

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: 50 Years Since Father Moon's Historical Rally at Madison Square Garden

Knut Holdhus
September 18, 2024



[Sun Myung Moon](#) and his interpreter Bo-hi Pak at Madison Square Garden 18th September 1974

50 years since large historical rally at Madison Square Garden, New York, where Father Moon proclaimed "The New Future of Christianity"



From the rally at Madison Square Garden, New York on 18th September 1974

50 years ago, on 18th September 1974, [Father Moon](#) delivered his landmark speech "The New Future of Christianity" at a large rally in the indoor arena Madison Square Garden in New York to a capacity crowd of 25,000. This marked a big step forward in his work in the USA. Based on the progress there and the positive reception he had received in this large Christian country, [Father Moon](#) felt that there was hope for the world. He also gained new hope that the Christians in his own homeland would begin to cooperate with him.

At the big rally in Madison Square Garden there was not a single empty seat. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 stood outside without being able to get in. [Father Moon](#) spoke about the purpose of the Second Coming of Christ. The media showed great interest in this rally. It certainly helped to make [Sun Myung Moon's](#) name became known throughout the USA.

The New York Times The New York Times wrote the day after the rally, on 19th September 1974,

"An overflow crowd filled Madison Square Garden last night and the police said thousands were turned away [...] as the Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#) appeared in the culmination of his huge promotion campaign. [...]

His chief associate, Col. Bo Hi Pak, translated with force but with less intensity. Both men mopped their foreheads during the talk as they stood behind the double lectern on the red-carpeted stage.

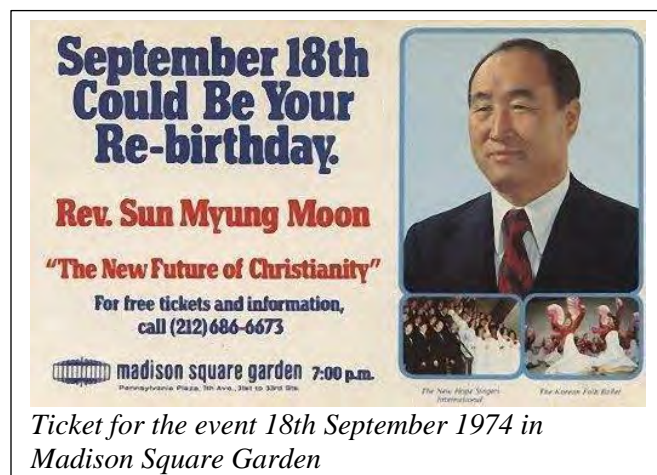
The Garden was filled to capacity minutes after the doors opened [...].

Mr. [Moon](#) was interrupted at the start of his talk when he invited "those who oppose me" to "do it now." Several people in the hall shouted, and a man in a suit and tie waving a leaflet was escorted out by the police.

The shouted words could not be understood. Demonstrators outside the Garden had handed out leaflets for various causes. [...]

After the initial interruption Mr. [Moon](#), smiling broadly, said that, after all the excitement, he would like to sing. In a low voice with a rapid and close vibrato, he sang a slow Korean song, hands in the pants pocket, of his dark blue business suit, very much at ease.

His demeanor contrasted with the intensity of his later remarks." (From "Thousands Crowd Garden to Hear Speech by [Moon](#)", a report by Eleanor Blau in The New York Times 19th Sep, 1974)



The paper also described how [Father Moon](#) explains the fall of the first human beings in the Garden of Eden, how Satan seduced Eve, who then seduced Adam, "spoiling what he said was [God's](#) plan to have them marry, raise perfect children and perpetuate the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on earth."

The New York Times also mentioned,

"Although Mr. [Moon](#) never said explicitly that he was the Messiah, he said 'the time of the second coming is near', and 'He may not return as you expect Him to return.'"

TIME Time magazine wrote the week after the event,

"It all worked for the Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#), 54, [...] who packed Madison Square Garden to overflowing last week. The happening, complete with numbers by the Korean Folk Ballet, kicked off an eight-city tour that climaxes his drive to build a base in the U.S. just seven years before the Messianic Age is to begin. [Moon](#), through an interpreter, told the Garden-goers in guttural shouts, 'The time of the Second Coming of Christ is near, and America is the landing site!'" (From "Religion 1974: Moon in Manhattan", Time Oct. 5, 1983)



Madison Square Garden, NYC

The large rally in Madison Square Garden marked the start of an 8-city tour where [Father Moon](#) after New York speaking in Philadelphia, Washington DC, Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Before that, that same year, another speaking tour had been held, to 32 cities from 15th February to 20th April 1974. [Sun Myung Moon](#) spoke for two evenings in each city. On the first evening, he gave a short speech at a banquet, and on the second evening, a longer speech. The theme was "The New Future of Christianity." In his speech, he urged everyone, especially Christians, to prepare to receive the Lord of the Second Coming.

Thus, [Father Moon](#) had now spoken in all the states of the USA. From 1st October 1973, to 29th January 1974, a speaking tour had been organized where [Father Moon](#) spoke in [21 cities](#). The theme was "[Christianity in Crisis: New Hope](#)."

Also, starting on 15th May, Dr. Bo-hi Pak, [Father Moon](#)'s translator, embarked on a "Celebration of Life" speaking tour to ten cities in the USA. The tour was meant to prepare for [Father Moon](#)'s own tour to eight cities, from 17th September to 23rd December 1974.

In fact, the first years [Father Moon](#) spent in the USA were primarily used to proclaim [God](#)'s new message to humanity. From the beginning of 1972, the USA became the focus of the movement's activities. With its population from all corners of the world, the USA was a microcosm of our world. Building a foundation in the USA was equivalent to building a global foundation. Therefore, [Sun Myung Moon](#) invested much of his time and resources in the USA.

Text: Knut Holdhus

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50 Years Since Great 21-City Speaking Tour

• January 17, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Father Moon's 21-City speaking tour to proclaim a new message from God

It is 50 years since **Father Moon's** legendary 21-city speaking tour in the USA from 1st October 1973 to 29th January 1974. The purpose of the tour was to proclaim a new message from **God** to humanity. At that time, **Father Moon** was primarily concerned with addressing the Christian world, and the theme was "Christianity in Crisis: New Hope".

He spoke three evenings in each city and held these speeches: "God's Hope for Man", "God's Hope for America" and "The Future of Christianity". The 21 cities were New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston,



Father Moon during 21-city speaking tour 1973/74. Photo: EFWDU

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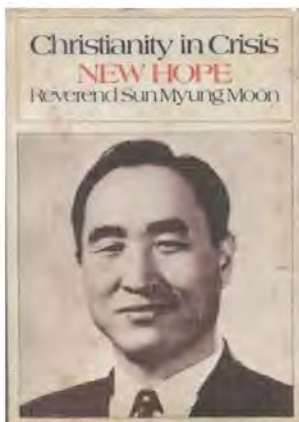
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The front cover of "Christianity in Crisis: New Hope" published in 1974 by HSA-UWC (Unification Church).

A book containing those three speeches, and with the same title as the speaking tour, was published in 1974. The text was a slightly edited transcript of the simultaneous translation by Bo Hi Pak.

In the middle of July 1973, many young members had come from Japan and Europe. They were organized as two large teams, each with 40 members. The teams then had campaigns in the cities where Sun Myung Moon was to speak. Gradually, even more, joined.

The tour got its own PR man and media spokesperson. The meetings were advertised in newspapers, on buses, and local trains. A large number of brochures were distributed in each city. The teams aimed to fill the hall every evening and to make Sun Myung Moon known. The

tour was introduced to the authorities in each city. He was appointed an honorary citizen in many of the cities. Several mayors declared the days when he spoke in their city as "Days of Hope". The first evening in each city a "Day of Hope banquet" was held with many VIPs present. There, these declarations from the local authorities were read out.

In New York, the first city of the 21-city tour, several hundred members worked for a month to prepare for the opening meeting in Carnegie Hall on October 1. The activities attracted media attention. Time, Newsweek, Christianity Today, and New York Daily News all had articles about the campaign. A large and quite positive article written by George W. Cornell, religion correspondent for Associated Press, was published in 79 newspapers across the country. 250 prominent New Yorkers attended the "Day of Hope banquet" at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. There, congratulatory telegrams were read out from the mayor of New York and several congress members and other celebrities.

In Washington DC, 400 VIPs attended the banquet, in San Francisco 500. In Atlanta, state governor Jimmy Carter declared 7th November 1973, "Day of Hope and Unity". In Berkeley, California, The Daily Californian wrote that Moon's followers had stood for one of the nicest and best-organized PR campaigns in the city for many years.

In the middle of the 21-city tour, on 18th December 1973, the seven children of Father and Mother Moon moved from South Korea to the USA. A property had been purchased for the family in Belvedere, New York, in October.

A new speaking tour, this time to 32 cities, was organized from 15th February to 20th April 1974. Sun Myung Moon spoke two evenings in each city. The first evening he gave a short speech at a banquet, the second evening a longer speech. The theme was "The New Future of Christianity". In the speech, he urged everyone, especially Christians, to prepare to receive the Lord of the Second Coming. Thus, Father Moon had now spoken in all states of the USA.

The same year, from 15th May Dr. Bo Hi Pak embarked on a "Celebration of Life" speaking tour to ten cities in the USA. The tour was meant to prepare for Father Moon's own tour to eight cities, from 17th September to 23rd December 1974. The eight cities were New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.



Father Moon speaking in Madison Square Garden, New York 18th Sep. 1974. Photo: FFWPU

A packed Madison Square Garden for Sun Myung Moon

The opening city on the tour to eight cities was New York. There, Sun Myung Moon spoke in Madison Square Garden on 18th September in front of an audience of 25,000. There was not a single seat left. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 stood outside without getting in. Father Moon spoke about the purpose of the Second Coming. The media

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snowed great interest in this meeting. Because of all these speaking tours, [Sun Myung Moon's](#) name became known all over the USA.

Based on the progress in the USA and the positive reception he had received in this Christian country, [Father Moon](#) felt that there was hope for the world. He also gained new hope that the Christians in his own homeland would begin to cooperate with him.

Featured image above: [Father Moon](#) speaking at Carnegie Hall, New York 1st Oct. 1973. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

"50 Years Since Great 21-City Speaking Tour" – text: [Knut Holdhus](#), written based on historical records.

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