

## Washington Monument, 1976

Sun Myung Moon

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In September 1975, we founded the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, New York, which is located north of New York City. The faculty was hired on an interreligious basis, and we had professors representing Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Oriental philosophy. When they lectured about their own religions, our students asked them very difficult questions. The classes always became forums for intense debate. When all the religions were put together and debated, they began to break through the incorrect concepts that they had about each other and to better understand each other. Gifted young people finished their master's level education at our seminary and entered the doctoral programs at Harvard, Yale, and other leading U.S. universities. Today they have become people capable of leading the religious world on a global scale.

In 1974 and 1975 I was invited to speak on Capitol Hill. I spoke in front of members of the House of Representatives on the topic "One Nation Under God."

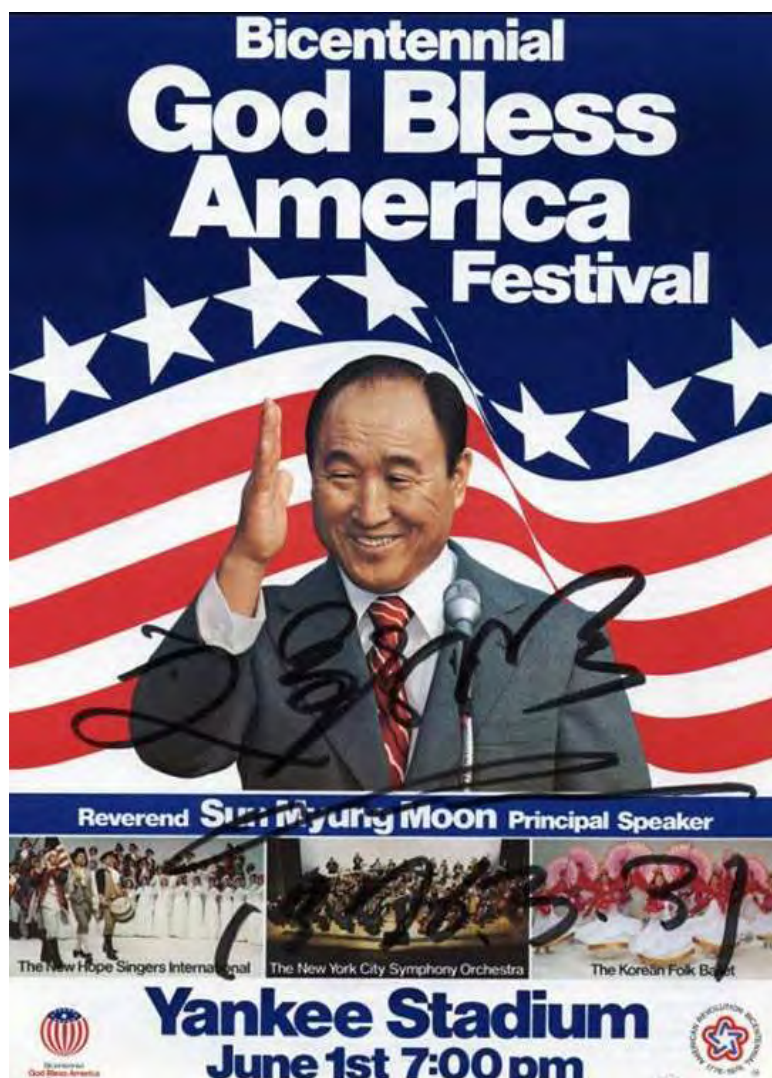


I addressed the congressmen in the same manner as I had the young people on the street, saying, "America was born through God's blessing. This blessing, however, was not for Americans alone. This was God's blessing for the world, given through America. America must understand the principle of this blessing and sacrifice itself in order to save the world. To do this, there needs to be a reawakening that lets America return to its founding spirit. Christianity, which has been divided into

dozens of denominations, must be united, absorb all religions, and open a new future for world civilization."

I was the first foreign religious leader to be invited to speak by the U.S. Congress. After I was invited for a second time, many more people became interested in finding out about this man Reverend Moon from Korea.

The next year, on June 1, 1976, we held a celebration at Yankee Stadium in New York City to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of America's independence. At the time, America was not so peaceful as to have the presence of mind to celebrate its anniversary. It was feeling the threat of communism, and its young people were living lives far distant from the desire of God, engaging in such things as drugs and free sex. I felt that America was seriously ill. I went to the celebration feeling as though I were like a surgeon cutting open the heart of a New York that lay sick.



On the day of the celebration, torrential rains came down, and a strong wind blew the decorations all around the field, but no one tried to get out of the rain. The band started playing "You Are My Sunshine," and everyone in the stadium began to sing together. They were singing a song about sunshine, even as they were being soaked by the rain. Their mouths were singing about sunshine, but their eyes were crying. It was a moment when rain and tears were mixed together. Then, incredibly, as I went to the stage to speak, the sunshine broke through the rain clouds. It was as if God had heard their singing.

I did some boxing when I was in school. You can hit a good boxer with many jabs and still find that he is not affected. If you can land a solid upper cut, however, even the strongest boxer will be shaken up. I was counting on landing a solid upper cut on America. I felt that there needed to be a much larger rally than what had been held up to that point so that the name "Sun Myung Moon" would be indelibly carved into America's mind.

Washington is the capital of the United States. In a place that is a straight line from the Capitol, there is a tower called the Washington Monument. It is an obelisk, shaped like a sharpened pencil standing on its end. A large grassy area extends from the monument to the Lincoln Memorial. This area represents the heart of America. I set a plan to hold a large rally in this place.



To hold a rally there, however, we needed permission from the U.S. government and the U.S. National Park Police. Most U.S. officials did not like me very much. I had previously put ads in newspapers calling on the people of America to forgive former President Richard Nixon, who had been pushed into a crisis because of the Watergate incident.

This view was very unpopular. So now the U.S. government kept turning us down, and it was not until forty days prior to the event that we were finally able to receive permission.

Our members, too, suggested to me that this was too ambitious a plan and that we should not go forward. The National Mall surrounding the Washington Monument was an open park in the middle of an urban area. There were not many trees - just a wide expanse of grass. If the crowd were small, it would be obvious for everyone to see. To fill such a large area, there would have to be hundreds of thousands of people. Our members

wanted to know how this could be possible. Prior to this, only two people had held large events on the National Mall. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had held a rally for civil rights on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and Rev. Billy Graham had held a large gathering there. So it was a place with a lot of symbolism. This was the place that I was challenging.



I prayed without ceasing for this rally. I wrote the speech that I was to deliver four different times. A week before the event, I still had mixed feelings about what I should say in my speech. Finally, three days before the event, I completed the text. Generally, I don't speak from prepared texts. I made an exception in this case, because of my concern that the event go well. I knew this was going to be a particularly important event, though I wasn't quite certain in what way.

I will never forget what happened on that day, September 18, 1976. People started coming to the Washington Monument from early in the morning. Some three hundred thousand people gathered. It was impossible to tell where all these people had come from. They had all different colors of hair and skin. All the races that God sent to earth gathered on that day. It was a rally on a global scale that does not

require any additional description.

I stood in front of the gathering and declared, "God prepared America for two hundred years. This is the time for awakening. America must accept her global responsibility. Armed with Godism, she must free the communist world and at last build the Kingdom of God here on earth." The speech was interrupted many times by shouts and applause.



Newsweek, in a year-end pictorial review of the major events of 1976, carried my photograph and referred to me as part of the revivalism of the 1970s. On the other hand, an increasing number of people were beginning to look at me with caution and fear. To them, I was nothing more than a strange magician who had come from the East. I was not a white man they could place their faith in and follow. The fact that I was saying things that were somewhat different from what they had heard in their churches made them feel very insecure. In particular, they could not allow a situation in which young white people were showing respect to and following an Asian with slender eyes shaped like a fish. They began spreading rumors that I had been brainwashing innocent young white people. This group that opposed me gathered in the background, behind those who were shouting their support. I knew that another crisis was about to befall me. I was not afraid, however, because I was clearly doing what was right.

America is widely known as a country of freedom and equality, where people of all races come to realize the American dream. In

fact, however, there is a great deal of struggle stemming from racial and religious discrimination. These are chronic illnesses that are embedded deep within America's history, and they are therefore much more difficult to cure than the social diseases such as immorality and materialism that arose out of the affluence of the 1970s.



About this time, I often visited African-American churches in an effort to foster ecumenical harmony. Among black leaders there were some who, in the manner of Dr. King, were working to do away with racial discrimination and bring about God's world of peace.



Some of these ministers had images hanging in their basements of slave markets that had existed for hundreds of years prior to being outlawed. One such image was of a black man being burned alive while hanging from a tree. Another was of black men and women stripped of their clothes being looked over like merchandise by potential slave buyers. And yet another was a black baby crying as it was being taken away from its mother. One could hardly believe that human beings were capable of the barbaric acts depicted so clearly in those images.

“Wait and see,” I told a gathering in Chicago on October 24, 1975. “Within the next thirty years, there will be a president of the United States who was born into an interracial black and white family.”



The prophecy I made that day has now come true in America with the inauguration of President Barack Obama, who spent much of his adult life in Chicago. This prophecy did not come true on its own. Many people shed their blood and sweat to do away with the struggles between the races, and those efforts have now finally blossomed.



Surprisingly, a number of ministers of established churches in America came and brought their congregations to the Washington Monument rally. They decided that my message transcended denominations and that I was inspiring young people. I called on people to transcend differences of denomination and religion, and those words were realized at this rally. The Washington Monument Rally was a miracle. Three hundred thousand people attended, making this among the largest gatherings ever on the National Mall.