

The New Morning Spiritual Festival in Washington, DC

Jaime Canton
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Photo Belvedere, Tarrytown, NY, date unknown

The time is 12:00 p.m. and a hazy afternoon sun is slowly greeting this twenty-second day of June, 1974. Looking out across the Washington Monument fairgrounds from the stage of the Sylvan Theatre, my eyes scan the activity. About eighty people dressed in a variety of white turbans, dungarees, ties, T-shirts, orange robes are working, spread over a 600-yard area surrounding the stage in a huge semi-circle.

Some people are erecting booths where elaborate multi-media shows will be given; others quickly join beams together to hoist a parachute to form an enclosure. Still others are testing instruments, sound and recording equipment which will serve to document the events of this day. Dave Richmond, Public Relations Director for the Divine Light Mission in Washington, D.C., breaking into a smile, looks over at me as I wipe the sleep out of my eyes.

"Sorta like a circus, you know?"

"Yes," I reply, "an educational circus." David and I along with twenty or so other representatives of the spiritual community have been working to create a productive educational experience here in the Washington area.

Today would be a very long day. The New Morning Spiritual Festival was the first large-scale gathering that succeeded to unify a majority of New Age spiritual groups on the East Coast. The festival was an educational experience that represented many ideals of unity and cooperation that have never before substantially manifested.

All kinds of people: young and old, black, yellow, red and white; Christians, Buddhists, Moslems, Hindus traveled from all over the eastern United States to be involved-to share being here now.

Many came quite far for a one-day event. The Yoga Folklore Theatre traveled from the mountains of Pennsylvania, as did the Atlantic Devotional Band from Georgia and Paul Silby's Collective Scar spiritual music group from New York.

This event was a chance for people to stop talking about the fantastic ideals of unity and start doing something about it. This was real. Philosophy without action is barren.

The goals of the New Morning Spiritual Festival were: 1) to celebrate and honor the original Creator-God; 2) to demonstrate the power of God working through many individuals and groups in many different ways to unite the many from becoming one. As I looked up across the expanse of the monument fairgrounds, 200 people had joined Adon in a freeform expression of whirling and dancing. Slowly my

feet liberated my body as I danced to experience the moment. It felt fantastic! Mike Beard, master of ceremonies, shot me a quick smile across the stage and then -- it rained.

Towards late noon, some people gave short talks and one in particular sticks in my mind.

"The comet is a symbol of change symbolizing the change yet to come and the change which the founding fathers of our great nation have made upon the world's consciousness. Some astrologers believe that the Aquarian Age began in 1776. The promise of America can only be fulfilled by man's living by America's philosophy of brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God -- Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

This talk was given by Bob Hieronimus, Director / Founder of AUM University in Baltimore, Maryland, as he explained the mystical significance of America in the New Age. His talk helped people to see themselves beyond the level of individuals or even groups, but rather as a collectivity of Americans, embarking on a new voyage.

One simple aspect of the festival was that people entered into the awareness-place of other people. People were sensitive and conscious of the needs of others. There was the chance for total encounter -- all you had to do was invest yourself beyond the level of "Why I'm afraid to tell you who I really am." Then the realizations came. Yes, we all essentially have the same needs and God is really pouring out His Spirit upon man. Communication = Awareness = Synthesis = Change (according to time, place and people).

"He alone is modern who is fully conscious of the present" -- C. G. Jung I think in helping to coordinate the New Morning Spiritual Festival, one thing became crystal clear. We all are experiencing too many things, faster than we can understand and deal with them.

Future Shock is now. The problems come when we are motivated unconsciously by our experiences rather than by the understanding of our experiences. This festival was not just a nice day of music, love, and peace. This festival was an attempt to bridge the gap between experience and comprehension by bringing people together to unite and sustain group consciousness.

The New Morning Spiritual Festival is not over. Physically, the music has stopped and the dancers have gone home. Spiritually, the internal alchemy lives on as new doors are being opened and the possibilities for unity come closer and closer to becoming a reality.