

Pastor Hyung Jin Moon's The World Peace and Unification Sanctuary Church in Newfoundland, PA to Hold Four-Day Celebration of Assault Rifles

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NEWFOUNDLAND -- A multi-day festival to celebrate assault rifles begins in Pike County just one week after one was used to gun down more than 30 people, 17 fatally, in a Parkland, Fla., school.

In recent years, the famous Moon family has brought to Pike County both a company that sells assault rifles and a church that puts them at the center of religious observances. The church's pastor and his followers say their devotion to the AR-15, a weapon of war used again and again in the nation's worst mass shootings, is rooted in Christian love. They do not see the police or the military as a sufficient bulwark against "the tyrants," "the wicked," or "the mafias...raping our children." Nor do they trust public schools, which they say are indoctrinating children into homosexuality. The pastor says it's up to heavily armed "local militias" to save "our children."



Hyung Jin Moon (Sean Moon), pictured with a crown of bullets, with his wife, Yeon Ah Lee Moon, and an AR-15 (Photo by Frances Ruth Harris)

The World Peace and Unification Sanctuary Church in Newfoundland will uphold these ideals at its Festival of Grace from Feb. 22 to 28. It includes a "President Trump Thank You" gun rights dinner in Matamoras on Saturday night, and a Day to Bear Arms at the church and training ground next Wednesday, Feb. 28. [The Southern Poverty Law Center's Hate Watch calls the church, also called the Rod of Iron Church, an "anti-LGBT sect."](#)

A blessing for assault rifles

Pastor Hyung Jin Moon is the youngest son and spiritual heir of Sun Myung Moon, the Messianic founder known for presiding over mass weddings in Madison Square Garden and other large venues back in the 1980s. On the Day to Bear Arms in Newfoundland, Pastor Moon will bless assault rifles, or receipts for rifles, brought in by attendees.

"Attending the blessing, either with an AR15 or alike or without, is valid, but to attend with an AR15 would be a substantial 'perfection stage' blessing," says the invitation on the group's website.

The church has its own militia, the Peace Police Peace Militia, and trains members onsite in the handling of knives and guns.

"The real pious level of protection is the fire power, the power of fire, the rod of iron, and the baptism of (the) Holy Ghost -- and fire!" says the Pastor Moon in a video posted on the church's website. "That's the real power. Old people, young people, age doesn't matter, size doesn't matter, everybody becomes more dangerous against evil."

Pastor Moon's brother is Kook Jin Moon, also known as Justin Moon. He is the CEO and president of Kahr Arms, which opened a plant in Pike County in 2014. He moved the company's corporate office out of New York State in protest after New York enacted gun control laws in response to the mass shooting of 20 first-graders and seven adults in Newtown, Conn., in 2012. Two years later, Kahr Arms opened at the long-vacant industrial site in Greeley, with a promise to eventually bring 90 to 100 jobs to the area.

Bob Smart is a salesman at the Kahr Arms warehouse in Greeley, which has its own retail store. He said New York limits choices for customizing AR-15s that make them more deadly.

"Until Cuomo decides what he's going to do, there aren't many choices for New York gun owners to buy the AR-15 beyond the very basic gun," he said.

Salesman Ben Geinble says the Greeley store is the only place in Pennsylvania where you can buy the Thompson AR-15. It is not available online.

Gun experts say the AR-15 is popular because it is light, fast, and easy to use.

"Women like to shoot the AR-15s because they're fun long distance and there's no recoil," said Smart.

The festival was planned before the AR-15 became the flash point of a fresh call for action, led by Parkland's student-survivors. The festival includes an apologetics speech contest, food festival to raise money for the local fire department, a raffle of donated baskets, a goat-skinning and -cooking lunch, survival contest, fishing competition benefit for Vetstock, arts festival, ministries demo, shooting competition, and prayer breakfast.



Sean Moon's jeep designed and gifted to him by Kahr Arms. Sean Moon's secretary, Lordes Swars, stands in front of the jeep. (Photo by Frances Ruth Harris)

Protest planned

Ed Gragert of the Delaware Valley Democratic Club said the club is pushing back with two events, one at the "Thank You" dinner and a candlelight vigil at the Pike County Courthouse on Feb. 28. (See sidebar for details.)

"For us, it is obscene to glorify the AR-15 assault rifle when it's been used once again in Florida to kill 17 students and teachers," said Gragert. "There is no room for hate/cult groups and such glorification/trafficking in assault rifles in Pike County!"

Sean Strub, the mayor of Milford Borough, said, "Anytime we have elected officials, business, faith or civic leaders who consort with white supremacists, homophobes, and anti-Semites, it is cause for concern..."

"It seems like guns are their God. Telling their faithful they need to buy an AR-15 to get the church's 'highest blessing' is, quite frankly, grotesque."

Chief Chad Stewart with Eastern Pike Regional Police addressed how he would balance the situation of armed diners and protestors.

"As long as the protesters exercise free speech and assemble peacefully, there shouldn't be a problem if people protest," he said. "Best Western is private property. People can carry as long as they don't break the law."



Sean Moon's secretary, Lordes Swarts, stands at the entry to Moon's home (Photo by Frances Ruth Harris)

'The intersection of guns and Jesus'

Pastor Moon said the Bible condemns homosexuality and that he opposes LGBT people who politicize sexual behavior. He said he has a gay acquaintance who knows Moon disapproves of him, but Moon does business with his acquaintance anyway because he is not political.

Larry Pratt, executive director emeritus of Gun Owners of America, which has a more absolutist stance on guns even than the National Rifle Association, will speak at the "President Trump Thank You" dinner. The Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit organization that tracks extremist groups, says Pratt "stands at the intersection of guns and Jesus, lobbying for absolutely unrestricted distribution of firearms while advocating a theocratic society based upon Old Testament civil and religious laws. A pivotal figure in the rise of right-wing militia, or 'Patriot,' groups, he spoke at the notorious 1992 'Gathering of Christian Men' in Estes Park, Colo., where 160 neo-Nazis, Klan members, anti-Semitic Christian Identity adherents and others arguably laid the groundwork for the militia movement that would explode in 1994. He believes that white Christians must arm themselves for self-protection in the inevitable social implosions and riots that are soon to come."

Moon conducts three-hour broadcasts titled "The King's Report" from Monday through Saturday out of his home studio. On the day the Courier visited, the morning after the Parkland massacre, the show's guest was Carla D'Addesi. She works for Paul Mango, who is running for governor on a "Faith, Family and Pennsylvania Values" platform opposing abortion and LGBT rights.

www.politicspa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Mango-on-King-Report.png">On a show in January with Mango himself, Moon said parents are afraid to send their children to public schools.

"They're not only going to learn the actual required course load, they're getting indoctrinated into the homosexual political agenda, they're getting indoctrinated in the transgender agenda saying that their emotions, that they can choose how they feel based on how they feel their gender which is totally against the bible," Moon said. "It's totally against biology, I mean my goodness."

Wearing a crown of bullets made by a parishioner, Moon told The Courier that the Book of Revelations says "the rod of iron" honors God: "And He shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from my Father," he quoted.

Three men, including Pastor Moon, were wearing crowns on the day after Parkland. In Moon's church, crowns celebrate sanctity and are worn by sanctified males. Moon said every man knows when he is ready for his crown. Pictures on the walls show women wearing crowns on formal occasions in the company of sanctified men.

The World Peace and Unification Sanctuary Church was listed as a hate group with The Southern Poverty Law Center just a week ago. Pastor Moon replied on Facebook that he would counter their hate and meet it head on.

"The Southern Poverty Law Center is well known as an extreme left hate group," said a posting on the church's Facebook site.