Joseph's Hospital. A modern six-story elevator tower of St. Joseph's Hospital can be seen from many directions.

There will be a specified number

of reserved seats for all who travel by bus and a limited number for those coming by private car. All are urged to arrive as early as possible to be assured of a seat. Provisions are being made to handle the overflow.

For those not attending, various television stations are cooperating to make the Mass and the highlights of same available on local television in the Elmira and Rochester locales.

Teleprompter, Channel 4, Elmira, will commence the broadcast of the entire Chrism Mass on a delayed basis commencing at 9 p.m. on the 13th. WXXI, Channel 21 in Rochester, will air a condensed version of the traditional service to include the general explanation and welcome, renewal of commitment, blessing of the Holy Chrism and Bishop Joseph Hogan's homily at 6:30 p.m. on Holy Thursday. WENY television, Elmira, will broadcast the same program at 7 p.m. on Holy Thursday for the non-cable viewers in the Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben Region.

The various tapes will be used by regions in the future as educational tools for the purpose of preparation and future planning.

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