

# The Moonies and BRAINWASHING

Last in a Series

By MARTIN TOOMBS

"Rev." Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church continues to grow, even in the midst of increasing criticism of the church's teachings and activities. The teaching of the church seems ludicrous to many, raising questions as to why anyone would join. Church critics look at the training sessions, and say that Moonies, as church members are called, are victims of brainwashing.

Several Moonies have come from the Rochester area. Unification activities in at least three different centers in Rochester, now closed, the new center in Savannah, and the on and off commitment in Ithaca have resulted in new members for the church.

Brainwashing is the central controversy surrounding Moon's Church. Exactly what constitutes brainwashing and what is training, has been debated in the courts, with no clear definition resulting. In the meantime, Moonies continue to do whatever they are told by their leaders, apparently willingly.

The church's recruiting efforts are widespread; Moonies can be seen in nearly every large city or college town. The church is always looking for potential members and the most fertile area has been college campuses. A startling number of the members were brought up either Catholic or Jewish. Very few Protestants and practically no racial minority groups are in the membership.

The original contact with a potential member usually occurs without the Moonies revealing connection with the church. They invite the prospective member to "Bible study classes" and then to weekend seminars. Then the pitch starts for further training, usually at the church's main training center, a former Catholic seminary in Barrytown, N.Y., which the church purchased for \$1.5 million. Another major center, Boonville, in California, takes recruits from the western portion of the country.

The training the recruits receive has been documented by many sources. A lack of sleep, three-hour lectures which are repeated, long periods of prayer and singing, and a rigid time schedule not allowing anyone to ever be all one. Recruits are completely separated from the world outside the center, and surrounded by longer term members who encourage dedication to the severe regimen. The combination of fatigue and the feeling of camaraderie with the other Moonies soon sweeps the new member into the fold.

After the Moonies undergo training, varying from two to eight weeks, they fully accept everything they were taught. Investigators note that two Moonies who are asked the same question will usually respond with the same answer, word for word. It is hard to get Moonies to answer questions without quoting from the Bible or from Moon. When asked to explain further, they reply with another quote or a counter question.

Church members are always segregated by sex, and married couples who join the church are separated. Marriage is the goal of every Moonie, as they believe that it erases original sin, and makes the Moonie part of Moon's family and therefore the perfect race. But they can only be married after they have reached the proper spiritual state, and with the approval of Moon himself. Moon often matches couples who don't even know each other. Mass wedding ceremonies are held periodically; the most recent Unification wedding in Seoul, South Korea, united 900 couples. Divorce is not allowed (though Moon himself has divorced three wives). After the wedding, the couple returns to separate quarters, and often never live together.

When the initial training is completed, Moonies are taken to various locations throughout the

country to sell items or ask for donations, from 12 to 16 hours a day. Church members usually claim that the money will be used for "drug abuse centers" or "youth work," not mentioning the Unification Church. Selling flowers and candy, items that are consumed and need to be replaced, is a major fund raising method. Each Moonie is expected to meet a specific norm for his day's work, usually \$100. Those sinking below that figure will spend the night praying for greater success the following day.

Moonies also run small factories and are involved in many businesses. The enterprises start small, but grow quickly on free labor and tax exemptions. Moon's industrial complex in South Korea grosses \$15 million a year.

The income of the church can be estimated by taking the conservative estimate of 7,000 full-time members, and an average per day take of \$100. The church's gross then would be \$700,000 per day. As the selling goes on every day of the year, the church's annual income would be \$255.5 million.

When the Moonies complete their day of fund raising, all their money is turned over to their team leader, who supplies food and clothing. Church members sleep on the floor, and live without any of the comforts Americans have come to expect.

The profits from these activities



In this drawing by Jim Hummel, titled "The Whole World is in My Hands," Korean evangelist Sun Myung Moon reaches out towards his followers. (RNS)

aren't spent on drug or youth programs, but are invested. The church owns \$10 million worth of real estate in New York City and along the Hudson River.

Particularly painful for Moonies' parents is that they are cut off from their children. Suppression of family ties is a major part of the church's procedure, as they teach that parents and former friends are not to be contacted, or trusted. Moonies believe that anyone who tries to get them to leave the church is working for Satan.

Many parents have sought to get their children back through "de-

programming," a process designed to reverse their indoctrination. First they make contact with their child, often difficult, and arrange a meeting. Once they meet, the parents forcefully take their son or daughter, usually to a motel, where the de-programming takes place. This is done by breaking down the person's faith in Moon, usually by showing them that what they believe is contradictory, and has no Biblical basis. The person best known for this is Ted Patrick; Moonies are taught to fear him, and reportedly tremble at the sound of his name.

De-programming is not always

successful; some Moonies who have returned to the church have brought lawsuits against their parents for kidnapping and violation of their civil rights.

Parents who have children in the church say that the best defense against the church is a clear knowledge of one's own religion, and of the Bible. Their organizations are working to expose the church as what they feel it is, and to stop its activities, but are admittedly pessimistic. They see public knowledge of the church, and a public outcry against its activities as being their most valuable weapon.

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