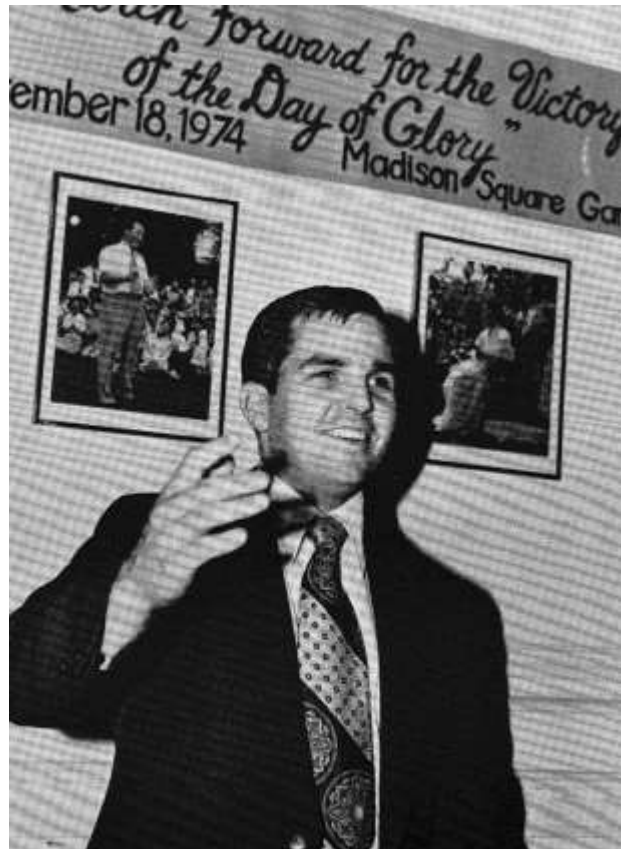


Madison Square Garden follow-up program for New York Churches

Joy Schmidt [Pople]
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Tens of thousands of *Christianity in Crisis* books have been distributed door to door in the New York area during the past several months in preparation for the Madison Square Garden campaign. The church in Forest Hills, after distributing 2,000 books, made 150 appointments to come back and discuss them in one weekend alone.

Weeks and months of witnessing have given the New York church members many contacts for follow-up work, visiting in homes, teaching at the centers, and inviting to workshops at Barrytown. In the weeks immediately preceding the campaign, they concentrated on getting people committed to coming to the Madison Square Garden program.

The Manhattan Unification Church on East 71st Street organized their contact cards by zip code areas and assigned pairs of people to visit each area. Throughout the New York churches each member is assigned 120 homes for regular contacts.

Mr. Joe Tully, Unification Church state representative in New York estimated that thirty nations were represented among the church

members in New York, creating a truly international environment. Dr. William Bergman, mobile unit commander in New York before leading an International One World Crusade team, observed growth in the New York members. "I find the New York family really inspiring; people who are relatively young are taking major responsibilities." He attributes the growth in New York to training programs at Barrytown, now led by Hiroshi Matzusaki, and to the leadership of Mr. Takeru Kamiyama. "I feel that the people receive great training from Mr. Kamiyama. Mr. Kamiyama and Mr. Tully work together as one body. I feel that this represents the standard we should develop throughout the country." Mr. Aidan Barry, Manhattan church director, had the inspiration one night to bake 10,000 cookies and deliver them to the doors of the 5,000 people who had definitely promised to come to Madison Square Garden. So they spent 70 hours baking the cookies, wrapped them in plastic tied with a bow and stapled them to a flier reminding people to come. The day before the campaign they took them to every door.

Manhattan church members work long and diligently to fulfill their goals. They chartered buses for their contacts, including two entire churches in New Jersey, Baptist and Methodist. A total of 1,500 had promised to come from these two congregations to the Madison Square Garden campaign.

The Forest Hills church has used picnics and free films to interest people in their programs. But their influence has extended as far as California, when Ruth Lester flew to New York to try to bring her classmate Debbie Van der Meer away from the Unification Church and back to California. Ruth had heard Reverend Moon speak in Los Angeles last January and felt she could really trust the people with him. After two weeks in New York she decided to stay.

New York Unification Church leaders have contacted practically all other religious leaders in the area. Miss Lynda Champion, former director of the Baldwin, Long Island, Unification Church, related some of her experiences in meeting people. "The first minister I went to see was a rabbi. His first question was 'Why do you want to explain the Unification Church to a Jew?' I said we wanted to introduce ourselves to the other religious people in the area.

"He had never joined the local ecumenical council, because no Christian minister could explain to him the idea of a living and dying God. I explained it according to the Divine Principle. He had all kinds of questions, which he fired at me for twenty minutes: doctrine, Reverend Moon, aims of our church. Then he told me, 'I will explain why I asked you these questions. My daughter was raised a good Jew. After graduating from high school, she went to Israel three times, and once to Russia. On her way back from Russia she met two Jewish boys from the Unification Church in Scandinavia and later went to a workshop in England. She came home and told me she was thinking of joining the Unification Church, because this was the first time she met people who thought like she did. So I want to know, can she keep this intense

Jewish feeling and still be a member of the Unification Church?'

"I replied that I as an Irish Catholic felt I was fulfilling my ideals much more now in the Unification Church. So he took some books, and wants to come to visit.

"The father of one of our members came out from Colorado to visit. He attended our fellowship and a slide show. He prayed at dinner and joined us in unison prayer afterwards. All the guests joined in the prayer, many of them crying.

"He told us, 'I really pray that God will bless your work, because it is one of the best groups I have ever met.' One night he had made dinner for us when we arrived home; it was one of the most delicious meals I have ever had.

"Last year during the Day of Hope campaign I spent a lot of time in Harlem. I learned that 1.8 million people in New York are Christians, and of those 1 million are black. We have had some really good contacts among the Christians in Harlem.

"During the National Prayer and Fast programs last winter, we were given four days to plan an interdenominational prayer meeting and program. One of our friends is a Catholic Archbishop who had worked for thirty years in Harlem. He is a man of deep concern for the spiritual needs of people and has commented to us that ministers today aren't really concerned with spiritual education, just social action.

"Aidan Barry and I visited him to ask him to give the invocation at the prayer meeting. He asked who else was going to speak. 'We don't know yet,' we replied. He also asked where it was going to be. 'That's not definite yet, either,' we said. He became very upset that we could not give him more notice and more details.

"'We are very sorry,' we said. 'Giving people advance notice is like giving them a longer time to think of reasons not to do it. How much notice do you suppose God gave Abraham, when He asked him to leave his father and his home country, and set out on a journey across the desert to an unknown land? Time is urgent. We have so little time to do God's work.'

"We told him how much we admired his dedication to God's work. I told him I joined this movement because I felt it would do what I didn't see the Catholic church doing-bring a unity of faith. He finally said, yes, he would come.

"He came to the prayer meeting and also came through the snow to our rally. He left early, and Aidan and I went to see him to apologize for not taking better care of him. 'I felt young all day after that,' he told us. 'It reminded me of when I first became a priest. It gave me real hope for unity and spiritual salvation.'

"You can really tell that New York City is the battle line, declared by our Heavenly Father. The best and the worst happens here. Even the younger members learn that if you just follow Father's word, everything will work out."