

Memories of the 2075 Blessing at Madison Square Garden, 42 years ago

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I was in Chicago MFT region when the July 1st Blessing came about. We fundraisers were told about the Blessing at the last minute. My spiritual father in NY told me over the phone that the Blessing was going to be on July 1st, and it was either weeks or months before we got the news from our commander.

One French Canadian brother had worked in a tailor shop, so he held fittings for the brothers' suits. Mine was taken in in the back, there's no way I fit into it now. We were all skinny as heck back then from all that running around.



We took a bus from Chicago. As we were pulling out, I saw outside my window a fly that was holding on tight as we were accelerating. I'd already been feeling "I'm not ready," and "I'm not worthy," but that fly reminded me of one of Father's speeches where he said we were like little flies hanging onto a racehorse. We couldn't go as fast as the horse, but if we just held on we'd go along with it. That fly hung on to the window for quite a while, and it gave me inspiration.

We made our way to NY, and a couple of brothers stayed up all night watching over the MFT vans in a parking lot. A day or so before the ceremony, all the MFT vans drove around a route in Midtown Manhattan with handmade posters about Rev Moon. I remember two men on the sidewalk talking, the tall one said, "Excuse me," to the other, turned and bellowed "MOONIES DROP DEAD!" at us, then he turned to continue his conversation as if nothing had happened.

The New Yorker was buzzing like a beehive. Members were coming from all over the world, and our security brothers at the front door were swamped. You needed a church ID, which not everyone had, or a letter from a leader, or someone nearby who could vouch for you. They were making laminated church IDs with two little gold hearts on the bottom, a special touch for the Blessing.

The New Yorker was full, and all kinds of rooms were being given out. Our region got a couple of sleeping bag rooms for the brothers (we didn't expect anything else). I believe there was a water faucet that never stopped running, and there were small mushrooms growing out of the carpet.



At the time, the New Yorker was being fixed up floor by floor. Some floors had offices, others had families living full time. Other floors were in all kinds of shapes. When a big event came, they gave out whatever they had. In regular times, you could rent a guest room, member guest room, or sleeping bag room. These went from fully but basically furnished to a room with a carpet. It was not unusual to rent a member guest room and find someone already in it. You just went down and asked for another one.

The people at the front desk were absolutely swamped. I remember hearing a couple of European members say, "Excuse me, there are no towels in our room." I remember thinking, 'If your door locks and the toilet flushes, you're doing ok. Everything else is a bonus.'

Then it was time to play "find your fiance." This was before cellphones and the rooms certainly didn't have phones in them, so you had to rely on messages being passed and finding out which room your fiance was in, but you certainly weren't going inside their room, so you'd meet in hallways. And we took our picture in front of the world mission map in the lobby,

with little red lights for every country our missionaries had gone to.

And somewhere in there we got to line up and get our photo taken in front of a double phoenix backdrop. It was a cosmic day, but also a very busy, tiring and sweaty day as well.

We were told to be fully dressed and ready to walk across 34th and 8th to Madison Square Gardens by 6:15 am or so. There would be demonstrators outside, and someone had heard there might be people throwing ink or paint at the couples going in. So all the brides and grooms marched across the street by the hundreds, just after the crack of dawn.

I don't remember when the rehearsal was, the day before or the day of. But Father and Mother had breakfast with us all in the Felt Forum. We sat in our seats and ate from deli boxes while Father talked. I remember him saying "Sisters, I am going to tell you the secret of how to treat your husbands. Husbands don't listen. (We listened) All you have to do is treat your husband like a baby, and he'll melt."

It was so different from how Father talked usually about marching forward into the enemy camp, and how to fulfill God's will. This was like a family breakfast.

My fiancé's father had come from Wales, and my parents had come down from Montreal. We visited them in their hotel room afterwards. There was too much going on before the ceremony.

The ceremony itself was memorable, walking slowly to turn on the stage and walk between True Father and True Mother, sprinkling us with holy water. We answered "Ye" when Father read the vows.

My father told me he was impressed with the depth of Father's prayer after the vows. Even though the words were in Korean, he could feel an absolute connection with God from his first word.

At one point, Father said to turn and bow to your parents. We bowed and waved at where we thought they were. As Keith McCarthy put it, "You can't miss us. We're in the 42nd row, 7th from the left. She's wearing white and I'm wearing a navy suit."

There were camera crews following a couple of couples, Patsy and Bruce Casino and some others. Like

any large gathering of family members, we were constantly spotting people we hadn't seen in a while. As Susan Fefferman once put it, "We don't have reunions, we have rallies."

We returned that evening for the entertainment. It was quite varied, from a high school marching band, our brother singing 'New York, New York' (He later told us he improvised the knee slide, and got an instant carpet burn), a mime who got four couples up and then rearranged them to see if they could remember who they were matched to, and finally, a Brazilian capoeira group. Larry Moffit tried to say "Cap-o-era" as they were walking off and one of them shouted "Cap-we-ra!" loud enough for everyone to hear. Enzo Stuarti, our featured entertainer, sang an aria which my fiancé's father thought was marvelous.



In a bit of a contrast, there were union crews working the show, which we had to hire, and some of them were wearing rock n roll tee shirts and jeans while we were all mostly formally dressed.

It was July 1st, so we visited various places around the city, we did the Circle Line and went to the Cloisters, which didn't impress me much but my fiancé's father was a minister and he enjoyed the old Christian carvings very much. On July 4th, we got the bright idea to go atop the Empire State building to watch all the fireworks for miles around. So did several hundred other people. It was windy, a bit cold but you could see explosions in all directions, you just couldn't hear anything.

Our parents left, and we made our way back to our missions, me to Chicago, her to Alabama, pretty spaced out now that we were Blessed, but with at least a 3 ½ year separation period ahead of us. It was a little hard to keep my feet on the ground. Fundraising in Chicago, however, has a way of bringing you back to Earth rather quickly.

Father directed that the red and white carpet from the ceremony should be cut into squares and given to each couple as a memento of the day. I still have a red and white square in a trunk, along with the corduroy jacket that Father grabbed to pull me down the ballroom to introduce me to my fiancé. It has red splotches on it from selling wood roses in the rain.