

## Memories of the 2075 Madison Square Garden Blessing

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July 1, 2017



For those who were there, what do you remember from the Blessing? Or from that time?

Our MFT region had one brother who used to work in a tailor's shop, so he altered our suits. Mine still has a slightly wobbly stitch up the back. We drove to New York, parked our vans in a nearby parking lot, and went into the New Yorker.

It was a beehive of activity. The security brothers were constantly checking people in. From Europe, Asia, Africa, people were converging on the New Yorker. Our US church ID cards had little hearts laminated on them for the occasion.



The front desk was absolutely swamped. The hotel was filled, all the furnished and renovated rooms were gone, and any room remotely habitable was being used. Our rooms on an upper floor had mushrooms



growing out of the carpet. Needless to say, we rolled out our sleeping bags on the floor. We weren't there for the décor.



In those days before cell phones, we had to make arrangements to meet our fiances by leaving messages or prearranging meeting places and times on the phone before we left. Once there, it was hard to reach anyone by phone. You could leave a message at their office, if they had one. Or you had to find out where your fiance was staying by asking people where their mission group was, or leaving a note for them.

In the course of doing this, you ran into brothers and sisters you hadn't seen in a while. As Susan Fefferman once remarked during a large CAUSA demonstration, "We don't have reunions, we hold rallies."



And running into old friends inevitably led to "Who did you get matched with?". Imagine, if you will, that everyone you know gets engaged at the same time.





There was also a matching going on, so those of us who were already engaged had some time on our hands. Of course, our central figures found a way to occupy it. MFT vans were pressed into service for a sort of driving demonstration. We put signs on our vans (I don't remember what they said – something like Rev Moon – Man of God!) and drove around a square of several blocks near the World Mission Center and Madison Square Gardens.

It's kind of hard to get noticed in New York. I did remember one man, standing on the sidewalk in a polo shirt and jeans, talking to another man. As we drove by, honking our horns, he halted his conversation just long enough to bellow “Moonies drop dead!” at us, then turned back to his friend without missing a beat.



A couple of our MFT brothers slept in the vans at the parking lot that night to guard against theft or vandalism.

Some other memories: running to the Gardens at 6 am in groups of 20. We had heard demonstrators would be out throwing paint on us, so instead of going from the WMC to the Gardens around the time of the ceremony, we went several hours earlier.

I believe that was when we filed into the Felt Forum for a breakfast with True Parents. They sat on the stage, and we all ate a boxed breakfast. I think it was milk, bun, apple, something like that. Father said we were family now, with the Blessing. He talked to us, gave us advice on how to treat each other. The one

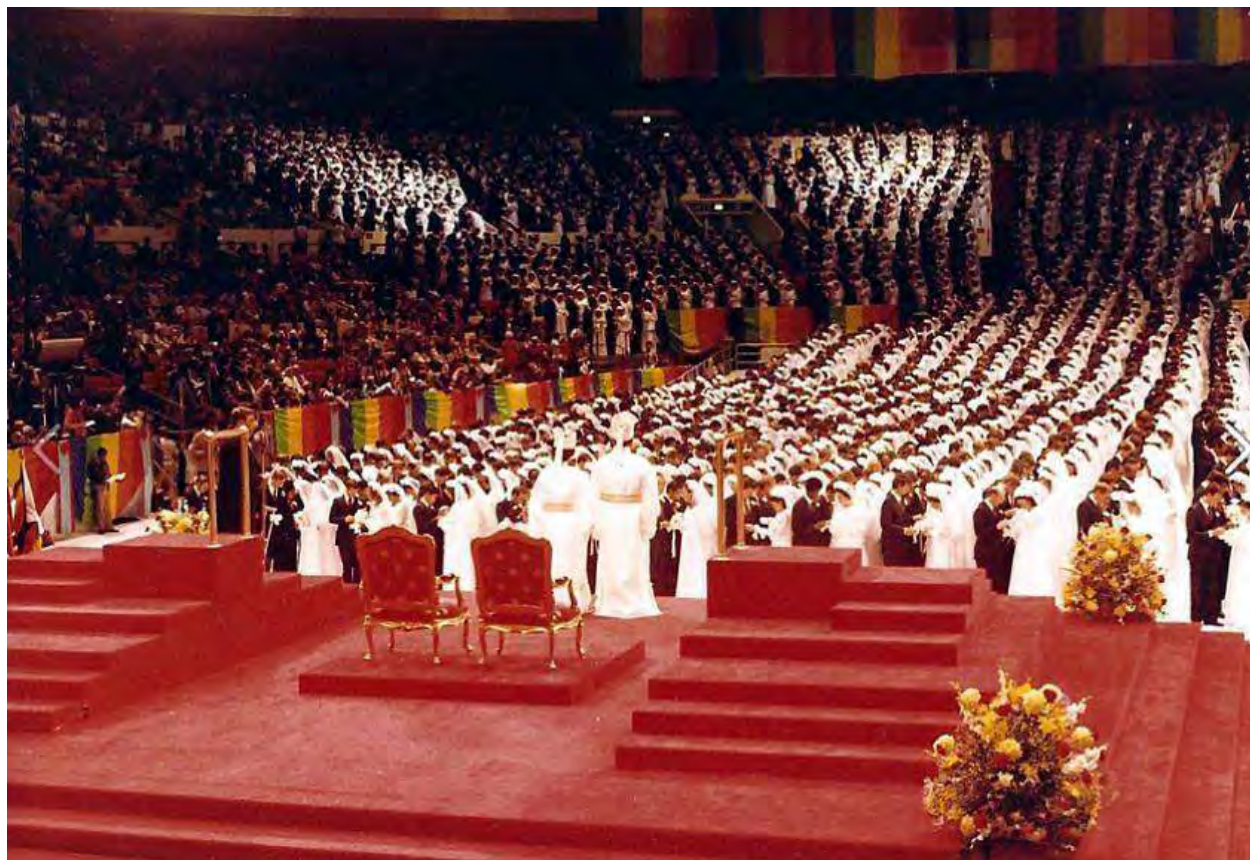


part I remember clearly was when the told the sisters “The secret of winning your husband is easy. Treat him like a baby and he will melt.”



The ceremony itself is a blur. We did a walk-through practice, and then ended up in a completely different place for the ceremony itself.

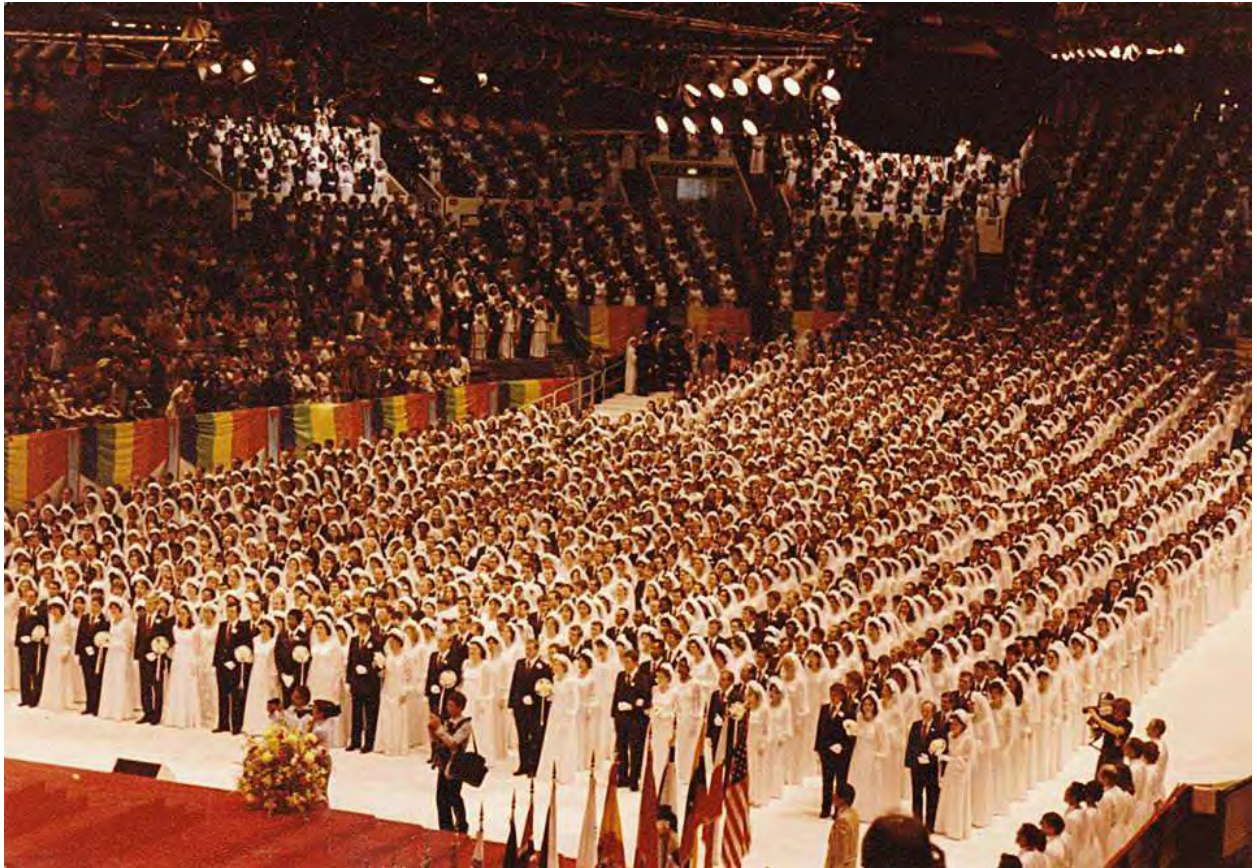
But the moment when we walked between True Mother and True Father and were sprinkled with holy water is a special memory. The musicians played the Wedding March over and over again as we all walked slowly by. Father recited the vows and we loudly replied “Yes”. Then we roared out three Manseis.



My parents were there, as was her father, but we had no idea where they were, and if they could pick us out, it would be a miracle. “You can't miss us: I'm wearing a navy blue suit and she's in white.” “It's easy: we're in the 56th row, 14th from the left.”



My father was impressed with Rev Moon's prayer. He said it had the feeling of talking straight to God, from the very first word. Of course, he couldn't understand a word of the Korean, but the tone was unmistakable. My new father-in-law, a minister himself, was less easy to impress, but he did admire Enzo Stuarti's aria during the entertainment.

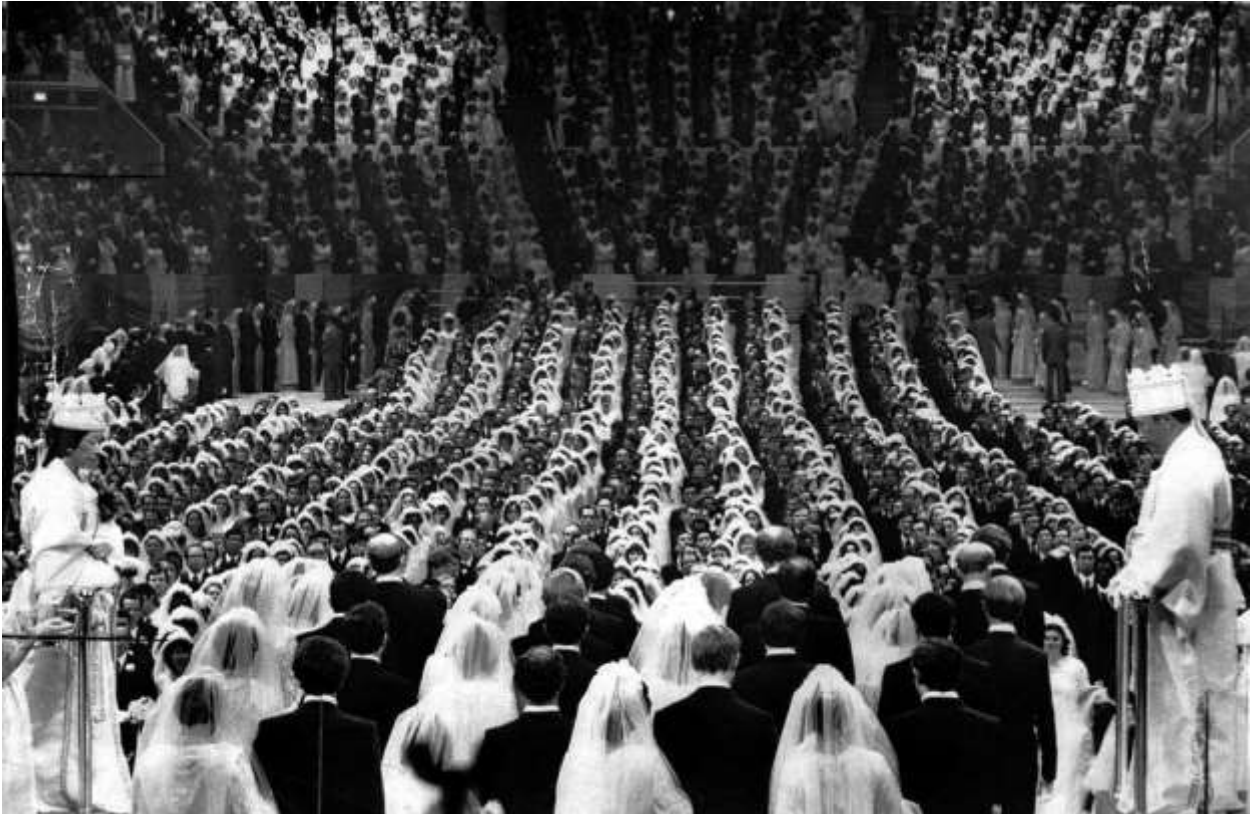


The entertainment was a bizarre mix. We had a high school marching band, a capoeira group (well before most people had heard of capoeira). I remember our MC said "That was ...cap-o-ira" and was loudly corrected by one of the troupe "Capoeira!" (Which was pretty impressive considering the guy had no mic and we all heard him, in MSG no less)



One of our church brothers came on to sing "New York, New York" and did a dramatic knee slide on the carpet. He later revealed that it had hurt like heck, badly skinning his knee, but he kept on singing without missing a note.

Another act was a mime, or a comedian, who asked for three couples as volunteers to come to the stage. He mixed them up, then rang a bell to see if they could remember who they were married to. They jumped into place pretty quickly.



After the ceremony, we visited the Cloisters, and on July 4th, we went up top of the Empire State Building to view the fireworks, along with about 900 other people who had the same bright idea. Although you couldn't hear them, we could see fireworks popping up like sudden flowers from about 12 different places, in every direction.

After it was over, we mostly returned to our missions. For many of us, it would be years before we were together again. But with the Blessing later on in Korea, our movement was now transformed from mostly single people, to mostly married.

It was a time of incredible hope, for our larger church family, and also for ourselves personally. Hope, to see thousands of brothers and sisters from all over the world, declaring our dedication together. Hope, for a worldwide family of man. Hope, for a future with the one True Father chose for us to be with.

It also opened avenues of incredible struggle. Struggle, as we tried to connect the lofty dreams we had with the actual person in front of us. Struggle, as we found that our visions could be quite different. Struggle, as we tried to see how we could live out the vows we had just made, entering the human minefield of married relationships.

What are your memories of that time? We had many different experiences: many of us are still together, some went and weren't matched, some weren't in it but were there, some had a fiance our spouse who couldn't go through with it. We all have stories to tell. Please share yours.