

MESSIAH FROM KOREA

HONOR THY FATHER MOON

HELLFIRE, DAMNATION, SALVATION! The Messiah is here. Sun Myung Moon has come from Korea to save our country, and thousands of young Americans have left their homes and schools to join his evangelical crusade, one of several religious cults that have mushroomed in the last decade. Thousands of other youths have joined Hare Krishna, the Children of God, the Jesus People, and the Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission. Hundreds of others have attached themselves to lesser-known sects, gurus and mystics.

In a time of recession and turmoil, the cults are a growth industry, their leaders successful entrepreneurs of salvation for the young. None of these new psychoreligious cults threatens to sweep the country, and probably none commands more than 5,000 full-time members. But in a country in which many of the young have recently tripped out on drugs and radical politics, the cults have become a new opiate for the youth of the '70s.

In terms of growth, wealth, organization and discipline, the Reverend Moon's Unification Church is the hottest and most controversial manifestation of the new evangelism. Founded in Korea in 1954 as The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, it now claims a worldwide membership of 500,000 to two million, based mainly in Korea and Japan, with a modest following in Europe. Moon moved his headquarters to America in 1973 because he believes it to be God's chosen land, and possibly because it

Sun Myung Moon suffers youth to come unto him, and they do, in droves. His Unification Church, stern and evangelical, leads the march of psychoreligious cults. Moon's Family, a warm womb, shuts out care, responsibility, and the need to think for oneself.

by Berkeley Rice

looked like promising territory. It has been. This article concentrates on the movement's activities in the United States.

Starting with only a few hundred members in 1970, the Unification Church now claims a U.S. following of 10,000 to 30,000, with a core of 2,000 to 10,000 full-time members. The movement now takes in about \$10 million a year from fund raising and contributions. It is difficult for any outsider to measure its size or wealth with full confidence, since the numbers vary wildly from one supposedly official estimate to another. As of the fall of 1975 the Church operated 120 communal recruiting and fund-raising centers in cities across the country, with recruiting teams covering 150 college campuses. Teams of Moon's missionaries bring word of the new Messiah to the heathen in other parts, and a Church-run publishing company spreads his message in pamphlets, paperbacks and leaflets.

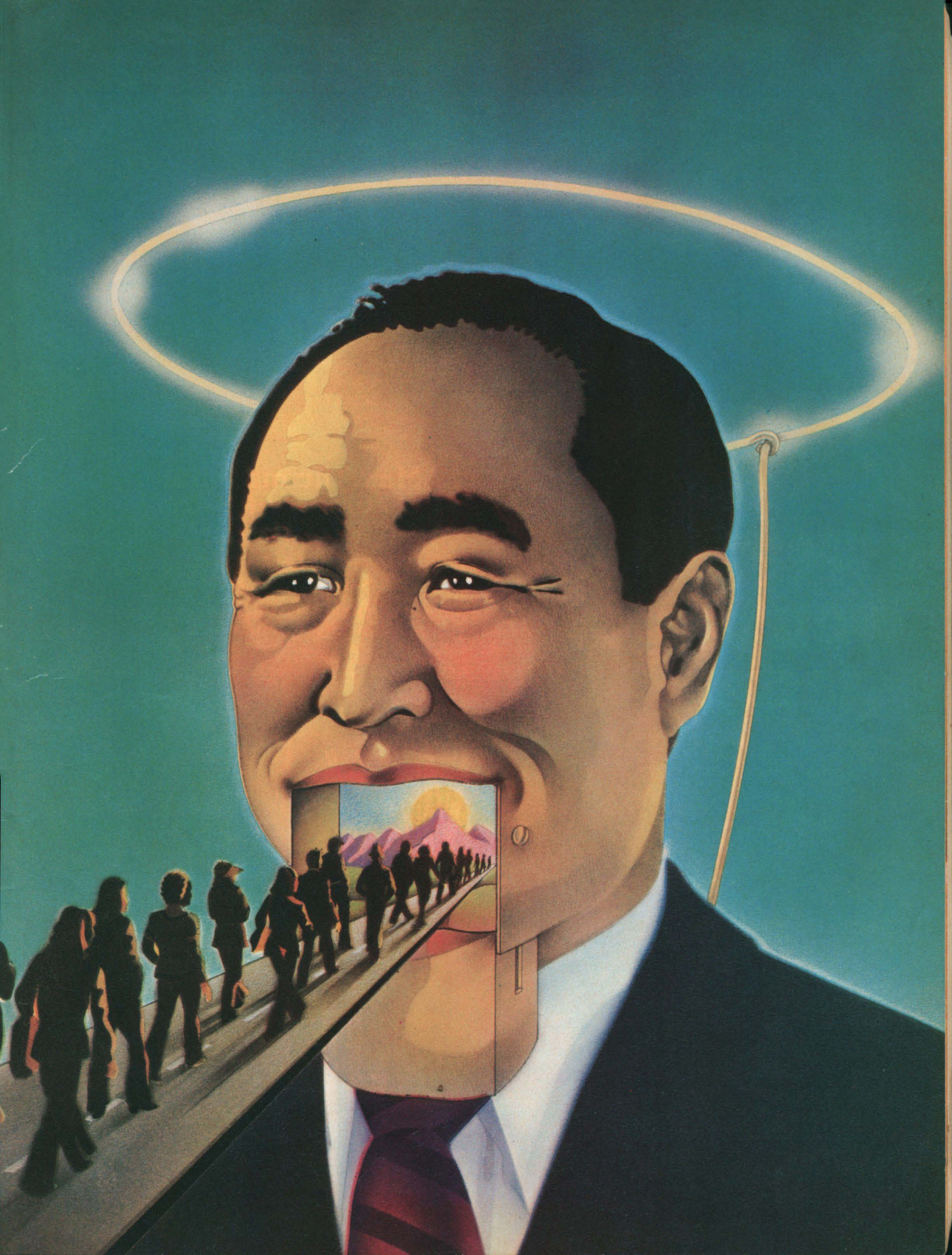
Professional "Deprogrammers." Moon has been denounced as a religious fraud and hustler, an antichrist who threatens es-

tablished Christianity. He has also been accused of manipulating and ripping off the innocent young "Moonies" who serve him. His recruiters have left behind a trail of irate or hysterical parents who claim he has stolen their children and brainwashed them into conversion and slavery.

Many parents have tried to rescue their sons and daughters from Moon's communes, but often the kids can't be found, or refuse to come home. Some parents have hired professional "deprogrammers" to kidnap their children and free them from Moon's spell. Some have sued the Church for holding the youths against their will, a charge difficult and humiliating to prove when the kids swear they prefer Moon's Family to their own.

Many other parents either approve of or don't seem to mind their children joining Moon's movement. Some feel it may be better than drugs or drifting aimlessly around the country. Others look with favor upon it as a Christian youth movement, without understanding exactly what the members do or believe.

While Church members easily accept Moon's theology as revealed truth, outsiders tend to find it a mind-boggling mixture of Pentecostal Christianity, Eastern mysticism, anticommunism, pop psychology and metaphysics. According to *Divine Principle*, Moon's book of revelations, God intended Adam and Eve to marry and have perfect children, thereby establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. But Satan,



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embodied in the snake, seduced Eve, who in turn passed her impurity on to Adam, bringing about the Fall of Man. God then sent Jesus to redeem mankind from sin, but Jesus blew it too. He died on the cross before he could marry and father a new race of perfect children. The time has now come for a second Christ who will finally fulfill God's original plan. Moon doesn't identify the new Messiah, but like Moon, He just happens to have been born in Korea in 1920.

A short, stocky, moon-faced man of great energy, this 55-year-old millionaire industrialist-evangelist remains unfamiliar to most Americans. He speaks little English, grants almost no interviews, and makes infrequent public appearances at Unification rallies and banquets, usually surrounded by a phalanx of husky Moonie bodyguards. Since Moon addresses his American followers only in Korean, outsiders cannot understand his charisma, which depends mostly on his dynamic delivery and the members' belief in his semidivinity.

Since settling in the U.S., Moon has lived near Tarrytown, N.Y. in a \$620,000 25-room mansion overlooking the Hudson River, with his wife, seven children, and a personal staff of 35 Moonies. The estate was called "Exquisite Acres" by the brassiere tycoon who built it; Moon has renamed it "East Garden"—a Garden of Eden for the new Adam from the East.

When not looking after his religious and corporate affairs, Moon spends a good deal of time out fishing on his 50-foot cabin cruiser, *New Hope*. Church officials bristle at criticisms of Moon's luxury. "Why must a religious leader be an ascetic?" one of them responded recently. "Look at the Pope." When I raised the issue with Farley Jones, a 29-year-old Princeton graduate who handles the Church's press relations, he said, "Followers of many religions honor their spiritual leader with physical comforts worthy of the dignity of his position. I trust the Reverend Moon's relationship with God, so I don't object to his lifestyle."

Moon's dealings with God began soon after his birth in North Korea. "From

childhood I was clairvoyant," Moon once told his followers. "I could see through people, see their spirits." When he was 12 he began praying for "extraordinary things," and must have caught God's attention. On an Easter Sunday morning when Moon was 16, he had a vision in which Jesus appeared and told him to "carry out my unfinished task."

Shining Dragon. Moon prepared for his divine mission by carrying on visionary chats with other prominent Biblical figures, and studying religious sects and cults then popular in Japan and Korea. In 1946 he began preaching his own version of Messianic Christianity, and gradually attracted a small, devoted following. He also changed his name from Yong Myung (Shining Dragon) Moon to a more celestial Sun Myung (Shining Sun) Moon. Moon, in Korean, means moon.

As his sect grew, Moon ran afoul of the authorities. He was excommunicated by the Presbyterian Church in 1948 and arrested various times by the police—on morals charges according to his Korean critics; for anticommunist activities according to Moon. Church legend tells how Moon was imprisoned, tortured and starved, yet shared his faith and his food with fellow inmates. Upon his escape or release in 1950 he led a band of followers on the mountainous trek to South Korea. He demonstrated his supernatural strength by

carrying a crippled comrade on his bicycle—400 miles on the handlebars, according to one account; 600 miles on his back, according to another.

Reestablished in the South at the end of the Korean War, Moon founded the Unification Church, which has flourished under the military dictatorship of General Park Chung Hee.

Since moving to the United States in 1973, Moon has proclaimed his new age of Christianity at lectures, banquets and mass rallies in every major city in the country, culminating in a rally at New York City's Madison Square Garden in 1974. This spring he hopes to gather 250,000 people at a rally in Yankee Stadium.

Moon's crusades feature performances of the Korean National Folk Ballet, a Korean children's dance troupe called the "Little Angels," the New Hope Singers and a rock group called "Sunburst."

As a build-up for the Garden rally, 2,000 Moonies (about half flown in from Japan and Europe) spent weeks thrusting out leaflets on crowded street corners, and plastering virtually every bare wall in the city with posters announcing the coming of Sun Moon.

"Kung-Fu Tantrum." In a two-hour speech punctuated by kicks, jumps, karate chops and tears (one reporter called it a "kung-fu tantrum") the Reverend Moon spewed forth a torrent of hellfire and brimstone in Korean, which was

THE QUOTATIONS OF SUN MYUNG MOON

"I am your brain."

"What I wish must be your wish."

"My mission is to make new hearts, new persons."

**"Of all the saints sent by God,
I think I am the most successful one."**

**"The time will come . . . when my words will almost serve as law.
If I ask a certain thing it will be done."**

**"The whole world is in my hand, and I will conquer
and subjugate the world."**

**"By putting things in order, we can accomplish God's will.
All obstacles to this world must be annihilated."**

**"Our strategy is to be unified into one with ourselves,
and with that as the bullet we can smash the world."**

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translated by a heavily accented Korean interpreter as Moon stood smiling beatifically. Moon told of the fall of man, recounted the history of Christianity, warned of the approaching apocalypse and announced the arrival of a second Christ who would offer the world one last chance at salvation. "You can be the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven if you meet the coming Messiah," he told a packed audience that thinned considerably before he finished. "He is your hope . . . and the only hope of America and this world." As usual, Moon stopped just short of actually proclaiming himself the Messiah, but he left little doubt in anyone's mind.

At other rallies the Unification Church's President Neil Salonen holds forth. Salonen, 30, is a smooth New Yorker who managed a psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C. before his life was "transformed" by Sun Moon. Salonen tells Americans how the country is going to hell because of all the crime, suicide, alcoholism, divorce, sex, drug abuse, college radicals and foreign communists. He says God has sent the Reverend Moon to the U.S. to solve these problems, and to "mobilize an ideological army of young people . . . to unite the world in a new age of faith."

The immediate goal of the crusades, rallies and street-corner evangelism is the recruitment of new members for the movement. Wherever the clean-cut, smiling Moonies can find them—on city streets or college campuses—they engage young Americans in discussions of the state of the country or their souls. As one U.C. official told me, "If someone's lonely, we talk to them. There are a lot of lonely people walking around."

The discussions almost invariably end with an invitation to an introductory lecture at the nearest Unification center. After these lectures come invitations to other lectures and dinners at the center. Along with dinner, potential converts get a diet of relentlessly hearty friendship from the brothers and sisters of what soon becomes the Family instead of the Church.

Those attracted to Moon's Family or his religion get invited next to a weekend "workshop" devoted to

further study and friendship. The weekends follow an exhausting and rigidly structured pattern with little time for sleep and none for private reflection. Recruits get a daily dose of six to eight hours of mind-numbing theology based on Moon's *Divine Principle*. By the final lecture they learn that God has sent Sun Moon to save the world in general, and themselves in particular.

After each lecture, recruits and Moonies join in small discussion groups to answer questions but also to explore any personal problems, and to offer comforting attention. The rest of the days are filled with group activities: calisthenics, meals, sports, and lots of singing and praying. After dinner, and often lasting well past midnight, there's more group singing and praying, with testimony by Moonies of how they came to find peace, purpose, love and joy in the Family. Never left alone, the recruits are encouraged to pour out their hearts to their new brothers and sisters. Many do.

By Sunday night the conversion process turns hard-sell, with each recruit pressed to make a commitment to a week-long workshop, the next stage in the initiation process. About one out of four do. Those who don't often receive phone calls or visits afterward by Moonies who don't give up easily.

No Time for Relatives. For most of those who sign up for the seven-day workshop, the next stop is the Church's training headquarters at Barrytown, N.Y., about 90 miles up the Hudson from New York City. Barrytown is big time. Indoctrination there becomes more serious, the study more rigorous, and the life more spartan than that of the cadets just down the river at West Point. The program leaves neither time nor opportunity for contacting relatives or friends on the outside.

At the end of the week comes the pressure for commitment to full-time membership in the Family. The recruits reach this moment of decision worn out from lack of sleep, numbed by the endless lectures, cut off from the advice of family or friends, and softened up by the embracing warmth of the group. "It was like being taken care of," one ex-Moonie recalled. "The people were very

friendly, and you really thought they did love you Also, I was kind of afraid of going out into the world It was an escape from the outside world." Some seem to have been ready for just such a commitment. "I've been looking for something like this for years," one told me. "It answers all the questions I was asking."

About half of those who complete the week-long seminar join the movement. Some join as "followers," remaining at their jobs or at school, and working evenings or weekends on Church projects. Some contribute part of their salaries. Those who join as full-time members either move into a local commune or stay at Barrytown and go on to increasingly intense seminars of three to 16 weeks.

During their first few months in the movement, new members often get phone calls or letters from parents or friends, urging them to drop out or at least come home to talk it over. Those who even waver, or who consider leaving are often told that their parents and others who oppose the Church are acting on behalf of Satan. A few do eventually drop out, but usually over the strenuous objections of their leaders. An evening of intense prayer and guidance frequently brings such wayward sheep back to the fold.

Once they move in, new members often give what possessions they have to the Church. While this rarely involves much money, some wealthy converts have donated considerable sums. At Barrytown or the communal centers, the Moonies no longer need money anyway. The Church takes care of all their daily needs, from toothpaste to trousers. Except for a few senior officials, every member who needs a new pair of shoes or eyeglasses has to ask the local director or team leader for the money to buy them. Directors of the bigger centers sometimes buy up large lots of nearly identical clothes for their resident members, thereby increasing the degree to which groups of smiling Moonies look as though they were cloned rather than recruited.

Life in a Moonie commune offers a welcome refuge to those unwilling or unable to face the daily frustrations of

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life on the outside: no drugs, no drinks, no sex, no money, no problems, no choices, no decisions. From the team leader's cheerful "Rise and shine!" in the sexually segregated dormitories to the last group songs and prayers at midnight, the Moonies rarely have to think for themselves. Full of religious fervor and new-found purpose, they follow orders and perform chores with gusto.

When not out recruiting, fund raising or working for the movement's various commercial enterprises, Moonies spend most of their remaining hours in group prayer. While they sometimes pray to God, they frequently pray to "Father." I asked one church official who "Father" was, and he replied, "Reverend Moon." One ex-Moonie feels the Church uses prayer as a means of emotional control over its members. "Everyone else is praying, like 'Heavenly Father, help us, help us. Oh, we're so lost Father.' They tell you that in order to reach God, you have to scream as loud as you can, and work up emotionally. . . . You're supposed to pray so fervently that you cry."

Spiritual Highs. I once watched a few dozen Moonies kneel in prayer at "the holy rock" at Barrytown. It got the title because Moon often stands on it to preach. Most were crying, some sobbing, as they prayed loudly and independently, but with the same general plea: "Father, oh Father, please help us." Some jerked spasmodically, in spiritual transport, like participants in a voodoo ceremony.

Those who observe Moonies closely often notice a glassy, spaced-out look in their eyes, which, combined with their everlasting smiles, makes them look like tripped-out drug freaks. Many are indeed on a high, but they are tripping out on God, not drugs. Some of that glassy-eyed look may also be attributable to lack of sleep.

Like the Unification Church, the other religious cults also produce highs without the aid of drugs or liquor. The Jesus People urge potential converts to "turn on with Jesus," or to "take a trip with Jesus." The Hare Krishna movement advertises: "Stay high forever." The mother of a Child of God gave this description of her son's cult-mates: "Their eyes are fully dilated, and they

glitter. . . . Although they talk to you, and they smile at you, you don't feel that it's the whole person."

To learn how the Church creates such spiritual fervor I visited the Barrytown training center recently with Michael Warder, a 29-year-old Stanford graduate who joined the Church seven years ago and now serves as its director of training. The center occupies a former Catholic seminary the Church purchased a few years ago for \$1.5 million.

As we toured the buildings and grounds at Barrytown, I saw dozens of Moonies servicing the center's cars and vans, preparing meals for hundreds of trainees, and doing all the chores involved in running a sizable education institution.

Wherever we went in the buildings, photos of Moon smiled down on us. In one office I met a spry, gray-haired lady of 67 who was led into the movement in 1974 by her son. She admits to having been negative at first, "but once I saw the light I quit my job, sold my house, and joined the Church." When I asked her what her son had been doing before he joined, she replied, "Spacing out. He didn't know what to do with his life." In another office I met a girl who said she'd been "a strong hippie radical at Berkeley" where she spent two years at college. "I didn't like the world the way it was. I wanted to change it. I had tried several Christian groups, and the Guru Maharishi. This was the first movement I tried that offered real answers."

Warder and I tried to look in on the three-week and six-week groups, but they were both away recruiting or fund raising as part of their training. The four-month trainees spend about one month out fund raising, but we found them at Barrytown just as their afternoon session began with several stirring hymns and a prayer to "Father" Moon for the "strength to understand his teaching."

The 120 well-dressed novitiates then sat through a four-hour lecture on predestination, which they followed attentively, taking notes in detail. When I asked if four hours without a break wasn't a bit long for such a topic, a staff member sitting next to me explained, "That is part of our training."

Diverting Energies. As I had noticed at other Church activities, the male and female members sat on separate sides of the hall. Warder explained that all activities at Barrytown and other Church centers are carefully segregated by sex. "We find that way everyone feels more comfortable in their study and in their search for the truth. As soon as they're mixed you find the boys and girls begin thinking about other things."

The Church's puritan attitudes toward sex govern every minute of the training and lives of its members. Perhaps as a way to divert libidinal energies, group leaders encourage various forms of asexual but segregated physical contact: touching, massaging, backslapping and general horseplay.

In one of the Reverend Moon's "Master Speaks" training lectures, he warned the young men and women against holding hands or even sitting next to each other because it might lead to sin: "You must keep your purity and chastity. You must think of it as more valuable, more important than your own life. . . . Purity is something like a blossom before it is opened. So before you are blessed, you must be like a blossom shut tight, and bear the fragrance deep within you."

Before they can become eligible for marriage, Moonies must put in seven years of faithful service to the Church and even then they need Moon's personal approval. Eligible members may propose mates of their own choice, but Moon makes the final selection, often pairing couples completely unknown to each other.

As a generous and efficient father, Moon likes big weddings. Last year, at an all-day affair held in a Seoul sports arena, he married 1,800 member couples from 24 countries, including 70 couples from the United States.

As in the outside world, marriage does not bring immediate bliss. Newlywed Moonies must live separate and celibate lives for at least 40 days, and up to three years for younger members, which allows them time to achieve a proper level of spiritual perfection. Even after the period of enforced celibacy, Church couples tend to live as brothers and sisters in the Family, rather than as

husband and wife. By enforcing celibacy and permitting only the distant prospect and eventual facade of marriage, Moon's movement follows a long tradition of American communes. The successful ones generally encouraged free love or enforced celibacy, thereby preventing the formation of family units that could threaten the cohesiveness of the communal family and the authority of its leader [see "Individualism Busts the Commune Boom" by Laurence Veysey, *pt.*, December 1974].

In addition to warnings on the evils of sex, trainees at Barrytown receive a heavy indoctrination in the dangers of communism. According to Moon, communism equals satanism, and every good Christian should be willing to give up his life to fight it anywhere in the world, particularly in defense of South Korea, the movement's "Fatherland."

Since he arrived in America, Moon has continued to mix politics with his religion. The Church has a political affiliate in Washington, D.C. called the Freedom Leadership Foundation (FLF), dedicated to "ideological victory over communism in the United States." The FLF's rallies, seminars, lectures and publications stress America's moral obligation to provide military and economic support for General Park's government in South Korea.

God Chose Nixon. Like his competitor Billy Graham, the Reverend Moon has demonstrated considerable flair for political publicity. With bipartisan agility he has had his picture taken (and used repeatedly in Church publications) with Senators Hubert Humphrey, Edward Kennedy, Strom Thurmond and James Buckley.

When Richard Nixon was under siege during the final months of his presidency, Moon, acting upon what he called direct instructions from God, took out full-page ads in major newspapers across the country urging public support of the President. Blending piety and patriotism, Moon proclaimed: "This nation is God's nation. The office of the President of the United States is therefore sacred. . . . God has chosen Richard Nixon to be President of the United States."

The following month Moon mobilized 1,000 of the faithful for a Washington prayer fast and vigil in the President's support. They marched on Capitol Hill carrying signs that read: "PRAY FOR NIXON" and "GOD LOVES NIXON."

Except for their anticommunist

indoctrination, most Moonies seem uninterested in politics. Besides, few have much time or energy left over from fund raising and recruiting. During much of their life in the Family, the brothers and sisters put in grueling dawn-to-dusk days peddling candles, peanuts, dried flowers or anything else the Church feels will inspire donations.

Moonies work in pairs at street corners or shopping plazas; others go out in teams selling door to door in suburban neighborhoods. When asked what they're raising money for, they give vague or misleading answers like "Christian youth work," "youth counseling," or "a drug-abuse program."

The young solicitors rarely mention the Church or Sun Moon. They are polite, but remarkably persistent. Success at fund raising becomes a test of devotion to the Church. Team leaders send their troops off in the morning with songs, prayers and pep talks, encouraging competition among each other and with other teams. Stoked up like Marine recruits for a bayonet drill, the Moonies charge out and work the streets with a fervor no profit motive could ever inspire. Those who fail to meet a respectable daily quota often spend the evening praying for God's help the following day.

Except for the spartan food, clothing and shelter it provides for its members, the Church seems to invest most of its funds in real estate. It bought the former Columbia University Club in New York for \$1.2 million, for its national headquarters, and owns another \$10 million worth of property along the Hudson River.

In addition to its real-estate holdings, the movement also runs cottage industries in dozens of communes around the country, with members turning out candles and other items used for fund-raising drives. The Church also owns and operates other member-run commercial enterprises: a ranch, gas station, printing company, travel agency, landscape service, home-cleaning service and tea house. While these hardly amount to a financial empire, they grow fast on tax exemptions and free labor.

From similarly modest beginnings, Moon has built up a \$15 million-a-year industrial conglomerate in Korea, drawing largely on churchmembers' labor. His factories turn out heavy machinery, titanium, paint, pharmaceuticals, marble vases, and shotguns.

"He Has a Right." Current plans call for U.S. distribution of a ginseng tea produced in Korea by Moon's Ilhwa Pharmaceutical Co. An old Oriental favorite brewed from a powdered root, Moon's ginseng tea reputedly "lowers blood sugar, prevents degeneration of human cells, and stimulates the gonads." It sells for \$24 for seven ounces, and tastes like boiled chalk.

To arouse consumers in this country, Moon has hired a high-priced public-relations firm (whose other accounts include General Motors, Gulf and Exxon) to promote his tea and to repair the Church's image in the U.S., which even its own officials admit is pretty bad.

Newspapers around the country have run stories about tearful parents who have tried in vain to free their children from Moon's cult; ex-Moonies have appeared on televised press conferences to denounce the Church for brainwashing them into conversion and turning them against their parents. Rabbi Maurice Davis, of White Plains, N.Y., has formed a national organization of several hundred parents who have lost their children to Sun Moon and other religious cults.

"Moon's theology is nonsense," says Rabbi Davis, "but he has a right to preach whatever nonsense he wants. What I hold against the Moon movement is that they take kids and treat them as things. They use the kids as slaves, as workers. They don't really care about these kids, and they do nothing to make the world better."

Church officials often argue they are making the world better by getting wayward youths off drugs and away from crime. But few of their recruits look like ex-junkies, and most come from middle-class schools and homes rather than crime-ridden ghettos. For all its talk about crime, drugs, alcohol and other social ills, the movement runs few programs aimed at solving such problems, or at helping nonmembers. Most of its resources are directed inward, producing more money and more members, who in turn will recruit more members and raise more money. Rather than helping society, the movement siphons off the energy and idealism of its members. When I asked one official how this would benefit society, he replied, "we can change the world by changing men's hearts." When I countered that such a policy would solve society's problems (Continued on page 47.)

only if everyone joined the Unification Church, he smiled.

Americans may not all join the Unification Church, but many are joining its competitors, which share similar policies and practices. The Children of God also spend much of their time selling various articles and soliciting donations, turning all receipts over to their leader Moses David. The movement is often accused of "brainwashing," and teaches recruits to regard anyone who challenges it as an agent of the devil. "They give you the answers for everything," one ex-member recalled. "The leader does your thinking for you."

Pattern of Vulnerability. The 5,000-member Hare Krishna Society is run by a successful businessman from India, who, like Moon, has organized his followers into a band of devoted fund raisers willing to live a life of ascetic denial. Membership requires insulation from the outside world, surrender of prior identity, strict standards of dress and behavior, and a great deal of group chanting which helps create the high. Instead of drugs, sex, or personal pleasure, the members substitute dedication, endurance, and self-sacrifice.

Psychologists who have studied the Jesus People movement found a pattern of vulnerability among the members. On a personality test they scored significantly lower than average on self-confidence and personal adjustment. The conversion process at Jesus People communes follows a rigid pattern, involving subtle and overt pressure, and a rewarding warmth and acceptance from new "brothers" and "sisters" upon conversion. Converts must make a total commitment, and give up all material possessions and outside contacts with family or friends.

The charge of "brainwashing" deserves attention. Much of what happens to Moon's converts during the weekend and week-long initiation workshops does follow the classic steps of brainwashing: isolating them from all past and outside contacts; surrounding them with new instant comrades and a new authority figure; wearing them down physically, mentally and emotionally; then "programming" them with new beliefs and pressuring them into total commitment.

But the term brainwashing implies force and captivity, conditions that do not apply to Moon's recruits. Church members may use heavy-handed emo-

tional or psychological pressure, but they do not force anyone to join or believe. While one might question the independence of a convert's mind, no one has proven the Church holds its members against their will. It might be fairer to use the term conversion instead of brainwashing. If conversion requires the suspension of critical faculties, at least the Moonies do so willingly.


In his classic study of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James described religious conversion in a manner strikingly similar to the tales told by Moonies. James wrote that conversion occurs most often among those beset by a "sense of incompleteness and imperfection," and frequently during a "state of temporary exhaustion." He told how conversion brings "a new level of spiritual vitality" in which "new energies and endurances are shown. The personality is changed, the man is born anew . . . perceiving truths not known before," a sense of peace and harmony in themselves and in the world.

Instant Salvation. Through a process of self-selection Moon's movement probably attracts only those youths already seeking some form of total commitment. Many Moonies have been drifting from cults to communes for years, sampling the spiritual fare like diners at a smorgasbord. The Church may be capitalizing on their loneliness, but it can hardly be blamed for their vulnerability. However remarkable the experience seems to the convert and his family, James described it as essentially an "adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity."

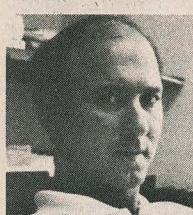
While one can commiserate with parents whose children leave home to join religious cults, it's hard to condone the desperate attempts to recover the children by kidnapping and deprogramming, a process openly based on the techniques of brainwashing. Youths of legal age have a right to practice any religion they choose. Whether or not their choice is wise has nothing to do with their right to exercise it. Eighteen-year-olds who join the U.S. Marines may be using equally rash judgment, and their boot-camp training subjects them to group discipline, exhaustion and "brainwashing" that match anything that the Moonies endure. One could easily question the judgment of grown-ups who seek in-

stant salvation in such socially acceptable adult cults as TM, Arica, est, primal therapy, or encounter groups.

While its critics describe the Unification Church as authoritarian, Church leaders prefer to call their approach "loving and parental." They may be right. To thousands of young Americans threatened by the approach of life as an adult, Moon's Family offers the security of perennial childhood. To lonely young people drifting through cold, impersonal cities, it offers instant friendship and communion, a sense of belonging. To college students suffering the rigors of academic competition, it offers an egoless life of cooperative group spirit. To those troubled by personal problems with drugs or sex, it offers a drugless, sexless world of militant puritanism. To those troubled by our materialistic society, it offers a life of disciplined asceticism. To those who have no faith in the traditional institutions of society, it offers the comfort of belief. To those hungering for truth and meaning in a complicated world, it offers simple answers.

Critics may call Moon's movement a religious fraud, and accuse it of exploiting innocent youths but, except for those who drop out, most Moonies seem genuinely happy in their service to Moon and the Church. In exchange for their labor, devotion and commitment, the Church has given them a home, a family, and a purpose. Critics may call that exploitation or slavery, but the Moonies consider it a bargain. No more problems, no more hassles, no more doubts. Just honor thy Father Moon. 

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peared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Harpers*, *Saturday Review*, *Look*, *The Nation*, and *Newsweek*, for which he served as a correspondent in West Africa. He has also written three books: *Enter Gambia*, *The Other End of the Leash*, and *The C-5A Scandal*. Rice received his B.A. from Amherst College, studied for a year at the Sorbonne, and earned an M.A. in English at Columbia University. For more information, read:

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