

Trump praises Christian-fascist Unification Church leader at “Rally of Hope” conference

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On September 11, Donald Trump addressed a virtual rally organized by the Unification Peace Federation, an offshoot of the Christian-fascist Unification Church.

During the event, which featured speeches from several one-time heads of state, including former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump, the keynote speaker, praised the late founder of the church, Sun Myung Moon, for establishing the far-right newspaper the *Washington Times*. Trump also celebrated the church's current leader, Hak Ja Han Moon, calling her a “tremendous person.”

“In just a few decades,” Trump said, “the inspiration they have caused for the entire planet is unbelievable and I congratulate you again and again. In less than one lifetime, they took a war-torn land and turned it into one of the great nations and great democracies of the world, while standing as America’s friend and ally.”

The online event, dubbed the “Rally of Hope,” purported to focus on the “peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.” Followers of the Unification Church, which was established in 1954, are commonly referred to as “Moonies.” The church’s teachings are a blend of anti-communism and Christianity. Core tenets of the movement include pre-arranged marriages, no homosexuality or divorce, and supreme devotion to the “True Parents.”

In addition to praising the leaders of the far-right cult, which preaches that the founder, Sun Myung Moon, along with his progeny, are ordained by God to rule as kings over the entire planet, Trump boasted that he had brought peace to the Korean peninsula through a policy of “unprecedented strength.”

“And as many of you will remember, the rhetoric got very, very tough and nasty and mean,” Trump said, referring to his genocidal threat in August of 2017 to rain “fire, fury and, frankly, power, the likes of which this world has never seen before” on North Korea.

Following Trump, Hak Ja Han Moon, who assumed

leadership of the movement following the passing of Sun Myung Moon in 2012, likewise heaped praise on herself for having “blessed America” over the last 40 years. Moon, who calls herself the “Mother of Peace,” outlined her vision for a “peaceful, heavenly” Korea during the event.

“This nation cannot be a secular nation that is only focused on human interests,” she said. “It must become a nation that attends God as the Heavenly Parent. Not just political leaders, all of the people in this nation must become ‘peace associates’ and attend God, the Heavenly Parent.” By “Heavenly Parent” Moon is speaking of herself.

Moon, referred to in church documents and by members as the “True Mother,” is a billionaire, having assumed control of the Moon movement’s assets following the death of her husband. The church’s assets are vast and run the gamut from a shipbuilding operation to restaurants, a seafood company, real estate holdings and hundreds of business subsidiaries. It controls political and social groups in the US as well as the aforementioned *Washington Times*.

In South Korea, the Moon church-owned conglomerate, or chaebol, named Tongil Group, has its tentacles in ginseng production, construction materials and even machine parts for the South Korean military through Tongil Heavy Industries.

Trump is not the first Republican politician to appear at a Moon movement event. On May 8 of this year, another “Rally of Hope” event was held that featured speeches from former Vice President Mike Pence, former Secretary of State and CIA Director Mike Pompeo, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

The death of the founder Sun Myung Moon led to the splintering of the Moon family, as rival factions fought for control of the business empire. Despite the internal

divisions, the youngest son of Sun Myung Moon, Hyung Jin “Sean” Moon, while currently estranged from his mother, also enjoys close ties with the Trump family.

Sean Moon, founder of the World Peace and Unification Sanctuary, an explicit pro-Trump sect of the Moonies, personally led a contingent of his followers during the siege on the US Capitol on January 6. In a video posted to Instagram by the church, Moon is seen recovering after getting doused with tear gas. Moon and his followers were also seen climbing scaffolding outside the Capitol and fighting with Capitol Police. None of them have been charged criminally for their actions as of this writing.

In the months leading up to the coup, Moon’s group aligned itself with Trump’s claims of a stolen election, deploying members at “Stop the Steal” rallies in Washington D.C., Pennsylvania and Georgia, where they listened to speeches from former Trump White House advisor Steven Bannon and Pennsylvania State Senator Doug Mastriano.

At an October 2020 Rod of Iron Ministries rally in Greeley, Pennsylvania, held in the parking lot of Kahr Arms (a small arms manufacturer founded by Kook-Jin “Justin” Moon, another son of Sun Myung Moon), Bannon encouraged the crowd of roughly 5,000, brimming with National Rifle Association members, to watch polling places because Democrats were trying to steal the election.

“We need tough people,” said Bannon.

DCReport.org reported that during a November 12 online sermon, Sean Moon warned that if Joe Biden became president, they would have to “fight against a tyrannical, globalist, Satanist, Luciferian force.” Inciting fascistic violence, Moon asked: “How many conservatives are actually going to go out in a pile of lead? Or brass—a pile of brass? That means you’re going to be in a gunfight with the police. How many conservatives are going to do that?”

Moon closed out his sermon with a plea for his followers to attend a “big rally coming up on Saturday in D.C.” He added, “Already our veteran friends and folks have contacted us. They’re going to be down there, too, so we’re hooking up with all of them.”

The “Million MAGA March” was one of two D.C. rallies held following Trump’s electoral defeat that served as dry runs for the siege on the Capitol. Sean and Justin Moon attended both the November 14 and December 12 rallies.

Moon’s splinter group is also known as the Rod of Iron Ministries, a reference to a passage in the Book of

Revelations in which Jesus rules with a “rod of iron.” Sean Moon has interpreted this passage as reference to an AR-15, which he and his group fetishize, incorporating the rifle into church ceremonies.

In 2018, Sean Moon was photographed for the *Washington Post* wearing a gold crown of bullets and a camouflage suit jacket, while holding a gold-plated AR-15. From his church, located in Newfoundland, Pennsylvania, Moon offers paramilitary training in between sermons filled with fascistic conspiracy theories, violent threats and apocalyptic proclamations.

“The Democratic Party has become the communist party funded by Nazi collaborator George Soros,” Moon ranted during a 2018 sermon.

In August 2016, Eric and Lara Trump attended the grand opening of Justin Moon’s Tommy Gun Warehouse in Greeley, Pennsylvania. In comments made at the grand opening, Eric thanked Justin for defending the Second Amendment. “You deserve tremendous, tremendous credit,” he said.

Following Trump’s failed coup, Sean Moon’s church purchased a 40-acre campground and marina located about an hour east of Waco, Texas for just under \$1 million. In an interview with DCReport.org, Steven Hassan, a former member of Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church and author of four books on cults, expressed concern over the recent purchase.

“When I saw that they bought the compound near Waco, Texas, near David Koresh, I was like, ‘Oh, so they’re training people how to shoot guns and assault rifles.’”

Hassan said that the Moon Movement and its offshoots, along with fascist Alex Jones, are attempting “to program people that we’re going to have civil war in the streets and we need our guns to kill all the commies. I’m very concerned.”



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