

Rev. Moon: Nixon Backer



By Ellsworth Davis—The Washington Post

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon, left, as he arrived here in January.

2/15/74
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Shortly before noon on the first of February the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, known variously among his followers as the Father of the Universe and the Messiah returned, was ushered into the presence of President Richard M. Nixon.

The chunky, 54-year-old Korean evangelist embraced Mr. Nixon and then prayed fervently in his native tongue while the President listened in silence. Mr. Moon ended the audience with the exhortation: "Don't knuckle under to pressure. Stand up for your convictions."

Afterward the White House issued a brief announcement of the unscheduled visit. It explained that "the President wanted to take the opportunity to personally thank Rev. Moon for his support . . ." No other details of the session were provided by the White House. No photographers were called in.

The previous morning Tricia Nixon Cox and her husband mingled with appreciative smiles among the disciples of Mr. Moon's Unification Church in Lafayette Square. They were characteristically well-scrubbed and well-trimmed young men and women carrying signs

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proclaiming that "God Loves Nixon" and urging that all "Support Our President."

The First Family was clearly basking in the spiritual embrace of "The Family" of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, of which Sun Myung Moon ("shining beauty") is founder, guiding light and—in accordance with his own theological precepts—the divine and ultimate master.

For 40 days at the turn of the year Mr. Moon and his followers waged a "Forgive, Love, Unite" crusade in behalf of the Watergate-besieged President of the United States through mass rallies, full-page newspaper ads and demonstrations staged in a dozen world capitals.

Each morning at the gates of the White House they prayed for forgiveness of Watergate. They packed the stands and waved "God Loves Nixon" placards at the lighting of the National Christmas Tree, thanks to an obliging National Park Service which awarded the Moonies 100 front-row gold-ticket positions, along with 1,100 other seats in the stands.

Mr. Moon's religious followers paraded in downtown Tokyo, carrying effigies and photographs of the American President and sounded the call for forgiveness. The scene was repeated in Seoul, home of the Unification Church movement, where mass demonstrations are generally frowned upon by the military-backed dictatorship of President Park Chung Hee.

In Seoul reporters who covered the event were given envelopes by the church containing the Korean equivalent of \$12.50 for "carfare"—the equivalent for many of them of two days' salary.

Mr. Moon said the decision to rally his followers behind the embattled President came to him as a direct revelation from God while he was resting in Korea from his 1973 coast-to-coast evangelical "Day of Hope" stump of the United States.

"We were all eyewitnesses to America's assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963," Mr. Moon proclaimed in full-page ads purchased in leading U.S. dailies early last December, "but today, without many realizing it, America is in the process of slowly killing her President again . . . You belong to the American family and Richard Nixon is your brother. Will you not then love your brother? You must love the President of the United States . . ."

"At this moment in history God has chosen Richard Nixon to be President of the United States . . ."

That was the message of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and it resounded loud and clear wherever he spoke.

Mr. Moon himself is an enigma — the central personality in a constellation of related religious, financial and political enterprises that operate on a world-

wide scale.

In the United States he has gathered behind him thousands of young adherents from college campuses and city streets, some disenchanted fugitives from the New Left, some stalwarts from the ranks of organized conservatism. Most of all, however, the ranks of Mr. Moon's "family" — as the faithful call themselves — are filled with apolitical young, floundering in search of meanings and certainties.

(Today he is beginning a new 32-city tour of the United States on the theme of "Christianity in Crisis".)

Among his constituency of true believers many see him as the Messiah returned to complete his work. Mr. Moon claims no divine status — he does not deny it either — but preaches that Christ will be born again in Korea in our time. The theme is a pervasive one in the unorthodox Korean Christian cults from which Mr. Moon's own doctrine sprang.

The established, mainline Christian churches both in the United States and Korea generally take a less admiring view. In these ecclesiastical circles Mr. Moon is regarded as a religious quack, a Korean-style Elmer Gantry who enjoys a warm and privileged relationship with the military-backed dictatorship headed by President Park.

Park has been jailing Christian clergymen in Korea in reprisal for the church's opposition to his regime's repressive policies. Unlike most of his countrymen, Moon and his principal supporters enjoy unrestricted travel and exchange privileges from the Park government.

In Seoul this week, General Secretary Kim Kwan Suk of the Korean National Council of Churches told Washington Post correspondent Don Oberdorfer that

Mr. Moon's religion "is not a church. It is a cult . . . a new sect which has been undermining the established church."

During a row between the major church organizations and the Unification group in 1968 a group of Moon's followers — in a widely publicized incident — poured a pot of urine and feces on the head of a Seoul University Professor of Religion.

At one point in the earlier days of the church Moon was arrested on a morals charge — the date was July 4, 1955 — and a group of professorial and student followers were expelled from Ewha Women's University in Seoul. The church was a subject of controversy and scandalous humors in the leading dailies of the Korean capital.

The late Syngman Rhee, whom John Foster Dulles once called a "good Christian gentleman," was Korean president then and, unlike Park, retained cordial relations with the regular Christian hierarchy in his country.

Despite these early reverses the Unification Church is now flourishing, as is

its founder. It may well merit the claim made by its leaders that it is the fastest-growing mass religious phenomenon in the United States, with thriving branches and offshoots in Europe, Japan, and elsewhere.

In financial solvency, institutional discipline and top management it far surpasses such other rival youth cults of Guru Maharaj Ji followers and the Hare Krishna devotees.

Cash contributions are currently flowing into the Unification coffers at a rate of \$6 million annually, says the church's acting U.S. president, Neil Albert Salonen, a 27-year-old former group leader in the Dale Carnegie Institute.

Within the past 18 months the Moonies have bought two mansions in Westchester County, N.Y. — the \$850,000 Belvedere Estate overlooking the Hudson that belonged to the Seagram distilling family, and the \$625,000 Exquisite Acres estate previously inhabited by the owners of Maidenform Bra. The Maidenform property, now named East Garden, is the U.S. domicile of Mr. Moon and his family, who have permanent residency visas in the United States.

The church has just completed a \$1.5 million deal to buy the Christian Brothers seminary in Barrytown, N.Y., with a \$350,000 down payment payable over the first three months of ownership. It is, furthermore, a co-signer or direct lender for real estate worth an additional \$600,000 purchased by 15 regional Unification Church centers throughout the country.

The church claims a worldwide membership of 500,000, with some 10,000 active followers in the United States and a full-time "core membership" of 3,000 who sell candles, peanuts, flowers and "granariums" — bottled arrangements of dried flowers and seeds — on the streets. It is an economic activity, fall-

ing somewhere between panhandling and sidewalk capitalism, that is pursued with dawn-to-dusk fervor by the members of the Family.

Church spokesmen insist that this is where most of the cash comes from, along with a few church-operated cottage industries scattered through the country. (One true believer, however, recently turned over her legacy of \$300,000 in stocks and bonds to the church.)

The economic miracle of the church's growth occurred mainly in the past three years, when receipts soared from \$100,000 to the current gross of \$6 million. "We never expected anything like it," Salonen acknowledged with a broad smile during an interview in the church's Washington headquarters.

The secrets of Mr. Moon's personal finances are inscribed in separate, private books and apparently are unknown even to the highest officials of his church. His net worth has been widely reported to be in the range of \$15 million, although he was flat broke when he began proselytizing his vision in

postwar Korea.

Mr. Moon's business card lists him as chairman of the board and founder of five companies, which manufacture a variety of products such as titanium, ginseng tea (a Korean blend) and air rifles. These industries, according to church officials in Seoul, are not part of the church's estate. They belong to Mr. Moon, although his only visible source of capital has been the alms gathered in by the faithful.

In the United States the ecclesiastical as well as the more secular enterprises of Sun Myung Moon are tightly controlled by a small group of trusted apostles and proconsuls.

Within the church Mr. Moon's chief executive officer and American protege is Salonen, the brisk, cocky and fast-talking Dale Carnegie alumnus who is both the apostle of Mr. Moon's "Divine Principle" and also the chief pitchman for his anti-Communist gospel.

Ex-salesman Salonen heads both the church and its political-educational front, the Freedom Leadership Foundation. The mission of FLF, as defined by its leaders, is to achieve "ideological victory over Communism in the United States."

It seeks to do so by promulgating Mr. Moon's "Unification Ideology" — the unified religious-political belief system of the founder — among the American young.

FLF publishes the conservative tabloid "Rising Tide" which now has a modest press run of 7,000, although its editors expect fully paid subscriptions soon to rise to 10,000 or more.

Salonen either presides over or sits on the boards of a number of interlocking organizations that uniformly stress anti-Communism as their main intellectual stock in trade.

As Salonen recounts it, FLF was con-

ceived by Mr. Moon, who chose him as the American instrument for carrying out its purposes. FLF is the American equivalent of the International Federation for Victory over Communism—also Unification Church-controlled—which has strong roots in Japanese and Korean rightist industrial and political circles.

Among those 'prominently associated with the federation is former Prime Minister Kishi, leader of the hawkish, pro-Taiwan, anti-Peking faction of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The foundation conducts anti-Communist ideological training institutes. It operates the Rising Tide Bookstore in a basement shop adjoining the flag-draped national headquarters of the church at 1635 Connecticut Ave. NW.

FLF also runs a program of campus counter-activism, carried out by a subsidiary Committee for Responsible Dialogue (also headed by Salonen), which provides the forensic big guns of the American Right to challenge radicals on the podium and the campus. Among the



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CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND FOUNDER**

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The calling card of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon lists the constellation of enterprises in which he figures.

conservative heavies listed among FLE's stable of speakers are Fulton Lewis III, Phillip Abbott Luce, National Review publisher William Rusher and Salonen himself.

On the question of presidential impeachment, in which the church has so prominently injected itself, Salonen maintains that Mr. Moon "received a direct revelation from God that we ought to forgive this man. There is no evidence at the present time that would justify impeachment."

It is not, in Salonen's view, a political issue. The church, he insists, "does not wish to be involved in partisan politics. Mr. Moon met with President Nixon "as God's representative, not as a man," Salonen explained.

Salonen is the preeminent American expeditor of the Divine Principle in the United States. Lt. Col. Bo Hi Pak, 14-year veteran of the Korean army, is Mr. Moon's closest and most influential Korean associate in the United States.

Col. Pak is Mr. Moon's translator and constant travelling companion during the tours of the United States. He is tall, well-groomed and has a flair for

evangelical dramatics which complements Moon's own frothing delivery.

Pak presides over a Washington-based organization called the Korean Cultural Freedom Foundation which raised nearly \$1.2 million through direct mail appeals and private donations to finance a varied array of good works: fostering Korean-American goodwill, broadcasting to "the suffering millions in Asia behind the Bamboo Curtain," and providing sound trucks carrying free medical advice to Vietnamese villagers.

The colonel was converted to the Divine Principle in Korea in 1957 when, by his own account, he fell under the religious spell of Mr. Moon. He was stationed in Washington as an assistant military attache here from 1961 to 1964.

Creation of a private foundation to strengthen ties between Washington and Seoul was being discussed in the Korean embassy while he was still serving there, Pak recalled. Finally, former Korean Ambassador You Yang (who bears the ambiguous title of ambassador-at-large) wrote the then Korean Minister of Defense Seung Un Kim that Pak would be of greater service to his country by returning to Washington as a civilian and

assuming the management of the foundation.

"Ambassador Yang wrote that there were many colonels in Korea who could lead a battalion but not too many colonels who could promote good will and friendship" with the United States, Pak related during an interview.

"My life goal was to become a general," he said. "Then suddenly there was a suggestion that I could serve my purpose better to the country in this way . . ."

Korean emigres here say that Pak has nonetheless maintained his connections in military intelligence circles in Seoul.

The foundation started from scratch in 1965 with little more than a roster of prestigious names on its letterhead: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Harry S. Truman, Adm. Arleigh Burke and scores of congressmen and "distinguished Americans."

KCFF's showcase exhibit is the Korean "Little Angels" children's dance troupe, which has performed throughout the world as the officially endorsed goodwill emissary of the Park government. Everyone loves children, Pak observed, and even Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) came to see them perform in Washington a second time.

But the objective of "broadcasting the truth" behind the Bamboo Curtain was also a primary goal of the foundation from the days of its birth.

This was the beginning of a KCFF project called "Radio Free Asia," which currently, according to its sponsors, is broadcasting in Vietnam and Laos for information on Americans missing in action. In its fund-raising letters the foundation stressed the importance of the POW broadcasts. These claims have been given a chilly reception by the State Department.

"We have taken the position," said a State Department spokesman, "in response to public and congressional inquiries that that Radio of Free Asia has had no known influence on the POW question and that it has no official sanction or sponsorship from the U.S. government."

Nonetheless the money rolls in and Pak, whose salary was listed as \$31,500 in KCFF's last Internal Revenue Service filing, enjoys a lifestyle at sharp variance from the ascetic communitarian standards followed by the great majority of Mr. Moon's disciples. He lives in a 12-room house in McLean, Va., which Fairfax County tax records indicate is worth about \$115,000.

Pak explains that the big house is needed to serve as a "logistics center" for the Little Angels troupe during the several weeks each year they are in Washington.

In 1970 Pak sold his house to the

Grace and Park Corp. which, according to Virginia's corporate records, consists of himself, his wife and his sister-in-law, an officer of KCFF. The reason for this arrangement, he said, was to be able to negotiate loans in behalf of the foundation. Incorporation is also often used to screen individuals from financial liability.

Pak maintains that KCFF has no interconnections with the Unification Church, although roughly half of the board that passes on the foundation's programs is made up of prominent church members, including acting president Salonen.

"Not a penny crosses between us," said Pak. "Organizationally there are no ties. Spiritually, however, Rev. Moon was the inspiration — through me."

Overall direction of KCFF's programs has been delegated to its executive director, Donald L. Miller, who with a business partner, Arthur Ulin, has a management contract with the foundation through their public relations firm, Associated Public Relations Counselors, Inc.

Miller and Ulin were registered as foreign agents for the Korean government in 1968 in connection with a visit by Korea's former Deputy Premier Park Choong Hoon. For a two-year period afterward Miller occasionally turned out speeches for the former Ambassador Kim Dong Jo.

"His English wasn't very good and he wanted words in his speeches that he could pronounce," Miller explained.

"When I checked with the Justice Department and told them what I wanted to do they said there was no need to register."

But in 1971 the foundation found itself the target of converging investigations by the State Department and FBI. At issue was whether KCFF and its operating officials were in violation of the foreign agent registration act by failing to register in behalf of the Park government.

At prior hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee there was testimony by witnesses from State that the Park government had given free time on its national network to Radio of Free Asia for the Washington-produced broadcasts.

During the hearings Fulbright asked former U.S. Ambassador to Korea William J. Porter: "If they use the facilities free of charge it would certainly be considered partially a government operation, would it not?" Fulbright never got an answer.

In October, 1970, a letter bearing President Park's signature went out to some 60,000 contributors to Radio of Free Asia declaring that "from the inception of Radio Free Asia in 1966 I have given my hearty support to this project. The Korean government was then, as it is today, privileged to lease our broadcast facilities to Radio of Free Asia . . ."

Park acknowledged that the dispen-

sation of air time by the Korean government to a foreign private foundation was "very rare."

By 1971 "the Justice Department was very close to making a serious move against them," a source who was authoritatively informed on the course of the investigation. Inquiries had been underway by the FBI, Internal Revenue, and U.S. postal authorities.

The foundation turned to the Washington law firm of Thomas (Tommy the Cork) Corcoran for help. The attorney chosen to wage KCFF's battle with the upper bureaucracy at State and Justice was Robert Amory Jr. former deputy director for plans (operations) of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Amory, a skilled Washington advocate (who has since left the Corcoran law firm) with excellent connections to the governmental Old Boy establishment, eventually won the day for KCFF.

They weren't able to pin anything on us," Miller recalled. "The State Department was telling a lie when they said we were getting free radio time on the Korean network. We had a contract. Someone in State was out to get us."

Nonetheless KCFF terminated its broadcasts on the government-controlled network in Seoul and switched to private stations in Saigon and into modest-scale medical and relief activities in the Saigon environs as the basis for its fundraising activities here.

High-priced Washington lawyers, round-the-world and cross-country cultural and evangelical jet tours are remote from the lifestyle of the majority of Moonies, who live the austere, devotional life decreed by the founder of the Unification religion.

The use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is forbidden. Sex is out, except for the handful of married couples

who have received the sanction of the church.

Among the American-born members only 19 couples have received permission to be married.

The strict standard of celibacy that now prevails for the vast majority of Unification Church members stands in sharp contrast to the reputation of the Moon religion in Korea during the mid-1950s.

The controversy culminating in Moon's arrest and the Ewha Women's University expulsions in 1955 centered on widespread rumors — given prominent attention in the Korean press — of bizarre sexual initiation rites into the church. The initiatory ritual was reportedly designed to purge impurities of blood that all men and women inherited from Adam and Eve—at least according to the doctrine.

(Moon was released after three months. His supporters maintain that he was found innocent of the morals charges placed against him. Other Korean sources said he was freed because of illness. The record is not clear.)

The Rev. Young Oon Kim, who has been a follower of Mr. Moon in Korea since 1954, blamed the scandal and reports of sexual excesses on the evangelist's first wife and what she called his "unfortunate first marriage."

Mr. Moon was married at least once and by some accounts three times before the final "Marriage of the Lamb" in 1960 which united him to his present wife, Hak Ja Han, known in the Unification Church as the Mother of the Universe. He was 40 and she was an 18-year-old high school graduate.

Since then the union and the church and the earthly domain of Sun Myung Moon has been blessed beyond all expectation.