

I was there... Yankee Stadium June 1st, 1976

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I joined at a volatile time in history. Just in time (by three months) to participate in TF speech in MSG and on to Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument.

I was so grateful to have assisted, on some level, in those providential landmarks. Very exciting times with an intimate experience with TP every step of the way.

I have vivid memories and thoughts of my impression (as such a young member) in our church at that time.

On the day of the event, June 1, 1976, it was to be the kick off event for the year long "Bicentennial God Bless America Festival" celebrating a truly historic day, America's 200 year anniversary .

The air, energy, and spirit in and around Yankee Stadium was highly charged with anticipation. Something big was about to happen, what exactly it was not sure.

The weather reports for this monumental outdoor event were not promising. Stormy weather was predicted and as the stadium began to fill, the clouds, and the crowds, gathered. Everyone who had prayed, toiled and sweated in preparation hoped against hope that somehow, God would intervene in the weatherman's prediction just long enough for TF to give his speech and for everyone to get out and get home.

As I looked at the extravagant and "too carefully arranged" styrofoam letters lying precariously on the infamous infield, I remember thinking to myself, "something's not right" it was too much. Too extravagant. too "artsy". Too much. It smacked a bit of opulence and excess. Had TF "approved" all this, I wondered. Maybe, maybe not.

The next moment I became aware of a "weather event" that was approaching the stadium. It was ominous.

The sky was turning, and churning and getting darker.

A strange wind began blowing through the stadium and the sky turned a dark gray green, the color of evil. Suddenly a small funnel cloud blew into the stadium grounds.

At the same time I heard a cacophonous roar, like a mixture of the sound of a rushing train and an angry mob. I heard sounds that sounded like gunshots echo through the, now packed, stadium crowd. A chill went up my spine.

An instant later, literally, all HELL broke loose. The funnel cloud hit those, letters, seemingly floating above the grass in the storied infield of Yankee Stadium and...blasted those flimsy styrofoam letters in all their pomposity, into so much trash, that were now being obliterated at the whim of the wind.

I was breathless, "OH MY GOD" I and ten thousand others shouted in disbelief. Was this God's answer to our prayer?

"How could this be happening" we wondered desperately? How could "God" allow this to happen, to his son? Familiar words.

The wind had its way with our decorations and blasted through the stadium and was gone as quick as it came. What just happened?

Our collective jaws were agape, as we pondered the meaning. Judgement? A test? "Satanic invasion"? Humiliation for the messiah? So many thoughts. Questions unanswered.

When the wind subsided, the "decoration committee" who had so painstakingly created these letters, that so offended me, earlier, proceeded, undaunted, to pick up whatever was salvageable, and "put it back

together again" they succeeded, on some level. When they finished they had, once again in styrofoam letters written, "God Bless America Festival".

The end result was more tasteful and, dare I say, more humble, and still got the point across.

In the stadium it was still pandemonium as TF came out to deliver his message with a deafening roar from the restless crowd, many of whom made it clear that they were here to "make trouble. Father began to speak strongly and boldly, with his characteristic "karate chop" motions (for emphasis)

Amidst deafening "BOOs" and multiples of fire crackers echoing through the stadium, Col Pak translated his powerful proclamations "JESUS DID NOT COME TO DIE!", he shouted.

Then the rains came, and father increased his intensity and pounded the podium. It was almost, seemingly, by his sheer will, that the next thing happened.

The heavens opened and a torrential downpour began, of "biblical proportions".

All at once there was a peaceful calm. The rabble rousers in the stadium were silenced as, perhaps, they looked on with silent delight as they saw the silencing and "assured destruction" of this menacing "Korean Man" who was screaming from this small stage, in "their" beloved Yankee Stadium. "How dare he?" they must've have thought. Or, perhaps they ran away, ducking for cover.

For the next few minutes it was silence as as the mysterious cleansing rain continued its "scrubbing" of this coliseum like structure and the "gladiators and lions" waited to devour their prey. For a moment, if it was possible, the skies darkened and all seemed lost as the thousands of dedicated "moonies" also, watched their hopes and dreams, and imaginative visions...being washed away, and for some, perhaps, their innocence.

But then, something else happened.

A faint glow started to appear "someone" leaped on top of one of the dugouts, was it an angel, and apparition? Whoever, whatever it was they began singing "you are my sunshine". Then a few of the folks in the stands joined in. Then a few more. Then a whole section.

They were all standing in the pouring rain and singing this silly song, as if it would make a difference. And more sections joined in. Other folks soon jump up on the dugouts in their section and began singing, and they were all singing at the top of their lungs, and more and more joined in the chorus. Soon almost the entire stadium picked up on it, and jumped up and were singing in the rain. They were singing as if their life depended on it and as if by sheer will and belief they actually thought they could...chase away the clouds and the rain.

It was beautiful to behold. The stadium was singing in unison with such joy and abandon, getting soaked by the rain...and loving it!

And...believe it or not, it seemed to have an impact. It appeared that the sky was getting brighter. Omg, could it be that the sun...was trying to peek through the cloud cover?

The crowd kept singing that silly song, over and over, as if it was the most important thing they ever did.

And...amazingly, the rains began to subside. And the sun did...begin...to shine. Did we collectively, on that day in Yankee Stadium...stop the rain?

Yes, I guess we did. And the rest...is history.

Sincerely,

Greg Davis