

Joseph Sheftick: Bus Breaks Down, Strands Missionary Group in City

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A bus breakdown and Wednesday's snow stranded 80 young missionaries in Frederick's National Guard Armory Tuesday and Wednesday.

The 80 missionaries on their way from Washington, DC, to Los Angeles were stranded Tuesday in Frederick when one of their buses developed radiator trouble. Company "A" National Guardsmen had barely cleaned the Armory on Bentz Street after 300 stranded travelers spent the weekend there when the missionaries arrived Tuesday.

The missionaries, from the Unification Church, expressed gratitude for Frederick's hospitality by giving a singing concert at Middletown High School Wednesday. A scheduled concert at FCC was canceled because of Wednesday's snow.

The missionaries distributed pamphlets entitled "A New prophet for a New Age" on the streets of Frederick where they also asked for donations to help fix their bus.

The missionaries, who hope to open Unification Churches all over the country, prayed together for a safe trip to California today.

Praying is a big part of their life. They prayed in a group when they woke up in the Armory this morning. Later, couples faced each other, bowed their heads and prayed aloud individually.

"We pray together as often as we want so that we can get away from being selfish. We pray for someone else who stands facing us to center our thoughts on God," Joseph Sheftick, the missionary director, explained.

The missionaries are traveling to California to support speeches made by the founder of their Unification Church, Sun Myung Moon. After Moon's speeches, they hope to mobilize 2,000 missionaries to set up churches all over the country.

Moon, the founder, saw a vision of Christ in 1954 after UN forces freed him from a Communist prison camp in North Korea. The church believes a messiah will come again, and Moon and his missionaries claim to be preparing the world for this coming.

The belief of the religion is that men and women should pray to conquer jealousy, pride and hatred before marrying. Once prepared for marriage, couples may raise families which will live the kind of lives God envisioned for Eden, they believe.

Moon's mission in the United States is special because this country has an obligation to provide a pattern for the rest of the world, the missionaries believe.

The missionaries also believe that Communists should be fought because they do not believe in God.