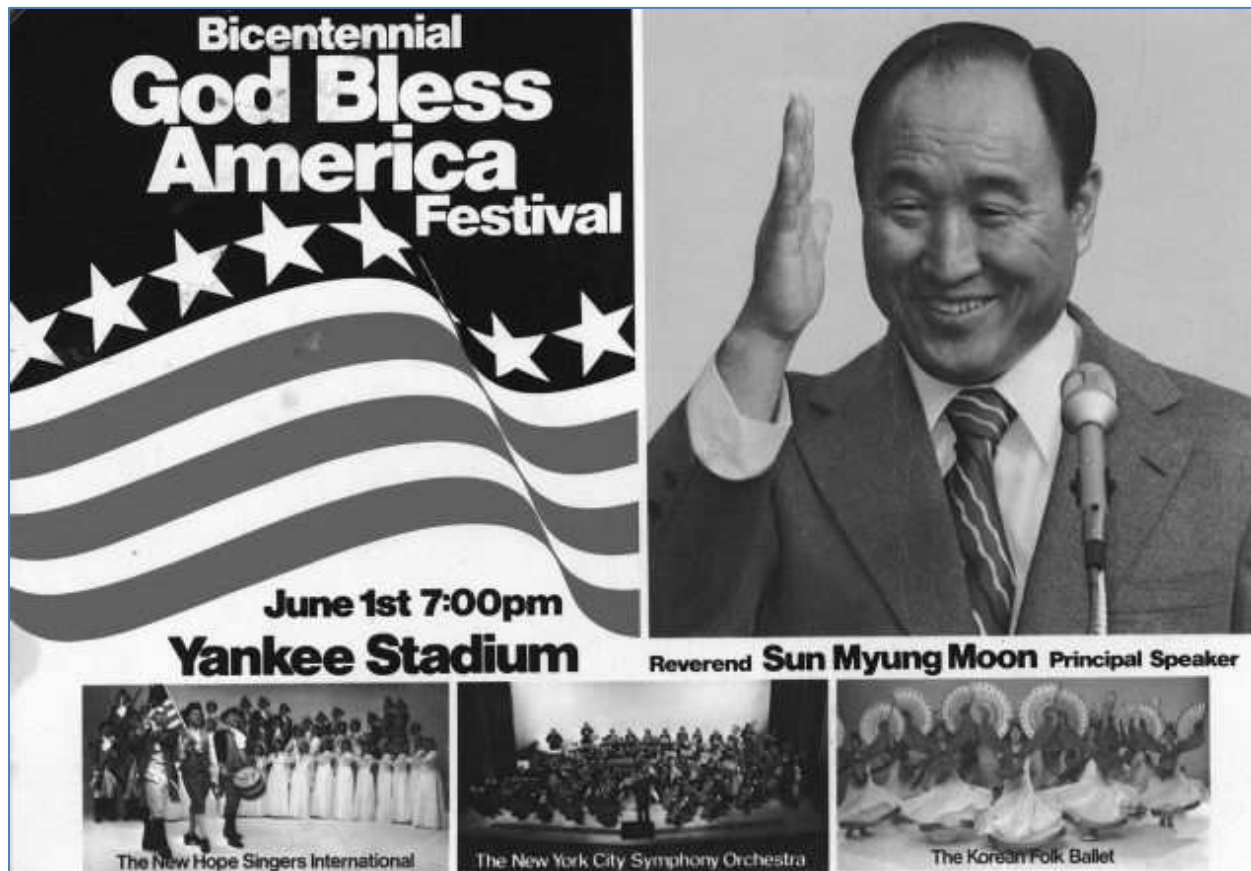


My memories of the Day of Hope Tour and the 1976 Yankee Stadium Rally

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In November 1975, Seattle Unificationists traveled to Vancouver, British Columbia for a Day of Hope Tour with the Western Canadian Church. We did outreach and fundraised for the event in British Columbia up until the end of March 1976 and then departed for New York for the Yankee Stadium Rally.

We left on the Canadian Pacific Railroad in our own coach, hitched in front of the club car at the end of the train. Over the next four days, we crossed the spectacular Canadian Rocky Mountains, stopping at such places as Lake Banff, Calgary, on across the Canadian High Plains and ending in Montreal in Quebec.

The trip across Canada was spirit-filled. We sang Holy Songs at all hours and regularly offered prayer in unison for the success of the Yankee Stadium Rally. Whenever the train stopped at a station, we would get off the train to witness and practice street-preaching, passing out flyers about the event at Yankee Stadium.

But the most memorable time was in the evenings when other passengers would walk through our coach car on their way to have a drink in the club car and then return. When leaving the club car for their seats, we might be in the midst of singing and praying. Some would sit with us and sing with gusto while others would stop on unsteady feet, perhaps thinking they had entered heaven, and retreat back into the club car. Some prayed with us, praising Jesus as they were caught up in the spirit.

We pulled into Montreal early in the morning of April 1 and transferred into buses for the trip to New York. We were all spiritually elated as well as absolutely exhausted and promptly fell asleep for the approximately six-hour trip to New York.

From then on, life in New York was a blur. We were organized into teams and the God Bless America Committee was established. Daily events included dressing up in white jump suits early in the morning with brooms and bags to clean the streets of New York. My team went to Brooklyn for outreach and to hand out tickets. One memory is setting up placards on the streets with my team in the afternoon with a lot of clouds beginning to build up in the sky. I realized that the clouds were about to cut loose with downdraft cold winds that would knock over all the placards. Sure enough the winds came, blowing many of our fliers everywhere, but we protected those placards.

I was responsible for organizing all the balloons that would be released when True Father ended his speech. We had to learn how to create large nets of helium filled balloons that would be located all over the stadium to be released at the proper time. Remembering that True Father loved fishing, we bought fish

netting in rolls and carried them up to the top floor of our base at 4 West 43rd St. to begin making fish nets for the balloons.

I volunteered to be the weather forecaster two weeks before the event... This was before the Internet & personal computers, and to visit the weather bureau, located at the top of Radio City Music Hall, you took the elevator up, passing through tourists and people going to see the dancing Rocketts. The first time, I met the head weatherman and explained our speaking event at Yankee Stadium, asking to visit their office to check the weather maps. He responded positively and welcomed me into the office. But the day before True Father was to speak, when I went to the weather bureau, it was different. The head guy came over to me sternly asking who I was working for and who I was. I responded that I was with the God Bless America Committee for Yankee Stadium and he asked if I was a Moonie. I said yes. He demanded that I leave, escorting me out of the office. I had been kicked out without the rain forecast.

On the morning of the event, we took our balloon nets, helium tanks and thousands of empty balloons into Yankee Stadium. We had many Japanese women missionaries working hard for the event and even an American who had been raised in Japan and served as a translator. Rev. Kamiyama was concerned with the rainy weather that had been going over New York City. For the last weather forecast, I found a small plane airport in New Jersey and was able to get a local forecast for the Stadium. As I recall it was for a 50-percent chance of showers about the time that True Father was going to speak.

At the stadium we placed our balloon nets on the field and in the stands. There were about 20 locations and the Japanese missionaries filled the balloons, which would take several hours to complete.

The sun was out in the morning, but as the day progressed more and more clouds came. At about 4:00 p.m. people from New York began filling the stadium. I received calls on the radio that some of the crowds were shoving our members making the balloons and looked hostile. Still, we all continued to work to make sure we were ready.

At about 5:00 p.m. the clouds turned dark with the winds over the stadium becoming stronger. In a short time the winds began rotating around in the stadium in a circle, lifting and breaking the balloon nets with the wind's force.

I remember standing near the dugout where True Father was coming out to walk to the stage with one of his security personnel, Mike McDevitt, with the rain starting to pound and the sky becoming dark and threatening. Mike's brother, Tom McDevitt, who later would become the chairman of the Washington Times, began singing "You Are My Sunshine" and people began singing along. It was a pivotal moment that broke the feeling of menace and darkness in the Stadium and within a few minutes the rain began to stop falling.

In the stands, as Father began to speak, our teams radioed that some tough guys were tearing up the balloon nets and shoving people around roughly. One young woman on the second level even had her arm broken by being pressed against the railing.

Finally the time came to release the balloons. I signaled by radio for their release and they began to rise all over the stadium. We were elated and so proud of True Father for his speech and Dr. Pak's translation.

After the speech, we worked to clean the stadium, and when we finally got home, we were exhausted. We all felt that we had been in a battle and survived along with True Father, who was courageous to speak to that crowd. In the days after the rally, there were many stories of near-miraculous events that protected True Father—we heard that people with guns were even found in the stadium, though they were not able to use them.

I never returned to the Radio City Building, but learned that at 5:00 p.m. that night, the weather bureau radar sighted tornado funnels dropping down out of the clouds over Yankee Stadium, but without enough force to touch the ground. Some years later I noted in a weather science magazine that a meteorological PhD student had done his thesis on the storm that passed over Yankee Stadium that night.

In preparing this testimony I also found an eye-witness report of the storm from a storm watcher reported in *StormTrack Magazine*. The report follows on the next page:

"Jack 'Thunderhead' Corso responds to another recent commentary by the editor: 'In *STORMTRACK* Vol. 12, No. 1, you mention thoughts of squall line storms not being capable of producing tornadoes. Your statement is partially true for the long track, "blockbuster" variety. However, squall lines can produce small tornadoes of the short tracking brand. On the afternoon of June 1, 1976, a mid-base shelf cloud (heralding the arrival of a cold frontal squall line) approached the New York area from the northwest at a slower-than-normal speed of 20 mph. Upon its arrival, in Queens, NY, (around 5 pm) the line passed over the bay and the sky grew black as night. The difference in this case, however, was that no strong plow winds hit. This

struck me as quite odd. Instead, a 45-degree wind shift took place with the cloud base overhead seething and boiling. To my amazement, a rapidly whirling spout appeared. For a few minutes this formation swirled vigorously while moving with the shelf cloud to the east-southeast. On the funnel's north side, little ripples seemed to bubble down and feed into the tip of the vortex. After around 3 minutes, the first funnel of my life slipped back into the cloud base and disappeared. Upon arriving home, the evening news reported a tornado traveled six blocks carving up rows of back-yards and tore off the roof of a Carvel Ice Cream Store. Witnesses reported seeing a skinny-black funnel.'

“Editor’s note: I’ve seen several of these type of funnels at the leading edges of shelf clouds, apparently the result of upward acceleration of warm air over the boundary. I’ve just never seen one touch down... yet.”