

Report: True Mother's Peace Starts With Me Event at Madison Square Garden

Michael Balcomb
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True Parents' legacy of peace and interfaith unity once again hit the illustrious venue of Madison Square Garden on July 15 for the *Peace Starts With Me* interfaith gathering. Co-sponsored by FFWPU, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), and the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC), the program made a call for peace starting with ourselves and expanding outward into our communities, the nation and the world.

The stadium was nearly full with guests hailing from a wide variety of national, racial, and religious backgrounds, bringing a unique beauty to the praise and worship that significantly highlighted the event. Among the participants were the 2,000 Voice Choir, 200 Praise Dancers, and 600 youth and young adults from the Hyojeong weekend workshop.



The program embraced the diversity of its audience from the start, with Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, Jr., National Co-Chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) and the emcee of the event, introducing groups and visitors from a variety of faith groups, churches, organizations, and regions, as well as the Hyojeong Youth. He then fired up the audience with roaring praise for God.



Pastor Paula White-Cain then continued the theme of *Peace Starts With Me*, reminding those in the audience, “We’re not waiting for change; we bring change.” She spoke powerfully and eloquently on the nature of God as our parent who wants to dwell with us and change the world through us.

FFWPU International Vice President Dr. Ki Hoon Kim highlighted the importance of unity in America: “Mother Moon pointed out what our problem is today. More than anything else, we as Americans need God and True Parents for the sake of God’s nation. We must come together and build this country, America.”



FFWPU USA President Dr. Michael Balcomb then read proclamations from elected officials, including the official announcement that July 15, starting this year, is *Peace Starts With Me* Day in the borough of

Brooklyn.

Pastor T.L. Barrett, the Senior Pastor of the Life Center Church of God in Christ in Chicago, first shared about the role True Mother has played in restoring his own marriage, and then emphasized that she is just as meaningful to every individual in the room. “No one is working harder with a deeper parental heart than Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon,” said Pastor T.L. Barrett. “They teach to embrace your own religion, embrace others, and live as one family... Heaven is celebrating the presence of all religions here today.



With Pastor Barrett’s moving introduction, True Mother then took the stage and shared the keynote message, speaking about the history of God’s Providence, the world’s dire need for true parents who can guide us to live as true brothers and sisters, and how America can be a leader in restoring peace of earth, starting with each of us. She closed with a hopeful call to action, that if we practice true love everywhere we go, shine our light to the world, and live for the sake of others, God’s peaceful home on earth is not far away.



Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, a member of the New York City Council and U.S. House of Representatives, recited words from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to highlight the need to live for the sake of others. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” Congresswoman Clarke reminded the audience. She continued, “What affects anyone directly affects us all indirectly.” She ultimately encouraged those in the audience to rededicate to the call to start and create peace on this earth.



Throughout these inspirational messages, everyone in the audience glorified God through music and dance, with powerful performances from Grammy-award winners Bishop Hezekiah Walker and Yolanda Adams, Shamira Mighty, and FFWPU’s Apple Heaven United, a conjunction of the original Apple Heaven band from Korea and Apple Heaven U.S.A. The entire stadium stood up, clapping, dancing, and singing along as they proclaimed, “Every praise is to our God” and many more songs of worship. The variety of musical genres and cultures represented in the musical performances again displayed the beauty

of interfaith and intercultural oneness before God.



Reflections

Here are some reflections from people who attended the event or watched from afar via live broadcast:

Wow, the last time I was at Madison Square Garden was in 1982 at the 2075 Blessing and I thought that would never be topped, but this evening—even though I could not be physically there—I can only say God was truly happy this afternoon and His message was truly spoken out not only for America but to the world. Thank you True Mother for speaking! Let peace really start with ME!

-Alan Ingram



This event was amazing! I was watching it on the computer screen, and even though I wasn't there live, I could feel the spirit from beginning to end. When True Mother appeared on screen, I felt her presence with me back at home. When True Mother was speaking, I thought about the impact that I want to make back home, but especially being involved and being active to make True Mother's dream come true. It got me really fired up and I felt spiritually alive and reawakened. It brought me to tears to see her, and the many lives she's impacted. Especially in her speech, she was talking about how Jesus couldn't fulfill his mission, and it took a long time for True Mother to appear onto this earth, and I thought about how precious it is for True Mother to be alive, and standing right in front of us. Whenever she speaks, she has a powerful, strong, and courageous spirit with her that always makes me want to redetermine myself over

and over for God.
-Junyo Nakamura



True Mother was speaking from her heart, that in order to revive this country, we need to stand up. Different religions were gathered together so it is really hopeful for this country to unite and forgive and love each other. True Mother was speaking to each person, not just certain religions. She was really trying to reach everybody.

When True Mother was talking about true love, if the whole world actually did show true love, starting with the family, the world would definitely change and become a better place. That is the hardest part—putting it into practice.

To me the event was about showing appreciation to one another. I really enjoyed it and want more of it. I'll go out to the streets, my peeps, and show them love.



The 21-Day Peace Challenge

If you couldn't attend in person, you can watch the full program at www.peacestartswithme.nyc. In the spirit of putting True Mother's words into practice, we invite you to join us on a 21-day Peace Challenge where we will share with you a daily nugget of wisdom and an actionable challenge to help you create peace in every aspect of your life and in the world around you.

[Sign Up For the Peace Challenge](#)



