

Yankee Stadium Then and Now

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Sunday Service message at Clifton, NJ, Family Church



“God knows the seriousness of this battle of Yankee Stadium, and I know the seriousness. Now you must respond to the seriousness in the same strength. We are the resurrected body of Moses, the resurrected body of Noah, the resurrected body of all those saints in the past, the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. For the sake of all the dispensational history we must bring this great victory together. So in one battle we want to liquidate all the failures of the past so that we can bring only victory. This is a very critical moment of human history. Like Noah after the flood judgment. Like when Abraham took his son to the Mount of Moriah to offer his son as a hurried offering. This is the time Moses is leading the troops to the Sinai desert. And Jesus Christ at the Mount of Gethsemane praying so desperately for his destiny. We are at the same moment of human history. So in the first week of 1976, I am giving this particular message. I want you to take it seriously. You must become men and women of conviction. You must possess the conviction that when you strike the earth, it will split. When you push, the mountains will go away. You are like the rods of Moses. You are like Isaac in relationship to Abraham.” -- Rev Sun Myung Moon - January 12, 1976

When True Father launched the God Bless American Bi-Centennial Crusade, he was deadly serious. To understand why it was so important, we should understand the providential context of the campaign. Father originally hoped to come to the United States in the late 1940s or early 1950s. But because of the failure of Korean Christians to support him, he had to go a course of terrible suffering in North Korea and was imprisoned in the South as well. He came to the United States to restore on the worldwide level what had been lost on the national level with Christianity in Korea.

To make a long story short, the initial stages of this ministry were highly successful. Father was greeted enthusiastically during the Day of Hope tours. Mayors gave him the keys to many cities, Governors honored him by proclaiming official Day of Hope commemorations in their states. Scores of Senators and Congressmen of both parties proudly meet with him. And during those years from 1971-1974, our movement roughly doubled in size even year. About 500 members in 1971, 1000 in 1972, 2000 in 1973, and 4000 in 1974.

So what happened? There are many factors that negatively impacted on our growth rate. But a very important one is this: in 1974 Father felt called by God to sacrifice our church for the sake of the nation by defending President M. Nixon. Father explained that his was necessary in order to save Southeast Asia and the world from Communism. After Father’s “Watergate Statement” appeared in newspapers around the country, The Washington Post immediately published a front page article entitled “Reverend Moon: Nixon Supporter.” After that, a tidal wave of negative media reports followed. Young people hated Nixon, so this campaign was destined to harm our ability to reach out to our primary demographic in terms of new membership. Left wing opposition around the country increased exponentially. Deprogramming became a common occurrence and parents heard so many negative reports.

Father did meet with President Nixon, and Father claimed that as a providential victory. But unfortunately the president did not take his advice. Nixon resigned in 1974, and Vietnam fell in 1975. American prestige had never been lower, and the Soviet Union was at the zenith of its power. It was one of America’s darkest hours.

It was in this providential context that True Father launched the “God Bless America” campaign. He explained to us many times that he realized this would constitute a real sacrifice for our movement. We began mobilizing early in the bicentennial year of 1976. Father taught us that Nixon himself was supposed to have led this campaign to revive the spirit of the Founding Fathers. But Nixon was gone, and the new President, Gerald Ford, was politically wounded. So Father mobilized our movement to do the job. Leaders and members from around the world came to join in the effort. Members actually lost their lives during this effort. I remember doing a nightly prayer condition at the holy ground in DC. Those were truly “showdown” prayers with God.



When Yankee Stadium finally came, I was assigned to deal with the media. So I was in the press box when the rain came. I remember watching in horror as the dark clouds rolled in, the rain began to fall in torrents, and the lightning flashed, the thunder roared. The beautiful decorations members had placed – the red white and blue bunting covering the outfield bleachers, flowers with the campaign logo, and most of all, huge letters in the outfield spelling God Bless America – were all blown away. I will never forget the sight of my good friend Mike Leone running around desperately in left field, in a futile attempt to grab those giant letters before they were blow completely away.

It was then that the members started singing You Are My Sunshine. In the shelter of the press box, I did not share their enthusiasm. For me, it was a dark night of the soul. The clouds only got blacker, the wind began to swirl, smashing any hope that the decorations could be restored. But the members kept singing as my heart sank lower and lower. Then, almost as suddenly as it had come, the storm moved away. Even while the rain still fell, the sun broke through the clouds. And a few minutes later, they completely stopped. Members started sweeping the water off the stage. Backup plans were launched to deal with sound equipment damaged by the rain.

And best of all, the people started coming! Hundreds of them. Then thousands – despite reports that the event had been rained out, the stadium was almost full when Father finally began to speak. I was so proud of him that night, as he walked boldly up to the stage with such dignity and enthusiasm. Later we learned that there had been a serious death threat against him, but he determined to speak anyway, even at the risk of his life.

I’m sure you’ll be hearing a lot more about his speech in the next few weeks. What I remember most was how he encouraged us Americans to take pride in our country and share God’s hope for it. He spoke about the three stages of the American Revolution – the original revolution to gain freedom from England and establish a nation based on the principle of religious liberty, the Civil War to deal with the sin of slavery, and the spiritual revolution of the present day, to realize the ideal of One Nation Under God and extend it to “One World Under God.”

Although Yankee Stadium was a dramatic victory, it was not a total success.

“That moment in Yankee Stadium was my moment of crucifixion. God had nailed me down but you, the disciples, never ran away... A miracle came and God answered your prayer... At Yankee Stadium we

tasted crucifixion; we tasted the three dark hours, and then we truly tasted resurrection and the joy of life. We won the victory at Yankee Stadium, yet something was lodged in your hearts. There was some emptiness since we could not bring a full house for God.

”So, immediately after Yankee Stadium, we launched the Washington Monument campaign. This campaign was even more intense. If Yankee Stadium was a crucifixion and resurrection, then the Washington Monument was the Second Coming. I remember walking to the Monument grounds from a meeting. When I rounded the corner of a building and the Monument came into view, I could scarcely believe my eyes. With two hours left before the rally would begin, already there were tens of thousands of people seating, and busses were unloaded thousands more every minute. People were running to get good seats. Children were playing, folks were having pic-nicks, Frisbees and flags were flying. I remember it like it was yesterday. That song we sang this morning had been fulfilled – “all of the children come running, Lord what a wonderful sight!”

That day Father spoke against about the founding spirit of America and urged us to take pride in the vision God had inspired through the founding Fathers. He introduced the crowd to the idea of Godism. He said Judaism representing the Old Testament, Christianity representing the New Testament and the Unification Church representing the completed Testament had to cooperate to defeat communism. “These three religions are indeed three brothers in the Providence of God. Then Israel, the United States and Korea, the nations where these three religions are based, must also be brothers. Because these three nations have a common destiny representing God's side. The Communist bloc as Satan's representative is trying to isolate and destroy them at the UN. ”We don't have time today to go into much detail beyond that. But it's interesting to realize that today, the Soviet Union has fallen and the Secretary General of the United Nations is Korean.

Susan Fefferman:



Today, our movement faces serious challenges. So does our nation and the world. Although Berlin Wall has fallen and communism is no longer a worldwide threat, the moral and spiritual foundations of America and western civilization have been shaken. Even our own church faces problems of schism, divorce, and corruption. We can take pride that our sacrifices have born tremendous fruit that seemed impossible at the time. But just as we faced dark hours at Yankee Stadium, we are now enduring challenging times as a church and a movement. Can we manifest the faith that we had 40 years ago to drive the dark away?