

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: 50th Anniversary of Sun Myung Moon's Rally at Washington Monument

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September 18, 2026



[Sun Myung Moon](#) speaking at the Washington Monument rally on September 18, 1976

50 years since Sun Myung Moon told America to wake up in his "America and God's Will" speech at the Washington Monument rally



From the large rally at the Washington Monument on September 18, 1976 with a sprawling crowd of 300,000.

Fifty years have passed since an extraordinary event took place on the grounds of the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., on 18th September 1976. An immense crowd, estimated at 300,000 people, gathered under the late-summer sky to hear a message that was both a stern warning and a profound declaration of hope for the United States. At the center of this historic event stood [Sun Myung](#)

[Moon](#) (1920-2012), the founder of the [Unification Church](#). He delivered a powerful and unforgettable speech titled "[America and God's Will](#)". Today marks the 50th anniversary of this monumental rally - a moment that remains a defining chapter in the history of modern religious movements and American public discourse.

See also [The Event That Put Father Moon in the Spotlight](#)

The rally at the Washington Monument served as the grand finale of a trilogy of major public speaking events that [Father Moon](#) held in the United States during the mid-1970s. This strategic public campaign began at [Madison Square Garden](#) on 18th September 1974 and continued with a massive, highly publicized [event at Yankee Stadium](#) in June 1976.

Originally, the Washington, D.C. gathering was intended to take place several years later, allowing the movement more time to expand and consolidate its resources. However, riding the immense wave of momentum and spiritual energy generated by the success of the first two rallies, [Father Moon](#) made the bold decision to accelerate the timeline. Consequently, the rally in the nation's capital was organized just over three months after the Yankee Stadium event.

The choice of 18th September carried an immense, deeply personal, and [providential](#) significance for [Father Moon](#). Exactly thirty years earlier, on 18th September 1946, North Korean communist authorities took the already imprisoned [Sun Myung Moon](#) out of his cell and began to brutally torture him in the prison in Pyongyang because he had attempted to secretly send a message to a Christian leader who was in another cell.

The torture was so severe that [Sun Myung Moon](#) hovered between life and death for several days. He survived only in what was described as a miraculous manner. On 21st November, his disciples found his battered body cast out in the snow outside the prison walls, more dead than alive. For [Father Moon](#), standing before hundreds of thousands of people in the capital of the free world - on that exact date, three decades after his near-fatal torture - was an ultimate victory of faith over oppression and a testament to [God's](#) protection.



From the crowd at the Washington Monument rally on September 18, 1976

In front of the sprawling crowd of 300,000 attendees, [Father Moon](#) delivered his core message. He emphasized that the United States had not achieved its wealth, power, and freedom by mere historical accident. Instead, he declared that [God](#) had consciously chosen and blessed America to serve as a model nation with the mission of establishing the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on earth.

This blessing, however, carried an immense global responsibility. [Father Moon](#) maintained that the [Unification Church](#) and the United States must work together to realize [God's](#) purpose in the work of salvation. He warned the nation against turning inward or becoming complacent in its material wealth. America's divine mission was not merely to save its own nation, but to take on the task of saving the entire world and creating "one world under [God](#)".

In one of the evening's most memorable metaphors, [Father Moon](#) described his sudden and impactful arrival in the West not as a foreign intrusion, but as an act of absolute necessity. He characterized himself as a firefighter rushing to a house engulfed in flames, or a doctor hurrying to treat a critically ill patient - someone who had come from the outside to help America. He declared that the teachings of the [Unification Church](#), which are absolutely [God](#)-centered, contained the power to awaken America and create a model of an ideal nation. The situation was marked by immense urgency, which he underscored with the dramatic words:



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The first of 11 full-page newspaper advertisements published in The Washington Post and The Washington Star between 5th and 18th September 1976. The campaign was conceived by renowned advertising executive Stephen Baker

"America must wake up today! Tomorrow may be too late!"

[Father Moon](#) viewed the United States as the nation representing the entire world in the era of the Second Coming. In 1976, it had been exactly 200 years since the founding of the United States. This Bicentennial coincided with the conclusion of Christianity's 2,000-year history, making 1976 a prophetically and historically unique year.

Because of the great success of the three major rallies in the mid-1970s, [Father Moon](#) declared that [God](#)'s work had now been accelerated by several years. He considered the necessary conditions for a global victory to have been established. Even though this took place in the midst of the Cold War - a time defined by deep ideological division - he was already looking far beyond the political barriers of the era. He boldly declared that one day, in the future, he would organize a major rally for [God](#) in Moscow itself.

Fifty years later, the Washington Monument Rally is remembered as a peak moment of the public ministry of the Unification movement ([Unificationism](#)) in the West. It stands as a striking testament to the scale of religious mobilization in 1970s America. As we reflect on this 50th anniversary, the core themes of that historic September day - spiritual renewal, global responsibility, and the call for a nation to look beyond its own borders to serve humanity - continue to resonate as a powerful

reminder of the long lines of history.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

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Hak Ja Han: A Nobel Case For Courage And Peace

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Nobel Peace Prize

Op-ed by PhDr. Juraj Lajda

Prague, 16th September 2026: In early October, the Norwegian Nobel Committee will decide to whom this year's Peace Prize will be awarded. Among the 287 nominees is [Hak Ja Han](#), globally recognized as the "Mother of Peace". Her [candidacy](#) is highlighted today by a stark contrast: while her decades-long devotion to global reconciliation earns widespread international praise, she and her movement are currently facing an unprecedented storm of political and legal hostility in her home country of South Korea.

See also [Mother Han Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize 2026](#)



Dr. Juraj Lajda, Doctor of Philosophy, lecturer and publisher, former political prisoner under the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, Photo (2024): Personal



Bertha von Suttner, at the time of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. Photo: Unknown author / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain image.](#) Cropped

The Nobel Committee has a long-standing tradition of honoring peacebuilders who labor against severe headwinds. When the Austrian activist Bertha von Suttner – born here in Prague – became the first woman to win the prize in 1905, her award was justified “for her audacity to oppose the horrors of war.” Throughout history, the prize has continually elevated leaders who utilized non-violent transformation in seemingly impossible environments. Martin Luther King Jr. fought entrenched segregation, Desmond Tutu stood firmly against apartheid, and Mother Teresa brought solace to those most rejected by society.

It is within this exact legacy of resilience that [Hak Ja Han's](#) life's work must be viewed. Born in what is now North Korea, she was forced to flee the

oncoming communist regime as a young child just prior to the Korean War. This definitive personal experience shaped her lifelong dedication to the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula – a vital bridge of dialogue that experts recently warned South Korea must [preserve](#) rather than dismantle.

As the leader of a global movement, she has established massive practical initiatives, including the *Women's Federation for World Peace* and the worldwide *Peace Road* project. Her vision remains anchored in the core principle that humanity is one family under [God](#), a philosophy she has shared directly with heads of state, academic networks, and interfaith leaders across the globe.

Yet, what makes [Hak Ja Han's](#) candidacy most compelling right now is her refusal to abandon her role as a peacemaker while under intense personal persecution. The ongoing legal campaigns against her in South Korea have sparked growing international outcry, with prominent human rights observers pointing out the dangerous weaponization of politics and a glaring lack of objective proof. The fact that an 83-year-old leader faces such heavy state pressure, yet continuously responds by preaching reconciliation, unity, and love instead of hatred, mirrors the profound moral strength of the historic laureates who walked before her.

Selecting a single winner from hundreds of noble candidates is an unenviable task. However, if the *Nobel Peace Prize* is to remain a beacon that illuminates dark political landscapes, recognizing Hak Ja Han this year would send a powerful signal to the world: that building

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true peace requires immense courage – especially when the storm hits closest to home.

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PhDr. Juraj Lajda

Doctor of Philosophy, lecturer and publisher, former political prisoner under the communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

Prague, 16th September 2026

Featured image above: [Hak Ja Han, Mother Han](#) 14th August 2022 in Gapyeong, South Korea. Photo: Graeme Carmichael

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