

Sun Myung Moon Christian Crusade's Celebration of Life in Oakland, California

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May 17, 1974



It was an explosion of joy for the 2,600 guests who attended the world premiere May 15-17 of the Sun Myung Moon Christian Crusade in Oakland, California.

Although rehearsals were rough, the cast and crew persevered, and employees of the 43-year-old Paramount Theatre were amazed at how the young people of the crusade could work so professionally and efficiently without breaks and still keep smiling and well organized. The entire spirit of the magnificently decorated movie palace and vaudeville house seemed alive with pure happiness and excitement.

In a true "Celebration of Life," as the crusade is called, members of the New Hope Singers International and the Korean Folk Ballet sang and danced to spontaneous applause from the audience—an applause which grew even more with the inspiration of evangelist Colonel Bo Hi Pak.

Extensive street campaigning in the Bay Area and vast media coverage drew over 700 guests the first night.

People of all ages, including many families, attended. College students heard of the crusade from members of the Unification Church dressed up in full-sized animal costumes. The furry figures bravely walked the length of local campuses passing out flyers to passers-by.

Unnoticed in the audience, Reverend Moon, founder of the Unification Church International, and his lovely wife watched the opening night performance with smiles as wide as those of proud parents. They were so pleased, in fact, that after the show they posed for pictures with the cast and invited the entire staff to lunch the next day at beautiful Shim Jung Gardens, which overlooks San Francisco and the bay from atop a small hill.

Speaking on the topic "Thy Kingdom Come," Col Pak said: "My gospel to you tonight is that Christ is coming now to complete the salvation.... There is no greater hope than this."

Using a light bulb to demonstrate how people are spiritually dead without God, Col. Pak explained man has to "plug himself back into the power source-God" to come to life again. He said each person must make his own decision to accept the truth or deny it—to live or to die, just as Adam and Eve were faced with the decision to live or die by the commandment given them by God prior to the Fall.

Charles Scott, a Vietnam veteran who said he had been praying many months for a spiritual revitalization, was so inspired by Col. Pak's message and the entire show that afterward he walked up to Mr. Neil Salonen, deputy director general of the crusade, and said he wanted to join. During a Rainbow Reception in a lower level of the theatre, he exclaimed: "This is it!" and expressed his hope that the crusade would be successful everywhere it went.

Also at the reception, New Hope Singers director Randolph Rimmel presented Col. Pak with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation for his direction in the world premiere of the Celebration of Life. Col. Pak in turn presented them back to Mr. Rimmel and said he and the choir deserved them more than he.

The second night, described as "electric and alive" by one observer, featured the mask dance by the Korean Folk Ballet. One lady was healed during the performance. Suffering from whiplash, she had difficulty in keeping her neck straight, but while praying during the show, she found she could straighten it out comfortably with no pain.

After a folk ensemble of the New Hope Singers called Lou's Folks sang "Jesus Met the Woman at the Well," the choir joined in for a number from the musical "Godspell." Even livelier spirit ensued when the New Hope Singers performed "Island in the Sun," Jamaica style.

Col. Pak used a parachute to show how many people misconstrue Acts 1:11 of the Bible to mean that Christ will come literally from out of the clouds. "Did Jesus mean he would come down from heaven that way -- with a parachute?" he asked the audience, who responded chuckling. "No!" he said. "He was born of a woman like you and I." Col. Pak cited another verse (I Thessalonians 5:2): "For you yourselves know

full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night."

"Which way will it be?" he asked.

The colorful Bu Chae Chum Fan Dance was performed on the third night by the Korean Folk Ballet to an audience of 1,103 guests. The ballet later plucked the strings of the oriental instrument kayakum to the tune of "Arirang," a Korean folk song.

The New Hope Singers offered two international songs, one in Gaelic and one in French, to the exceedingly warm audience. A solo by tenor Ivan Janer and a musical skit by Barbara Snell were met with long rounds of applause.



Again God's Colonel was introduced. Miss Na Kyung Pak, hostess of the performances and daughter of Col. Pak, said her father was given the nickname of God's Colonel in light of the many other colonels who have been forerunners in history: Colonel John Glenn, who became the first man in orbit; Colonel Davy Crockett, who made a legend of the Alamo; and Colonel Harlan Sanders, who invented Kentucky Fried Chicken.

And God's Colonel he was. With both power and great love, Col. Pak spoke the third night on the topic: "What Was the Forbidden Fruit?" After lightly commenting how natural it is to believe that Adam actually did eat an apple in the Garden of Eden as evidenced by all men still having it caught in their throats, he turned to a more serious note.

"Misuse of love was the cause of the fall of men," he declared.

Adam and Eve should have grown up as brother and sister, loving God more than anything else, he said. But instead, they chose to follow Satan, the archangel Lucifer, and fell.

"Love is like atomic energy. Uncontrolled it can blow up the earth," Col. Pak said, reflecting on how more than one great empire has fallen due to self-centered love.

The grand finale came with the entire cast singing "The Song of the Garden." But it was only an introduction to the real finale and most exciting moment of the evening. The entire audience, covering the whole floor of the auditorium, stood clapping and cheering as Reverend and Dr. Moon were introduced and invited on stage to receive bouquets of yellow roses.

As if the audience was thanking him for all his efforts to unite the world and to celebrate life and experience God's joy, the huge crowd applauded still louder as Reverend Moon thanked them with a wave and an almost tearful smile.

Introduced at the Rainbow Reception following the performance were Col. and Dr. Pak and Reverend Paul Werner, crusade coordinator and regional director for the Unification Churches of California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Hawaii.

Mountain workshop

A summer camp in the Santa Cruz mountains by the ocean was the site for a two-day workshop which began the morning after the last performance. Total attendance for the workshop was 174, which included 36 guests, members of the mobile and national staffs, the New Hope Singers, the Korean Folk Ballet, production assistants, and members from centers in California, Nevada, and Arizona.

All were more than earnest about the Divine Principle lectures given by Belvedere Training Center instructor Terry Walton, and notes often overflowed onto two pads. Questions were sincere and far-reaching during discussion periods between lectures. Atheists, Mormons, fundamentalists, and just plain interested people took part.

Highlight of the first half of the workshop came when Col. Pak addressed the full house just before dinner. He explained that he was introduced to the Divine Principle in 1957 while a colonel in the Korean Army. He began a Divine Principle club in the basement of his home in Washington, D.C. after being transferred there as an attaché of the Korean embassy.

"In the past I couldn't read the Bible for more than thirty minutes," he said. "But hearing the Divine Principle now is just like hearing it new-it is so clear and vivid." Terry had just ended a lecture on "The Christ-Who Is He, Why Does He Come?" which Col. Pak attended.

"In our movement, life is precious because each day is important, a chance to grow, to experience God and bring joy to Him," Col. Pak said. Just like Jesus, he said he and the entire cast planned to "cast a fire" in Seattle, the next crusade city, with music, dance, and inspiration. "This is the twentieth century way to evangelize!" he said to a round of applause from the audience. He said many people refer to China as a sleeping tiger. "America is like a sleeping giant. With God's direction, she can move the entire world," he said.

Col. Pak spoke highly of Reverend Moon as the best example for Christians today. Few people, if any, have sacrificed as much as he. He is so close to God, the evangelist said, then continued: "Our ability to achieve the Kingdom of Heaven on earth has been established. 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.' It is a day of hope.



"The most critical time of history is now. But you can't see it making the headlines every day. The SLA (Symbionese Liberation Army) is not the news, but the coming of the Kingdom of God. You are making history. As champions of God you can transform the world," he said.

After a dinner of barbecue chicken during which Col. Pak personally met with all the guests, the group divided in two for fellowship. Teams of ten members each had fifteen minutes to design and organize a skit which they presented before the other groups to be judged. Fellowship coordinator Gil Fox said it was really a test of teamwork to keep centered upon each team's captain.

A cool but restful night's sleep in open-air cabins gave way to breakfast, several songs by the New Hope Singers, and the continuation of the lecture series. At 11:30 lunch was served, followed by team recreation.

Sawdust became a welcome cushion for bare-footed players during a "Fetch the Bacon" game. Giant pines and spruce rimmed the recreation area. Three games of "Dodge Ball" concluded the afternoon recreation.

Short lectures on resurrection, predestination, and Christology were presented, followed by an in-depth study of how God uses central figures throughout history to restore man and prepare him for the second coming of Christ. After the conclusion lecture, Mr. Neil Salonen, president of the Unification Church of America as well as deputy director general of the crusade, spoke on America's need to revitalize herself and recognize her role as a vanguard for social justice and world freedom. "We can't live in isolation today. It's only obvious that we must learn to live together," he said.

He pointed out that dedicated Communists and dedicated Christians are very much alike. Both are convinced their pattern for the world is best, and both are willing to fight until death to see their pattern succeed, he said. "We must make sure it is those on the side of God who win," he said.

Mr. Salonen emphasized that everything in the world depends upon what people believe. On the level of the whole and of the individuals-from getting up in the morning and brushing your teeth to going to bed at night -beliefs are being formed, he said. What we need is an ideology centered upon God. If a majority of people unite with such an ideology, the whole world can become a Kingdom of God, he said.

Members of the Unification Church are available any time, day or night, to answer questions or help solve problems, he said. But you must pray deeply and ask God to answer your prayers and help guide you to the truth. Group discussions concluded the workshop for 174 tired but very inspired people. Several stayed the next day for a chance to ask further questions.

From beginning to end-the first night to the singing of "Shining Fatherland" at the close of the workshop-it was one big success story and a promise for even greater triumphs for the nine remaining states to welcome God's Colonel and the Celebration of Life crusade.