





**The Family Federation for World Peace  
Inaugural World Convention**

***'Global Implications of Family Values in the 21st Century'***

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# The Completed Testament Age

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*Former U.S. President Gerald Ford speaking at the  
Inauguration of the Family Federation for  
Unification and World Peace, Washington, D.C.,  
July 30, 1996*

# TRUE PARENTS AND THE COMPLETED TESTAMENT AGE

*Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon*

*Excerpts from speech at the Womens Federation for World Peace Rally, June, 1993, Seoul, Korea*

Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for coming here today. I am truly moved to see so many of you committed to building a peaceful world.

As we all know, our world today is not a world of peace and happiness but a world filled with conflict and despair. We are confronted with the breakdown of our families and the moral decline of our society.

We have become a nation of talk shows. We debate the issues over and over again and yet find no solutions. Why is this? This is because a true solution must include God and deal with the root of the problem and not just the symptoms. To find this root, we must first understand God's purpose of creation and realize that we, today, face the most important turning point in the history of God's providence.

At this crucial time, God asked my husband, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, to bring a new revelation to the American people. My husband, accordingly, just delivered this new message of hope in 12 major cities across America. Now, I would like to give you this same message, entitled "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age."

## God's Original Ideal

God wants to give limitlessly to His children. God is not content in giving just 100 percent. God's desire is to give a thousand times more than what He has already given. The nature of God's Love is to give completely and then forget what He has given. Unlike some who calculate how much they have given and decide that it is enough, for God enough is never enough.

If God's ideal of true love had been realized through Adam's family, that family would have become the beginning of the heavenly kingdom. It would have expanded throughout all of history to the clan, to the nation, and to the world. This would have been the world of true love—the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Furthermore, there would have been a parallel expansion of the heavenly kingdom in the spiritual world.

If God's original ideal had been realized, then there would have been no need of a Messiah or of God's providence to save humanity. Adam's family, though it was merely a single family, would have been the center of the clan, of the nation, and of the world. It would have been the blueprint for all families in the future.

It would have been the model for the realization of God's ideal world.

Because of the fall of the original human ancestors, God's work of salvation had to begin. Salvation history had to be repeatedly extended through the complicated and suffering courses of the Old Testament Age and the New Testament Age, culminating in today's Completed Testament Age. God's ideal of the true family and the heavenly kingdom, which He wanted to realize through Adam's family, was destroyed because Adam and Eve fell away from God.

Due to the Fall, this present world is far from the good world of God's ideal. Today's world is, in fact, a "false" world, in that it is flooded with self-centered love. This came about because Adam and Eve became false parents based on false and self-centered love with Satan. They multiplied evil rather than goodness, creating a false family and passing on false life and a false lineage to their descendants. Thus, false clans, false nations and a false world came into being.

### **Formula for Reconciliation**

Therefore, the goal in God's dispensation of salvation is for a man and a woman, representing Adam and Eve, to be restored as True Parents centered on God's true love, so that the true family can be formed. From them would eventually flow the true clan, the true nation and the true world. In other words, the seed from which God's true love, true life and true lineage can grow must be created.

My dear friends, have you ever wondered how a world filled with such evil and corruption could come from a God of love and goodness?

If you read the Bible carefully, you will see that the fall of man involves the loss of Adam's entire family. First, the position of parents was lost through the fall of Adam and Eve. Second, the position of children was lost as Cain murdered Abel. God's "blueprint" for an ideal family and world perfection was lost. Therefore, to restore the original family, God works in reverse to reclaim the positions of Cain and Abel, and then the positions of True Mother and True Father. This pattern of reconciliation of Cain and Abel as the foundation for restoring the True Parents has been God's consistent formula throughout the history of restoration.

Ladies and gentlemen, if a family is not centered on God's ideal of love, there will be conflict among the members of that family. Without God's love as an absolute center, such a family will ultimately break down. Moreover, a nation of such families will also decline.

It is not by chance that self-centered individualism has become the dominant way of life in these last days. People feel increasingly alienated from those around them, and bear little sense of responsibility for the well-being of their country, society, or even their own families. Rising divorce statistics indicate that husbands and wives feel little responsibility toward their marriages; parents do not take responsibility for their children; individuals, devoid of any sense of human dignity, fail even to take responsibility for themselves.



America has seen such phenomena at work beginning with the youth movement of the sixties. Idealistic youth rejected the materialism around them in order to seek love and peace, but in the process, they also abandoned morality and responsibility. Unable to attain the true love they sought, many disillusioned young people resorted to suicide, drug abuse and free sex.

### **True Love vs. Free Sex**

Of all these, what pains God most is free sex. A world of free sex is absolutely contrary to the Will of God. Love comes from stimulation of unblemished emotion, but free sex is totally devoid of purity or true emotion. How many of us have been touched by the cruelty of infidelity and divorce? Where is God in all the one-night stands? What about the nightmares of the children who are sexually abused by a parent? Is free sex worth the price of a broken child?

Equally alarming is the policy of giving school children condoms, teaching the illusion of safe sex, and surrendering to the assumption that premarital sex is inevitable. Indeed, where there is homosexuality, free sex, drugs and alcoholism, the world of true love is far away.

In this world, Satan openly tells people, "Drink! Smoke! Take drugs! Have sex!" Those who do God's Will, on the other hand, live a lifestyle that is 180 degrees different from this. Throughout history, those who chose to walk a spiritual path of self-sacrifice have been bitterly opposed and persecuted by the rest of the world.

### **Rebekah and Tamar**

In the Bible, one of God's great heroines is Rebekah, the spouse of Isaac. As the mother of Jacob and Esau, Rebekah held the same position in Isaac's family that Eve held in Adam's family. Unlike Eve, however, Rebekah understood God's providence and helped her second son, Jacob, representing Abel's position, to gain the blessing destined for the first son, Esau.

Just as Cain killed Abel, Esau wanted to kill Jacob when the blessing went to his younger brother. But with Rebekah's help, these brothers eventually reconciled in a warm embrace, rather than resorting to violence.

This reconciliation was a major victory for God. This victory, nevertheless, was not complete, since the reconciliation represented only a symbolic purification of blood lineage. The substantial purification of blood lineage had to be accomplished in the womb. This is the reason for the paradoxical story of Tamar. By understanding that Tamar, like Rebekah, was in the position of fallen Eve, it becomes possible to understand why Jesus was born of her lineage, the tribe of Judah.

I am sure that many of you have read the story about the birth of her twins. She conceived with Judah, her father-in-law, the twins Perez and Zerah. The Bible tells us that the two sons struggled even in the womb for the position of

first-born. During Tamar's labor, Zerah's hand emerged and the midwife tied a red string around his wrist. Then, Zerah's hand disappeared back into the womb and Perez, the younger, was born as the elder! Thus, the positions of Cain and Abel were restored even before birth took place. It was from this point that the Israelite people became the nation chosen to receive the Messiah.

In terms of conventional morality, the stories of Rebekah and Tamar would be questionable at best. Why God blessed them was a theological mystery until today. As we now see, God needed to reclaim His lineage from Satan so that Jesus could be born. Purified, true-love blood lineage was the point from which the Israelite nation started expanding. The word Israel means victory. Their victory was the purification of blood lineage.

### **Mary's Life-Risking Course**

The lineage of Judah developed for generations, expanding to the levels of tribe, society and nation. From this same lineage, Mary was born in Israel 2,000 years later. Mary had the responsibility to unite Cain and Abel figures on the family, clan and national levels through paying appropriate indemnity and restoring elder sonship. Mary responded to God's call and conceived Jesus even though, in the eyes of others, she had betrayed her parents and Joseph, to whom she was engaged. At that time, it was customary to stone to death any woman who became pregnant out of wedlock. However, Joseph, standing in the position of Adam, courageously protected his fiancée and resisted abandoning her.

Because of Mary's faith, and the work of Rebekah and Tamar, Satan could not claim sovereignty over Jesus in Mary's womb. Jesus was born in the position of a true son under God's complete, direct lineage. He is the first true son of God after the purification of the fallen blood lineage. That is why Jesus, the first-begotten son of God, is the saint of all saints and the ancestor of God's true blood lineage.

### **A Dream Unfulfilled**

Mary, in the position to restore fallen Eve, had to build a unity between Jesus, who was in the position of Abel, and his elder cousin, John the Baptist, who was in the position of Cain. This unity was essential for the people of Israel to identify Jesus as the Messiah. John the Baptist should have helped Jesus reach the religious leadership of Israel. If John had fulfilled his role, then Judaism, in the position of Abel, and the nation of Israel, in the position of Cain, could have united centered on Jesus. This would have laid the foundation for the Marriage of the Lamb. Jesus would have stood as the True Father of humanity, and his bride would have stood as the True Mother of humanity.

However, this glorious destiny could not be realized. It was the religious people themselves who rejected Jesus' words and called for His crucifixion.

Confronted by the faithlessness in Israel, Jesus determined to give his life

to achieve spiritual salvation for humankind. However, he would have to come again in order to bring physical or earthly salvation in addition to spiritual salvation.

### **The Unity Imperative**

God's preparation for the Second Advent required a world-level foundation of successful Cain-Abel reconciliation. This dispensation was carried out through the events surrounding World War II. God's representative came to bring His word and was met with tremendous persecution and almost universal misunderstanding. This paralleled Jesus' situation 2,000 years ago. Just as the Israelites of Jesus' time awaited the Second Coming of Elijah on a chariot descending from heaven, Christians awaited the Second Coming by expecting Jesus himself to descend on a cloud from the sky.

In Revelation, Jesus reveals to the Apostle John that he will come with a new name. This foreshadowed that Jesus would come again through another man, just as Elijah had done.

At this crucial time after World War II, then, God instructed my husband to bring a new message of truth to Christians in Korea. Korean Christian leaders, however, rejected the possibility that he, a humble young man, had been chosen to bring this new message. Because the New Testament Age is an extension of the Old Testament Age, they could not believe that the Second Coming would be born as a man on earth any more than the Jewish people could believe it at the time of Jesus.

If the Christian churches had become one with my husband, the heavenly kingdom would already have been established on earth as well as in heaven. During the seven-year period from 1945 to 1952, when the New Testament Age ended, the entire world could have united in accordance with the providence of God. Instead of uniting with him, however, these religious leaders became jealous of the growing number of his followers. They blindly opposed my husband without hearing him out. They even spread lies about him. Rumors of sexual misconduct and greed, the very antithesis of his teachings, were used to assassinate his character.

For decades, my husband has been completely misunderstood. For three years, he was imprisoned in a North Korean communist concentration camp. Altogether, he has been wrongly imprisoned six times for doing God's work. My heart is broken when I think of how my husband has suffered. But he always comforts me, reassuring me that God has deep compassion for those persecuted for doing His work.

The truth that God revealed to my husband is contained in the Divine Principle. Looking at the history of humankind and the stories of the Bible from the providential viewpoint, the Divine Principle unlocks the answers to questions unsolved for thousands of years. Those who have sincerely studied its



contents have found it to be a true gift from God, providing the only solutions to the problems facing our society today.

There are countless other testimonies to the power of the Divine Principle to give hope and new life to young people. Last year, in Korea, we held a wedding celebration for 30,000 couples, all dedicating their lives to one another, to God, and to the world. In most families today, parents cannot effectively guide their children, especially on such intimate matters as love and marriage. Yet, my husband and I brought together young people from 131 different nations and realized their most cherished dreams of love in a historic way. This was indeed a great miracle of the modern world.

### **Extension of the Messianic Ideal**

Ladies and gentlemen, at the dawn of the Completed Testament Age, the time has come for each family to take up the messianic mission of completing the work of salvation all over the world. After restoring your family, the next step is to restore your community, tribe and nation. We call this process “tribal messiahship.” In the Completed Testament Age, the mother’s role will be crucial. She must unite her children and her husband, and link her family with the True Parents. Already, we have sent thousands of Tribal Messiah missionaries around the world. Soon, the original ideal of the family will be achieved worldwide.

In every completed family, grandparents will be in the position of kings and queens representing God and good ancestors. Parents will be in the position of kings and queens representing present humanity, and children will be in the position of princes and princesses representing all future descendants. When all three generations are united, past, present and future will live together in harmony. With such families, the symptoms of our decaying society will vanish. As confident children of God, we will no longer be enslaved by the temptations of alcohol and drug abuse. Moreover, by understanding the holiness of love between a husband and a wife, we will possess the moral strength to stand strong against infidelity and promiscuity. Finally, we will work as a whole to eliminate war, racial prejudices and world hunger.

Based upon this foundation, we can realize a world of true happiness, freedom and peace. God is very much alive, and His original ideal for humankind is unchanging and absolute. It is our destiny to fulfill this ideal and liberate God’s heart.

My dear friends, the Women’s Federation for World Peace is called to this task. Let us work together to bring about its successful completion.

It is my hope that all Christians, and people of all faiths, will understand this message with a deep heart and an open mind. I sincerely pray that, by upholding the Will of God, we can all reach the place of God’s blessing. May God bless you and your families. Thank you very much.

# The Completed Testament Age

## 1993-1999

**IT WAS HARD TO IMAGINE** HOW REVEREND MOON could top his declaration of messiahship in 1992. However, he may have done so by proclaiming the beginning of a whole new historical epoch in 1993. In a speech, “The Reappearance of the Second Coming and the Completed Testament Era,” delivered at Belvedere International Training Center, Tarrytown, New York on January 10, 1993, Rev. Moon announced “the transition today to the Completed Testament era.” Although details as to the precise nature of the new epoch were as yet sketchy, it was understood to involve a fundamental shift in the order of salvation. As one church leader explained, “Previously, religious organizations have always been centered upon the salvation of the individual, but we have now progressed to the salvation of the family.” The implications of this were momentous. Essentially, it signaled a radical new beginning for the movement and rendered all previous religious expressions, including that of the Unification Church, obsolete. Within a few years, the church began to reconfigure itself as a “Family Federation,” developed theological concepts and terminology reflective of the shift, and launched into efforts to realize a restored and purified Garden of Eden. The gateway to the Completed Testament Age (CTA) was the Blessing which extended far beyond the Unificationist community during the 1990s. In fact, members routinely referred to the “globalization” of the Blessing. Probably because of its association with “holy” experiments and new beginnings, the CTA also signified a renewed role for the U.S. and the Americas.

### The Proclamation

Most of these developments were not apparent in 1993. The immediate concern was to proclaim the message of the new age in coordination with the earlier declaration of messiahship. On April 10, 1993, the movement published a statement, “True Parents and the Completed Testament Age,” in the newspapers of 160 nations. Then, in May 1993, Rev. and Mrs. Moon began a tour of



thirty-three U.S. cities under the same theme. Whereas Korea was the venue for their proclamation of messiahship, the U.S. was the launching pad for Rev. and Mrs. Moon’s proclamation of the Completed Testament Age. Rev. Moon spoke in the first twelve cities between May 13-24, 1993. Mrs. Moon then covered twenty-one cities between May 26-June 28th.

*Rev. Moon speaking in Long Beach, California, during the Completed Testament Age Tour*

The tour was extended to include twenty-three additional cities during July, thereby covering all fifty states. A highlight of the July segment was Mrs. Moon’s speech at Capitol Hill on July 28th before representatives from 115 congressional offices. That same day, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution designating July 28th as national “Parents’ Day.” Senator Trent Lott (R-Mississippi) went on record as joining the Women’s Federation for World Peace in celebrating the occasion and urged his colleagues in the Senate and all citizens in the nation to recognize and support True Parents’ Day. Although few, if any, legislators understood the symbolic significance of their action and although church opponents later attempted to expose various members’ role in the enactment, the designation was gratifying.

Mrs. Moon’s speech at the United Nations in New York on September 7, 1993 served as a springboard to the world tour. That she had delivered the message of “True Parents and the Completed Testament Age” at the UN as well as on Capitol Hill afforded credibility when scheduling major venues abroad.

Between September 11-30th, Mrs. Moon conducted twenty-five rallies in Japan, the highlight being her speech before 50,000 at the Tokyo Dome. At that particular rally, Princess Eva Marie of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Marilyn Quayle, wife of the former Vice-President of the U.S., offered remarks. In October 1993, Mrs. Moon delivered the CTA message before audiences at forty Korean universities, often speaking at two different campuses on the same day. Then, beginning on November 2, 1993 and extending for the next fifty-three days, Mrs. Moon traveled the globe delivering the message to audiences in forty countries. The tour covered Europe, the former Eastern bloc communist and Balkan states, the Middle East, Africa, South America and the Orient. Simultaneous with Mrs. Moon's world tour, Rev. and Mrs. Moon's older children and several of their spouses delivered the "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age" message to audiences in forty additional U.S. cities on weekends and often in churches between October and December 1993. The following spring, between March 8-April 27, 1994, Mrs. Moon and her adult children and in-laws undertook a "100-Campus Speaking Tour" in the U.S., once again proclaiming "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age."



*Mrs. Moon traveled throughout the world, here addressing members in Auckland, New Zealand, following her public speech.*

The speech itself was challenging on a number of levels. For secular or non-Christian audiences, it introduced unfamiliar terminology and content which appeared to be rooted almost entirely in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Adam and Eve, the Human Fall and Satan, the Cain/Abel relationship as a paradigm for world history, and Biblical figures such as Rebekah and Jacob, Tamar, and Mary all figured prominently in the message. Beyond that, the very concept of the Completed Testament Age implied that it was an extension of the "Old" and "New" Testaments. Some resultant problems were acknowledged in tour reports, particularly in the Middle East. There, as one report noted, many church missionaries had "gone to jail, been deported and endured various hardships." In Jerusalem, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel threatened to revoke the kosher license of the hotel where Mrs. Moon was to speak and a few hundred Orthodox Jews demonstrated. In Istanbul, a substantial number of the Muslim audience walked out during the speech. Rev. Kwak noted that in India, a political official introduced Mrs. Moon, "saying that he did not understand the theme," and that in Taiwan, though many of the 4,000 gathered "probably did not understand the Biblical terminology...still they did not fidget but sat quietly and listened to the speech."

The message also was challenging to Christian audiences. Some of the problems were longstanding. Unification positions on the failure of John the Baptist and the necessity of Jesus to take a bride, restated in the CTA proclamation, had





been a source of strain before. However, the explicit messianism of the text was new. Rev. Moon, for example, announced that if he and the Christian churches had “become one” following World War II, “the heavenly kingdom would already have been established on earth as well as in heaven.” He stated that he paid indemnity, or restitution, for “all of history” over the past forty years, and that unlike “American leaders, prominent Christians, and other leading figures of the world” who have “only a faint idea of the forces that shape the future...I know the direction that humankind must go, and I, with the help of God, will lead the world there.” All of this built up to the proclamation’s concluding declaration. As Rev. Moon phrased it,

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great privilege to announce to you the establishment of the first True Family. My wife and I, together with our thirteen children and twenty-four grandchildren, are absolutely dedicated to serving God and humanity. With three generations in one family, we have achieved on the family level, the central root, the central trunk, and the central bud of the “Tree of Life” mentioned in the Bible. It is our sincere hope that you will symbolically graft into this lineage by joining us in our efforts to create an ideal nation and world. This marks the beginning of the Completed Testament Age.

This explained why Rev. and Mrs. Moon enlisted the participation of their family in the CTA speech tours and was consistent with the transition from individual to family-based salvation. In addition to True Parents, Rev. and Mrs.

*Mrs. Moon presented her talk at the United Nations, New York.*



Moon now proclaimed the True Family. The invitation to symbolically graft into this lineage referred to the Blessing, and one of the purposes of announcing the CTA was to help prepare the way for the blessing of 360,000 couples planned for 1995. Still, these statements and sentiments could hardly have been expected to receive instantaneous acceptance. One American member referred to “proclamation shock” among listeners.

Though in different ways, the CTA tour was a challenge to Unificationists. Externally, members arranged and financed venues and did their utmost to fill auditoriums, often at quite short notice. Internally, they had to alter their consciousness about the CTA. Many understood that the CTA already had arrived and that The Principle was a Completed Testament text. In fact, Rev. Moon announced the CTA in several speeches to members during the 1970s and 1980s. The CTA tour served notice that religious gradualism was out and apocalyptic immediacy was in. It also signaled a renewed evangelistic thrust reminiscent of the 1970s. However, there was an important difference. Previously, the movement witnessed indirectly to the coming Messiah as the “new hope” or “new future” of Christianity. Now, it was witnessing directly to messianic fulfillment.

It also should not be overlooked that the CTA tour was challenging for Rev. and Mrs. Moon and their family. Part of the challenge was physical: fatigue, constant travel, temperature swings and changes of season, the crossing of time zones, unfamiliar food, etc. Rev. Moon had a fever, and Mrs. Moon fought the flu during her first twelve speeches. However, the more serious challenges were internal. There were numerous sources of strain. One was cultural. There also were national barriers. As the movement’s Continental Director of Asia, Byung Woo Kim commented, “Satan is always standing at the immigration area, and strong nationalism is controlling the world.” The possibility, and in certain areas the reality of religious opposition also presented pressure. Mrs. Moon acknowledged “many difficult and upsetting parts within the speech.” In one testimony, she stated, “I can speak and it is the truth, but there are times when I wonder if they will throw stones at me.”

For all these pressures, undoubtedly the most severe strain was living up to messianic expectations. Rev. Moon discounted appeals that he live a little more freely after the proclamation of the CTA, saying, “Because I have proclaimed myself to be the Messiah, history and mankind will closely observe how the Messiah lived after such a proclamation.” According to Rev. Kwak, “Although he wrote the CTA speech, Rev. Moon nevertheless carefully read it for more than an hour every night and again in the morning and on the airplane for the purpose of infusing more spiritual pressure and power into it.” For her part, Mrs. Moon was expected to be not just uniformly gracious and giving but to demonstrate the same depth of heart and commitment as her husband. Even more taxing was the necessity of testifying not on behalf of others but to themselves! This was not easy. To proclaim oneself among followers was one thing,

but to do so in public risked ridicule and censure or even worse, indifference. Yet there was no one else among the membership to undertake this task. In proclaiming themselves, the existential burden was great. Rev. Moon was not one to speak openly of personal struggles. However, in a recorded prayer, he referred to the “huge” mission of True Parents and stated, “No matter how hateful and difficult it is, we must go on.”

It would be a mistake to assume that these challenges overwhelmed or invalidated the tour. The truth was the opposite. Given the obstacles which were overcome, movement spokespersons might be forgiven a certain amount of hyperbole. One leader wrote, “When they were speaking, Father and Mother looked like teachers and all listeners looked like children.” Another stated that audiences were “spiritually overpowered, so that they could only listen immobilized.” While it may not have been quite as triumphant as these sources indicated, the CTA tour revitalized the movement’s worldwide membership and as mentioned it heightened members’ consciousness about the CTA and introduced a note of apocalyptic immediacy. Beyond that, it afforded members in mission countries a sense of direct participation in the movement’s mainstream providence. Mrs. Moon and her party were able to visit dynamic mission areas in Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. Rev. and Mrs. Moon together visited the Oceania region for the first time. In this respect, the CTA tour was an essential building block in the movement’s globalization. At a more subtle level, the tour expanded the movement’s definition of membership. In their speeches, Rev. and Mrs. Moon spoke as if they were addressing in-house audiences, and throughout the 1990s there was a general collapsing of distinctions between insiders and outsiders. This was an uneven but revolutionary process for the movement. Essentially, Rev. and Mrs. Moon took seriously the proposition that they were the True Parents for all humankind and that a new age had begun. Under these conditions, they embarked upon an ambitious program of global salvation.

## **Federations for World Peace and Unification**

During the early 1990s, the movement was optimistic about the prospects for immanent, substantial world peace and unification. To some extent, its perspective mirrored that of secular idealists who in the wake of the West’s cold war victory proclaimed “the end of history.” However, there was one important difference. Secular optimists tended to perceive the post-cold war situation in terms of the triumph of democratic values. Unificationists, however, rested their hopes upon the victory of True Parents who were regarded as the true “end” of history. Both of these positions were put to the test during the 1990s. In the wider society, there was a loss of idealism during the middle years of the decade as the costs of winning the peace became more apparent. There also was a tendency to retreat into isolationism and self-indulgence.

Unificationists were not oblivious to these pressures, but the movement as

a whole stayed the course, pursuing a three-pronged program of world peace and unification. The first component of this program was dialogue. Rev. Moon remained convinced that interdisciplinary, intercultural and interreligious dialogue was essential for world peace. Therefore, the movement continued to sponsor a broad array of conferences. The defining characteristic of this development during the 1990s was the proliferation of numerous “federations for world peace.” These integrated the distinct and separate organizations for scientists, academics, media professionals, religious leaders, politicians and the like which the movement had previously organized and funded. This shift actually began in the previous period with the establishment of the International Federation for World Peace (IFWP), the Interreligious Federation for World Peace (IRFWP), and the Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in 1992. By the late 1990s, the movement proliferated a dozen or more federations. Many of them were later integrated under the International and Interreligious Federation for World Peace (IIFWP).

Each of these federations appealed to a different constituency. However, they were interrelated and at least initially understood to be successors to the United Nations. Just as the victorious countries created the League of Nations following World War I and the United Nations after World War II, so the conclusion of the Cold War, which the movement perceived as World War III, required the creation of institutions reflective of the new era. In the immediate afterglow of communism’s collapse and in the context of references to a new world order expressed by some world leaders, the movement sensed that a new federative body would supersede the United Nations. As the idealism and hopes of the early 1990s faded for many, the movement reconceptualized the mission of its peace federations: rather than superseding the United Nations, they would work to revitalize it.

The federations for world peace also presupposed a more focused commitment among participants. Previously, those attending ICUS, PWPA, World Media Association, AULA or Summit Council meetings were united in their general affirmation of theistic values and opposition to communism. Although there was a higher degree of interdisciplinary encounter, civility and even family feeling than elsewhere, the conferences did not differ markedly in their basic orientation from professional meetings. There typically was a Founder’s Address at major gatherings, but otherwise attendees were exhorted to be the best professionals and persons they could be. Rev. Moon’s declaration of messiahship to an assembled gathering of conference participants at the first World Sports and Culture Festival in 1992 altered the equation, but there was still the possibility of proceedings slipping back into business-as-usual. In this regard, the creation of peace federations called participants beyond pre-existing professional and personal involvements to a shared common cause and a more activist, existential encounter. Another feature that the federations had in common was Western and particularly American influence. The working staff,



meeting chairs, and the great bulk of the keynote speakers were Western, usually American. English was the language of choice for international gatherings, and the organizational structure and proceedings were governed by Western cultural norms.

Despite these influences, funding came from the Orient, and the federations were subject to the movement's sense of timing and purpose. Many of the major international meetings were held in conjunction with movement-sponsored World Culture and Sports Festivals and to some extent served as a backdrop to the International Blessings. However, this was not uniformly the case. The movement's most spectacular world convention was held in Washington, D.C. from July 30-August 1, 1996, inaugurating the Family Federation for World Peace (FFWP). This event included a cast of luminaries rivaling anything the movement had yet undertaken: two former Presidents of the United States, Gerald Ford and George Bush; former President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias of Costa Rica; former Prime Ministers Edward Heath of Great Britain and Brian Mulroney of Canada; thirty-six one-time heads of state or governments; university presidents including Boston University's John Silber; Christian television personality Robert Schuller; Christian Coalition Executive Director Ralph Reed; Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; Maureen Reagan, the daughter of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan; well-known comedian Bill Cosby; and Christian singer-actor Pat Boone. In addition, the main proceedings were covered live by C-SPAN television network.

*Participants at the Inauguration of the Family Federation for Unification and World Peace, Washington, D.C.*



*The Washington Post* contended that some of the speakers were unaware of Rev. Moon's involvement and cited critics who claimed that former presidents, celebrities and educators recruited to speak at World Peace conventions were being used. The *Post* also speculated about speaker fees. Movement spokespersons stated that they took great pains to let everybody know who founded the FFWP, emphasized that the conference was meant to attract former heads of state who still wield influence in order to put family matters at the top of the agenda in their nations, and noted that the size of honorariums paid to speakers was confidential. Far from using them, Rev. Moon understood that his ministry had progressed to the point that world-level leaders were his peers and an appropriate audience for him to address. Also, Mrs. Moon delivered a straightforward opening plenary speech on the "View of the Principle of the Providential History of Salvation." In this respect, the Inaugural World Convention of the FFWP was a high-level witnessing opportunity.

The establishment of the FFWP represented a new stage in the movement's development. Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak, who was appointed International President, maintained that the FFWP was more important than the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC) or Unification Church. HSA-UWC, he noted, was "not True Parents' ultimate organization." The rationale for this assertion was connected to the historic shift that underlay the emergence of the Completed Testament Age. As noted previously, Rev. Kwak explained,

Religious organizations have always been centered upon the salvation of the individual, but we have now progressed to the salvation of the family.... Such an organization is not a church; it is the Family Federation for World Peace.

Given this understanding, it wasn't surprising that the FFWP rather than the Unification Church was the main sponsor of the World Culture and Sports Festivals and International Marriage Blessings after 1996.

By the late 1990s, the movement proliferated a dozen or more federations for world peace. Some of them were quite specific, i.e., the Artist Association for World Peace (est. 1995), Island Nations for World Peace (est. 1996), Peninsula Nations for World Peace (est. 1996), Continental Nations for World Peace (est. 1996), Martial Artists for World Peace (est. 1997). In addition, the movement sponsored a World Peace Conference for several years and inaugurated a World University Federation. Within this constellation of activity, the Interreligious Federation for World Peace (IRFWP) and the International Federation for World Peace (IFWP) functioned as umbrella organizations, representing internal and external approaches to the solution of world problems. These two federations coalesced into a single entity, the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace, in 1999. The stated purpose of the merger was to bring their combined resources together.





*Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak and Taj Hamad (center) congratulating a graduate of an interreligious seminar at the New Yorker Hotel*

This process began with a conference on “Realizing the Interfaith Ideal: Action Beyond Dialogue” sponsored by the IRFWP in Washington, D.C. from December 18-20, 1998. The “concept for the conference,” according to its coordinator Dr. Frank Kaufmann, “revolved around an initiative for religious leaders to work formally with the United Nations,” a vision which “was enthusiastically received by the 126 international participants in attendance.” Even more gratifying was the response of United Nations representatives present who “acknowledged the conference initiative as inspired, timely, necessary and doable.” Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak in an important plenary address, “New Directions for Interfaith,” stated,

[W]orld peacemaking calls not only for the wisdom of statesmen and diplomats but also for the wisdom of the world’s religions, as embodied in the most honored representatives of those religious traditions. To implement such a program would involve a re-structuring of the UN as currently conceived. For, in addition to the representation of nation states, there would be representatives of the world’s religious traditions.

One can perhaps imagine a congress of two houses. One house—a House of Representatives—would be structured very much as the existing United Nations. It would consist of an assembly of wise and experienced representatives of the

world's national governments. In addition to this house, however, there would be added a second house or senate. This Senate would consist of distinguished religious leaders. Together, in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, these two houses would work together with a single objective: moving the world toward peace.



Rev. Kwak's sentiments reflected those of Rev. Moon who had previously spoken along these lines. In his conference address, Rev. Moon stated, "the path to world peace will be incomplete if we build it merely upon the political, economic and military functions of the United Nations.... I hope the participants here today, and all the nations of the world, will seriously consider this proposal to establish a structure encompassing the world's religions and the United Nations."

*A Hoon Dok Hae Conference in Washington, D.C., 1999*

The call to religious leaders for "action beyond dialogue" continued with the establishment of the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP) in February 1999. However, it was supplemented by another theme. According to Frank Kaufmann, a "second trademark insight" attributable to Rev. Moon was "his understanding of the seamless web linking family order to world order." This was apparent in the IIFWP's first and succeeding International Seminars in Washington, D.C. on "True Families as the Foundation for World Peace in the New Millennium." In early July 1999, Rev. Moon directed IIFWP staff to convene the first seminar "before the end of the month and to bring together two hundred distinguished participants representing more than forty nations" as well as participants from each of the twenty-two U.S. states in which Mrs. Moon had recently spoken. From each locale, three guests were to be invited: one a religious leader, one a political leader, and the other an academic leader.

Rev. Moon also gave "specific direction that the content of the conference program...should be dedicated to a series of *Hoon Dok Hae* readings." These were "gathering for reading and learning" sessions based on passages from Rev. Moon's speeches. The general membership had been encouraged to practice *Hoon Dok Hae* between 6:00-7:00 a.m. since late 1997, but it had not been tried

at “any previous international conference for VIP contacts.” The program included a series of seven ninety-minute *Hoon Dok Hae* sessions, each consisting of a reading on a specific topic followed by responses by two assigned discussants and comments from the floor. Despite initial apprehensions, members with extensive experience in dialogues of this type offered glowing appraisals. Dr. Anthony Guerra, Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies at the University of Bridgeport, commented,

I have been comparing in my heart and mind over the past few days this first *Hoon Dok Hae* conference with the many other Unification-centered seminars for VIP guests. The strongest metaphor I’m left with is that of the difference between the atomic bomb and conventional weapons. In this first *Hoon Dok Hae* conference, our guests and also we members, are challenged by the direct words of True Parents. In the atmosphere created...we all seem to be delivered from our old selves.... Father has given us the formula for Pentecost.

Given the success of the initial gathering, the movement undertook regular *Hoon Dok Hae* conferences for the remainder of the year in Washington, D.C. Beginning with the second conference on September 17-20, media representatives were included among the religious, political and academic leaders.

The introduction of *Hoon Dok Hae* and the emergence of high-level conferences devoted to “reading and learning” Rev. Moon’s words highlighted two important points. First, Rev. Moon’s speeches or excerpts from his speeches were beginning to supplant The Principle as the movement’s official canon in the Completed Testament Age. For some, the *Divine Principle* was reduced in stature from a sacred text to a systematic theology. Moreover, it was regarded as being addressed primarily to Christian audiences. In this respect, *Hoon Dok Hae* was seen to underscore the “universalism” inherent in Rev. Moon’s message. Second, the study of Rev. Moon’s words on diverse topics related to the family and world peace was a clear indication that the movement pursued not only peace but also unification. In other words, it understood that true and lasting peace could not emerge without a central reference point. How explicit that reference point should be was open to interpretation. The *Hoon Dok Hae* conferences emphasized the “spiritual” and “internal aspects of the global peace process,” i.e., “common values and shared concerns.” Nevertheless, an unstated assumption behind the gatherings was that there could be no peace or unity among brothers and sisters at any level without True Parents.

## Sisterhood Ceremonies

The second prong of the movement's three-fold approach to world peace and unification was that of forgiveness and reconciliation. Some issues simply transcended the problem-solving capacity of rational discourse and social idealism. Among the most serious global problems in the 1990s were the vicious hatreds among ethnic, national, racial and religious groupings. These, in fact, became more pronounced during the post-Cold War period when they were no longer held in check by the competing superpowers. Tutsis and Hutus killed one another in Rwanda; Croats, Serbs and Muslims killed one another in Bosnia; Irish and English killed one another in Northern Ireland and elsewhere; Jews and Arabs killed one another in the Middle East. Additional examples of this could be cited throughout the globe. Any program for peace, therefore, needed to go beyond the normal bounds of interpersonal relations and address issues of forgiveness and reconciliation, especially between enemies and former adversaries.

Here, the movement took its cue from the experience of Rev. Moon. During the cold war, Rev. Moon was widely regarded as a virulent anti-communist. However, it was less widely known that prior to the demise of communism, he sought reconciliation and developed personal relationships with Mikhail Gorbachev and the late North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, both of whom had been serious adversaries in the past. In fact, both were alleged by the movement to have been linked to assassination plots against him. Rev. Moon adopted a similar stance much earlier toward Japanese secret police who had tortured him for his underground activities during their occupation of Korea and whom he subsequently aided in escaping reprisals following Japan's World War II defeat.

Out of these personal encounters, Rev. Moon derived the inspiration to pursue forgiveness and reconciliation on broader levels. He encouraged marriages between partners of formerly enemy states, created situations in which followers from adversary nations worked together, and sent them out as missionary teams to the field. During the mid-1990s, he pursued these measures in a more programmatic way, working with the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) to sponsor large-scale "Sisterhood Ceremonies," first between







Korean and Japanese and then between Japanese and American women. Rev. Moon understood that women would play a leading role in fostering peace in the Completed Testament Age. This sentiment was echoed in a particularly strong way by Mrs. Moon in a congratulatory address to participants in a Korean-Japanese sisterhood ceremony. She stated,

*American and Japanese WFWP presidents, Mrs. Nora Spurgin and Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, cross the "Bridge of Peace."*

[N]one of you were treated properly by men who did not know the original value with which women were created. In the existing order, which discriminates between men and women, you have had to endure much suffering. However, today, you are seeing the age of women which is now dawning for the first time in history.

If women, who make up half of mankind, cannot enjoy proper human rights, can we have a peaceful world? The mistak-



*Former U.S. President and First Lady, George and Barbara Bush at a WFWP conference*



en mentality that discriminates against women must be changed. The role of women must be expanded and corrected within all areas of society in which discrimination against women exists—including the spheres of politics, law and the economy.... A woman, as seen from the viewpoint of the ideal of creation, is not an assistant to a man, but must be a partner.... We women have the mission to correctly guide those men who have until now led history through power, and confused the order of love in their lives.

Under the auspices of WFWP, more than 200,000 Korean and Japanese women “came together to create sisterly ties” in thirty-eight separate occasions between March 11 and November 8, 1994.

Sisterhood ceremonies conducted in the United States between Japanese and American women did not achieve those kinds of numbers, primarily due to the geographical distance between the two nations. However, they may have had more impact due to the involvement of persons with exceedingly high public profiles, most notably, former President and First Lady George and Barbara Bush. Numerous other leaders of the highest rank and celebrities spoke or entertained at WFWP-sponsored sisterhood ceremonies in the U.S. They included former Department of Education Secretary and author of *The Book of Virtues*, William Bennet; Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick; television personality Barbara Walters; former Congressman Jack Kemp; “Superman” actor Christopher Reeves; Coretta Scott King; well-known psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers; Olympic swimmer Matt Biondi; Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale; Maureen Reagan; singers Shirley Jones, Jennifer Holliday, and Naomi Judd;

and actress Phylicia Rashad. Taking part in the ceremonies, many were deeply touched and accepted additional invitations. The most prominent were President and Mrs. George Bush who accompanied and spoke in support of WFWP with Mrs. Moon on a six-city speaking tour in Japan.

Between January 22 and March 8, 1995, 4,000 Japanese women traveled to Washington, D.C. to be matched with an equal number of American women in eight separate sisterhood ceremonies. These were set to coincide with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, and each ceremony built up to a dramatic “bridge-crossing” during which “a representative group of the Japanese delegates crossed over a special bridge, met their American counterparts in the middle where each bowed, embraced the other, and then walked down together, hand in hand.” One participant commented, “It is hard to fully describe how moving this simple ceremony was without witnessing it!” The rich background of cherry blossom trees and roses on stage undoubtedly contributed to the effect. Following the highly successful Washington, D.C. conferences, the movement sponsored Japanese-American sisterhood ceremonies in eight U.S. cities during the remainder of 1995, with several thousand more women from both countries participating. In 1996, the WFWP conducted a number of “African-American/Caucasian-American” ceremonies. These activities in America inspired Austrian-Croatian, Czech-German, Russian-German, Hungarian-Slovakian, and Italian-Slovakian sisterhood ceremonies conducted by WFWP chapters in Europe.

The movement did not limit its efforts on behalf of forgiveness and reconciliation to symbolic exchanges. Members also took on sacrificial lifestyles and voluntary suffering. Rev. Moon referred to this as going to the “zero” point. Whatever the terminology, the group most embodying this and through whom Rev. Moon attempted to work most directly in the 1990s were Japanese women. In much the same way as he provided opportunities and encouraged Mrs. Moon in her leadership of WFWP and world speaking tours, so he looked to elevate the spiritual consciousness and commitment of Japanese women. Utilizing messianic imagery, he called upon them to take on an “Eve” or mother’s role in the world. Japan had been sacrificially funding movement activities for years. During the 1990s, the movement deployed thousands of Japanese women as missionary workers. Initially, 1,600 went out to the 160 countries in which the movement had missions, ten per nation. Later, some 4,000 Japanese women went out to countries in the Americas. At the end of the decade, most of these sisters were deployed in the United States, and Rev. Moon stated his intention of sending 20,000 more. Many of them left husbands and children behind. Their commitment was intended not only to augment movement activities but also to inspire sacrificial efforts in others.

## Nora Spurgin

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One day I got a call to come and work with Women's Federation. I traveled literally all over the world with True Mother, including Europe, China and Russia, and the USA and everywhere. It was hard for my husband, in my home town, taking care of the younger children, looking for a job while I was traveling all over the world with Mother. It was so powerful being with her and meeting all those people. It was exciting traveling and establishing the Women's Federation. I worked with WFWP for seven years, and in the sisterhood ceremonies in 1995 and 1996.

Father called Mrs. Sugiyama and me to East Garden and said he wanted to do a sisterhood ceremony in the USA. They had done sisterhood ceremonies between Korean and Japanese women. In Korea, the Japanese women and Korean women sat across from each other at a table, shook hands and signed something. Tomoko Duggan had the idea of a bridge; at first we thought it could be a decoration, but then we thought if it was a three-dimensional bridge with steps leading up to it, as a ceremony it would be very moving. It was such a heartistic experience. Looking back on it, it was so moving for everyone involved. It was more than a conference; it was much deeper. It was a heart experience, not a head experience.

## Beyond The Dream

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### Nadine Andre

On Oct. 5 something very special happened in three cities across the United States. In Los Angeles, Tampa and New York City, over 700 African-American and Caucasian women crossed the Bridge of Peace, uniting in sisterhood, pledging to heal the racial wounds which have historically divided our nation.

This was not a political event. This was not some social program or legislative action. These were women who were courageous enough to face their own demons, their own prejudices, and their own internal wounds, woman to woman, heart to heart. Their hope was to create a consciousness whereby the historical misdeeds of slavery and the abuses of racism could finally begin to be laid to rest. These were brave women willing to put themselves on the line.



*New "sisters" meet for the first time at a WFWP conference.*

This event, sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace, was patterned after the series of International Friendship Conferences held throughout the country since 1995. These conferences brought together women from Japan and America who crossed the Bridge of Peace in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. The restorative nature of these ceremonies soon became quite evident.

Women, it seems, because of their roles as mothers, healers, nurturers and wives, were able to bridge the gap of resentment, pain and historical indemnity—not through the path of intellectualism or social engineering but through the path of "heart." The results have actually been quite astounding.

When the Japanese and American women cross the bridge to meet their new sister, the passion and tears that ensue and the realization that whatever has happened in the past can be healed in the present is a moment transcending words. The past, present and future all seem to exist in that moment of embrace and upon that foundation of tears, forgiveness and repentance, the relationship between the women and the histories of their nations are reborn. The his-tories become her-stories and the feminine aspects of our mass consciousness are allowed to emerge. The feminine aspects of God are required now to promote the healing necessary to enter the new millennium. The American women knew this was the only way to heal the racial divide. Thus the idea for the Interracial Conference "Beyond the Dream" was born.

Having worked on the conference myself here in New York, I can tell you it was not easy. Every obstacle that could arise, did. From lack of funds to finding the right venue and gathering women who understood the issues, to preparing the program, was an uphill journey all the way. But the path was paved with miracles as if God wanted this to happen even more than any of us could imagine.

The event in New York was held at Riverside Church in Harlem. This was especially significant not only because they were celebrating their 65th anniversary on that precise day, but because Riverside is also the church where Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke several times. As co-chairwoman Suzanne Tadokoro said,



*A WFWP conference in Washington, D.C.*

“Martin Luther King had a dream, but it is up to us to go beyond the dream and make the dream a reality.”

Debby Gullery, chairwoman of the New York chapter of Women’s Federation for World Peace, and co-chair of “Beyond the Dream,” said in her address: “Each of us represents thousands of people who have lived before us, people who have suffered and people who have caused suffering...but one person’s transformation has the power to affect thousands.” And so it was, the unity between the two co-chairwomen, Ms. Gullery, a Caucasian woman, and Ms. Tadokoro, daughter of an

interracial couple who is now herself in an interracial marriage. They, too, had to cross the bridge many times within themselves and with each other to lay a strong internal foundation for the event.

Keynote speaker Andria Hall, former WNBC/Ch. 4 news anchor and lecturer, who crossed the bridge with Ms. Gullery, said: “Racism is ugly, racism is real and racism hurts. I implore you to rebuke this monster which is in our midst.” Ms. Hall continued to give testimony about the many times she had to symbolically cross the bridge in her journalistic career as an African-American woman, and the deep pains she had to endure.

Other featured speakers included Ms. Mozelle Reid, state convener of the National Council of Negro Women and president of the Native Black American Women’s Organization, and Marjorie Davis, community activist and journalist with the *Afro Times*. An address was given by Ms. Marta Varela, chairwoman of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, and Ms. Michelle Tong from the Office of Community Affairs read a letter from New York State Governor George Pataki applauding the work of WFWP.

From this roster of celebrated speakers and from all the women and men who participated, it seemed as if on this one sunny autumn afternoon the city of New York was at peace. As the strains of “Let There Be Peace on Earth” resonated throughout the halls of this great cathedral, the women recited the sisterhood pledge: “to build a bridge of peace and reconciliation, healing and forgiveness between our two races.” It was at that moment, that eternal second, although unspoken, that everyone knew this was the key to our liberation.

It was Charmaine Singer’s 44th birthday, and she was crying. “I wondered how I was going to spend my birthday,” she said, “but God gave me a sister today.” Ms. Singer’s eyes brimmed with tears as she walked arm in arm with her new African-American sister, Ms. Loftin, an evangelist from Yonkers. Ms. Loftin, who fled South Carolina in her youth to escape a cross-burning, handed Ms. Singer a pamphlet showing her family tree dating to a freed slave born in 1845. “Welcome to my family,” Ms. Loftin said. “Now God is really using us.”



The afternoon continued to soar higher and higher as the program concluded with a performance by Mavis Staples, from the internationally acclaimed gospel group, the Staples Singers, nominated for a Grammy for their hit song, "I'll Take You There." Ms. Staples gave her testimony of meeting with WFWP Boston Chairwomen Heather Thalheimer and Cynthia Myers. They had initially discussed the idea for the Beyond the Dream conference when Ms. Staples became inspired to say, "That's a great idea and a great name for a song!" Heather said, "Why don't you write it?" One month later Ms. Staples did just that. New York City was privileged to hear the world premiere of the song "Beyond the Dream." The crowd went wild singing and dancing as the afternoon drew to a close in a joyous rhapsody of love.

As all good times must come to an end, this was the end of our new beginning. There was something different now. Something had changed. As each woman left the auditorium, I noticed a sparkle in her eyes, a glimmer which only comes from the discovery of new hope. A new hope had been born that afternoon. A hope to transform the face of our nation, one nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

## Bridge of Peace

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### Paula Fujiwara

The Bridge of Peace ceremony was introduced to Southern California by the Women's Federation for World Peace in Sept. 1995 as part of its International Women's Friendship Conference series between Japanese and American women. It is a ceremony of forgiveness, reconciliation and healing of the wounds caused by past wrongdoings. Nine Japanese-American bridge ceremonies took place in Los Angeles. Out of the urging of Southern Californian participants in this conference series, a new project was born in January 1996. The Interracial Sisterhood Project (I.S.P.) was established to address the problem of racial division in the Los Angeles area. The first interracial Bridge of Peace ceremony was held at the L.A. Convention Center with 350 participants on Oct. 5, 1996. It was an entirely volunteer effort with many goods and services donated.

"After months of hard work and fund raising for the first I.S.P. event, we found that participants were inviting us to bring the ceremony to their 'realm of influence,'"

said I.S.P. chairwoman Sheri Rueter. Consequently, in 1997 there were Bridge of Peace ceremonies held in four different communities. The first event was held at the beginning of spring as an interracial ceremony for 185 girls of the ABC High School District. It was coordinated by Diane Stonbraker, a teacher and founder of the Artesia High Rainbow League, which promotes interracial harmony on their culturally diverse campus. Now the campus has an Interracial Sisterhood Club which just held the second annual bridge ceremony including girls from the other four high schools in the district. The second event was held for residents of a large senior citizens' complex in Pasadena. I.S.P. supporters from the Pasadena Interracial Women's Club organized the ceremony, pairing residents from the two towers in order to encourage a closer-knit community. The third event involved a national Native American conference held in Anaheim. The bridge ceremony was part of the conference's cultural night coordinated by Paula Star of the Southern California Indian Center. There were 250 participants; mostly Native American women were paired with I.S.P. supporters but also some men, children and family "partners for peace" were formed. The fourth event was the first city-sponsored ceremony in Carson, California. Several city officials who were invited to earlier ceremonies were instrumental in making it happen. It was held in October (Cultural Diversity Month) as the second anniversary of the original Interracial Sisterhood Ceremony. There was a total of 300 participants, including all the city officials.

### I.S.P. Builds Momentum in 1998

The spring season was ushered in once again in 1998 by 150 excited girls from the ABC Unified High School District at the Cerritos Park East Community Center. The new Interracial Sisterhood Club of Artesia High took responsibility for many aspects of planning and preparation of the event, which had been done by faculty advisors and the I.S.P. in 1997. This year's event was "very challenging but equally successful," commented club advisor Diane Stonbraker. "The girls got to know each other better this time." A segment was added to the program allowing time for new interracial pairs to get to know each other.

This year's event was covered by the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* and the *New California Times*. The keynote speaker was school principal Dr. Genevieve Shepherd, who spoke at the first interracial bridge cere-



mony in Los Angeles. She reminded participants that something as simple as a smile and a kind word go a long way to bridge the gap between individuals.

Held on Friday, March 20, some girls were eagerly awaiting the experience. "People said it was really fun last year and the girls were nice and friendly," said Whitney High sophomore Lejone Morris, 15 years old.

Honesty Brown commented that "in high school people have a tendency to hang around people of the same race.... But here you don't have a choice and you get paired with someone of a different race and you can talk with them and find out you have a lot in common. It's amazing to find that out!"

Honesty's "Sister of Peace" Christine Maldonado is co-president with her of the Gahr High Interracial Sisterhood Club. "We just made meetings (to organize the event) but never really sat down together and just talked," says Christine; at the ceremony "we got to talking and I learned so much!"

"I think it's probably one of the best events that has ever come to our school district," says Kristy Crumbo, Artesia High student body president and ceremony coordinator. "It built unity among the whole community."

Interracial Sisterhood Club members are considering sponsoring a retreat to address women's issues and things that affect them every day, since meetings during the school day have been too brief, and after school and weekends are crowded with other activities.

### **First College-Sponsored Bridge Ceremony**

Saturday, March 28 marked the historic first college-sponsored Interracial Bridge of Peace Ceremony. It was held at Chaffey College in the community of Rancho Cucamonga in California's Inland Empire region north-east of Los Angeles. The coordinator of the event was Chaffey College Professor Arlene McCall. Arlene came in contact with Women's Federation for World Peace when she responded to an invitation to the International Women's Friendship Conference in Los Angeles. She attended the first Interracial Ceremony at the L.A. Convention Center as well as the third International W.F.W.P. Convention last November in Washington, D.C. By the beginning of this year she was determined to hold a bridge ceremony on campus this spring and intends to have a bridge crossing at her church in May.

This semester she was able to rally the support of the faculty, staff and students as well as the local mayor and city council. There were approximately seventy attendees

and about twenty pairs of sisters crossed the bridge. Arlene and I.S.P. chairwoman Sheri Rueter were co-emcees. Arlene's talented students created the atmosphere for harmony with poetry, song and modern dance. Director for Student Activities Susan Stewart made acknowledgments and presented a proclamation from the city of Rancho Cucamonga. Keynote speakers were Cheryl Landon and Dorinda Henderson. Cheryl shared something of the lessons of love her father, actor Michael Landon, wanted to convey through his TV series *Little House on the Prairie* and *Highway to Heaven*. Dorinda Henderson is an active WFWP/ISP member who was an exchange student at Chaffey College and was named Alumni of the Year in 1996. A native of Belize, she has served in the management of Bank of America and as deputy director of the state's Fair Employment and Housing Department. Dorinda told of many positive experiences with her advisors at Chaffey who understood about cultural diversity and the challenges she faced adjusting to the American education system and culture. She concluded: "I'm back and I'm proud!"

Students were heard saying that a teacher told them to come and they could get extra credit, but they had no idea it was going to be so magnificent. They were surprised that they were so moved. Chaffey student Rhonda Sanchez remarked, "It was more than I expected. I felt so touched today." Arlene added, "This is really a groundbreaking event for this community and I'm sure it's just the beginning; it's paving the way for much larger events to follow."

Prof. McCall is currently working on a Ph.D. in International Education. She plans to develop and implement a certificate program and an Associate of Arts degree in multicultural studies. Ongoing bridge of peace ceremonies will be part of her program.

The Interracial Sisterhood Project of Southern California is planning more bridge ceremonies this year, as part of a youth conference in the city of Carson and with the International Friendship Festival in Long Beach, among others. ISP wants to multiply these ceremonies in schools, churches and cities. Partners for Peace who have had a chance to recognize and heal the wounds of the past can make great strides toward a future of harmony.

## A Bridge of Love

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Jennifer Holliday, acclaimed Broadway star of *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God* and *Dreamgirls*, was scheduled to perform at the conference in Washington, D.C. Ms. Holliday heard about a special 23-year-old Japanese singer. Unbeknownst to Ms. Holliday or WFWP, a fast-food chain in Japan had sponsored an essay contest in which the winner would be the one who best described her feelings about Ms. Holliday and her music. Hiromi Okasaki, blind since birth, won the first prize—an all-expense-paid round trip to America.

Wishing to fulfill her one dream to have a voice lesson with Jennifer Holliday, Hiromi located Ms. Holliday through an organization whose purpose is to unite those separated between Japan and America.

“I didn’t know anything about the contest. I didn’t even know they knew me in Japan,” Ms. Holliday exclaimed. “I certainly have never performed there, although I knew that a road show version of *Dreamgirls* toured there years ago.”

Excited by the coincidence of this sequence of events, Ms. Holliday invited her Japanese protege to join her in Washington several days prior to the eighth sisterhood event. Their first union was a tearful one for Hiromi, who had been waiting for this moment for a long time.

“I always wanted to sing like Ms. Holliday, but was advised not to because I could ruin my voice,” reflected Hiromi. “But I didn’t care; I did it anyway.” Impressed by her potential, Ms. Holliday invited Hiromi to perform with her on stage. She also wanted to go through the bridge ceremony with Hiromi, where Japanese and American women cross a bridge to meet each other and symbolically become sisters. This development was beyond Hiromi’s wildest expectations.

On the day of the event, Hiromi and Jennifer were the stars of the bridge ceremony. The last ones to cross the bridge, they stood for several minutes in an embrace that brought tears to everyone’s eyes. Elayne Bennett, the keynote speaker, needed several minutes to recover her emotions before she could begin her speech. The



*Jennifer and Hiromi*

sound and light production men backstage were also overcome with tears, even though they had been witness to seven previous bridge ceremonies.

That evening as Jennifer performed, Hiromi was sitting in the audience with her mother. Suddenly, Jennifer was by her side, guiding her to the stage and, through a translator, she testified to Hiromi’s strength, her talent and sweet personality. Hiromi, standing alone on stage, sang “Climb Every Mountain” in perfect English. Then Ms. Holliday joined her in a powerful duet.

The image of the two women, singing in a language of courage and hope which transcended every national boundary, moved the audience to tears. It was one of the deepest moments of all the conferences and one that the guests who were there will never forget.

## The Globalization of the Blessing

The sanctification of families through International Marriage Blessings was the third prong in the movement's program for world peace and unification. Sanctification within the Christian tradition referred primarily to the transformation or perfection of individuals. However, Unificationists understood that a whole new historical epoch had begun in which there had occurred a fundamental shift in the order of salvation from the individual to the family. Therefore, the movement's understanding of sanctification related mainly to the family and family formation. The gateway to the sanctification process was the Blessing which became a major point of emphasis for the movement during the middle and late 1990s.

Sanctification was an important complement to movement-sponsored dialogues and reconciliation efforts. The first two prongs in its program for world peace and unification essentially dealt with conflict-resolution. The third prong, the sanctification of families through the Blessing, was understood to eliminate the root cause of human conflict and division. In essence, it was a process through which men and women came into union with one another, engrafted into the True Parents, reconciled with God, and thereby reconstituted themselves as a new humanity. In this process, there were important internal and external components. Internally, the Blessing was understood to cleanse couples and their future progeny from the taint of original sin. Externally, blessed couples were to exemplify world peace and unification. The movement encouraged international, intercultural and interracial matches in large International Marriage ceremonies dedicated to "World Peace Through Ideal Families."

Prior to the beginning of the Completed Testament Age, the Blessing was a narrow gate. It was restricted almost exclusively to Unification Church members. However, the situation changed dramatically after 1993. The essential difference was that the Blessing became open, and Rev. Moon stated his intention of blessing hundreds of thousands and even hundreds of millions of couples before the year 2000. This shift and the accompanying goals were the result of altered circumstances. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as well as the movement's access to communist leaders and breakthroughs in both communist and post-communist worlds were all crucial. However, Rev. and Mrs. Moon's public declarations of True Parents, messi-



*During the mid-'90s the Blessings expanded to local ceremonies at Christian Churches all across America.*

ahship, and the Completed Testament Age were equally important. As a consequence, Rev. Moon had every expectation that a new messianic age was about to dawn. The most visible sign of this was what members came to call the globalization of the Blessing.

The globalization process affected movement practices and eventually members' thinking about the Blessing. Prior to the CTA, members endured lengthy preparation periods that extended from the time they joined the movement until they were blessed. During this time, they were strictly celibate and fulfilled regular membership duties as well as special conditions associated with the Blessing, such as bringing three new converts and completing a seven-day fast. All were "matched" by Rev. Moon and required official permission to "start their families." A major departure after 1993 was that these conditions did not apply to the overwhelming majority of those being blessed. The reason for this was simple. They were not Unification Church members. For most of these couples, there was no formal preparation at all. In most cases, the Blessing came as suddenly as a knock on the door. In fact, as the numerical totals climbed into the millions, the majority had only the most limited and rudimentary understanding of the Blessing if, indeed, they understood that they were blessed at all.

There also were departures from basic ritual practices. For most Unificationists, the Holy Wine Ceremony was the centerpiece of the Blessing. It signified the cleansing of original sin, or in Unification terms, the "change of blood lineage." As far as possible, members preserved the integrity of this ceremony. They offered holy wine in living rooms, on beaches, at county fairs and elsewhere according to accepted formulae. However, there also were adaptations and eventually innovations that bore only a faint resemblance to the original tradition. Some couples refused wine. In these cases, members distributed grape juice referred to as "holy nectar." Others had compunctions about accepting drinks from strangers. In these instances, it was sometimes maintained that sniffing the wine or dipping one's finger into a cup was sufficient. Once again, as numbers accelerated into the millions, enterprising members distributed holy "lemonade" to thirsty beachgoers or downtown pedestrians, usually with little or no explanation of its benefits. Others distributed holy candy with printed blessing affirmations.

Globalization, in effect, resulted in the spiritualization and democratization of the Blessing. Whereas eligibility had been interpreted previously in literal and legal terms, the movement now incorporated symbolic content and a more accentuated theology of grace. There was significantly more emphasis placed on benefits available through "the merit of the age." The grace of the Blessing was understood to accrue to people regardless of their effort or even their awareness. Rev. Moon stated that those born after the True Parents' Holy Matrimony in 1960 were already blessed. He later extended the period to include those born after he began his public ministry in 1945. Given this under-



standing, excessive preoccupation with ritual or legalistic niceties was clearly misplaced. At the same time, continental leaders, tribal messiahs and eventually ordinary members were empowered to bless couples. This led to further experimentation and innovation.

## **Blessing '95**

Rev. and Mrs. Moon officiated at an International Holy Wedding for 360,000 couples on August 25, 1995. The main site was at Seoul Olympic Stadium where 36,000 Couples and additional onlookers gathered. The remaining couples were simultaneously linked to the main ceremony at more than 500 satellite locations in 160 nations throughout the world. This was the movement's first avowedly open Blessing. In 1992, forty-three Muslims and twenty-eight long-time contacts from seven different religious traditions participated in two Blessing ceremonies. However, their presence was not widely publicized. This time, the movement made a public commitment to transcend religious and denominational distinctions. Apart from this, there were practical reasons for reaching out to already married couples from diverse backgrounds. The 30,000 Couple Blessing conducted at the First World Culture and Sports Festival in 1992 was challenging but within reach as there were enough blessing candidates among the membership to meet the goal. There were not enough member candidates to make up the 360,000 Couple Blessing. As a consequence, the movement moved into uncharted territory.

Rev. Moon's initial strategy for accomplishing the 360,000 Couple Blessing was to have all of the 30,000 Blessing couples bring twelve additional couples each. He soon supplemented this with the direction that all members bring twelve couples. In addition, the movement undertook high level witnessing among the many contacts established through the "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age" world tours. There also were hopes that many in the various federations for world peace and among the 4,000 American women matched with Japanese counterparts in sisterhood ceremonies would either participate directly or aid the cause. Finally, the movement cultivated contacts among religious leaders, particularly among independent African-based churches, ICC ministers who had previously gone to Korea, and representatives of non-Christian faiths who had attended one or more of IRF's or IRFWP's interreligious conferences.

There were breakthrough encounters with leaders of the Nigerian Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim movement, also Nigerian-based. There also were breakthroughs with representatives of the world's religions based on the movement's nearly two decades of interreligious activity. In late 1994, the movement's International Religious Foundation (IRF) produced a Blessing video, "World Peace Through Ideal Families," hundreds of which were made available; an attractive Blessing brochure, "Marriage, Family and





World Peace,” thousands of which were distributed worldwide; an educational manual, “Introducing the Blessing to Members of Other Faiths” which was distributed to movement leaders and missionaries; and a lecture slide program, “The Loving Family and World Peace.” From December 1994, IRF leaders gave forty-three VIP Blessing education seminars in eighteen countries. Six months later, Dr. Frank Kaufmann reported, “several hundred social and religious leaders, and more than 100,000 couples from the world’s religions have signed up for the Blessing.”

With an event of this magnitude, there obviously were innumerable glitches and problems. Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak, who had overall organizational responsibility, commented, “Anything you can imagine happened at the blessing.” He noted, “Bridegrooms and brides came to the organizers right before the start of the ceremony saying they could not find their spouses.” Despite the Korean rainy season and typhoon-like conditions and flooding in the days leading up to the event, there were no accidents with vehicles, including the hundreds of chartered busses bringing participants to the stadium. Members also counted it a miracle that the rains stopped just prior to the ceremony and resumed again afterwards.

Rev. Pak reported other “amazing miracles” throughout the world. In the Ivory Coast the transmission company restored a connection at the last moment despite the country’s “terrible track record of not paying for satellite service.” Two weeks before the Blessing, through the work of a former President, Mali “[q]uickly...offered 15,000 couples.” In Brazil, “on the eve of the blessing all the participants put on their ceremonial gowns and paraded in cars on the streets of Sao Paulo” with local media inflating the blessing total to 400,000 couples! In Papua, New Guinea, the satellite broadcast was carried on prime-time national television, and in Taiwan, the head of the Cultural Revival Association, a government organization seeking to restore traditional moral and family values, “sent out a personally-endorsed government notice to 5,000 heads of district and local organizations encouraging participation in the blessing.” As a result, two city stadiums were prepared and “nearly 10,000 couples were blessed.”

Apart from its work with VIPs, the American movement did not play a major role in the 360,000 Couple Blessing, particularly at the grassroots level. A number of staff and blessing candidates from among the membership traveled to Korea to support or participate in the main ceremony. Other couples took part in the “satellite blessing” at various locations. However, the locales and precise numbers were unclear. The *Unification News* published “partial” lists of couples blessed in Korea and by satellite which approached 1,000. Even if these lists represented only one-tenth of the actual total, the U.S. would have fallen well short of its national goal of 40,000 couples.

## Blessing '97

Blessing '97 presented a different set of circumstances and confronted the American movement far more directly. Previously, members had assumed that Korea, as the birthplace and holy land not only of Unification faith but of an expected new global culture, would be the site of all future World Culture and Sports Festivals and International Blessings. After the completion of Blessing '95, many were surprised when it was announced that the Third World Culture and Sports Festival and the main ceremony for an International Holy Wedding of 3.6 Million Couples would be held in Washington, D.C. at RFK Stadium on November 29, 1997.

The rationale for the decision to hold Blessing '97 in the U.S. was not entirely clear. There was a sense that Rev. Moon wanted the next Blessing to have a more substantial global impact, particularly in terms of media coverage. Although Korea was regarded as the future center of world civilization, that was not the case at present. In this respect, the U.S. offered intriguing possibilities. Rev. Moon's attention already had been drawn to South America as an alternative starting point for a new global culture. It may have been that he wanted to draw upon the resources of the entire Americas. Or it may have been that he simply wanted a more substantial return on his investment in the American movement. There also was evidence that Rev. Moon relished a challenge. Having been there and done that in Korea, he may have wanted to test the movement's mettle in the capitol of the world's only remaining superpower.

Whatever the reasoning process, the American movement was left with responsibility to spearhead Blessing '97. This would be a time of testing for the membership. There were ongoing anxieties, frustration, despair and agony over lacking or slow results, dramatic shifts of strategy, significant breakthroughs, and eventual vindication. In the end, members learned an important lesson about the Completed Testament Age. It was about members, themselves, taking responsibility. As early as 1980, Rev. Moon proclaimed that the era of the leader-centered movement had ended and that of the member-centered movement had begun. It took most members more than a decade and a half to realize and experience the meaning of that proclamation. Even then, it was a lesson easy to forget and one that required continual reinforcement. Once the 3.6 Million Couple Blessing total had been attained, an event which he sealed with the blessing in marriage of his two youngest sons, Rev. Moon proclaimed the "Era of the Fourth Adam." Although once again there was ambiguity about the precise meaning of the proclamation, essentially it indicated that the mission of the Third Adam, the Lord of the Second Advent, was complete and that humankind as a whole, the Fourth Adam, was ready to inherit their birthright.

However, this all lay in the future. The immediate concern was how to prepare for Blessing '97. Initially, the American movement attempted to work from its perceived strengths. The leadership believed that the movement's major

asset lay in its ability to mobilize elites. Literally thousands of scholars, religious leaders, media professionals and civic officials had attended conferences or lent their support in one or another way since the late 1970s. Therefore, it was logical that the movement should start from them in mobilizing support for Blessing '97.

For Blessing '97, Christian ministers were the specific targeted elite. The movement had been quite successful in mobilizing thousands of them to Korea during the late 1980s. The assumption was that not only ministers but their entire congregations could be mobilized for the Blessing. To that end, the movement sponsored three-day, expenses-paid "Empowering Christianity Through True Family Values" seminars at the Sheraton National Hotel in suburban Washington, D.C. weekly between June and December, 1996. Several seminar sessions were based on Rev. Joong Hyun Pak and Dr. Andrew Wilson's book *True Family Values* (1996), a text that presented the movement's teaching on marriage and family as a faith-based message "addressing issues faced by individuals and in today's society." Dr. Tyler Hendricks, President of the Unification Church in America, led a team that adapted the text into workbooks of the "fill-in-the-blanks" type which were completed by participants. The movement's top lecturers from the earlier ICC Minister Conferences also spoke.

The seminar series was remarkably successful. More than 4,500 clergy and religious leaders from all regions of the country and virtually every religious denomination attended. A large number expressed interest in the Blessing. Some indicated that they might like to hold a blessing in their church. This was consistent with Rev. Joong Hyun Pak's "Five-stage strategy" for success at RFK. These stages included the:

- True Family Values education of ministers;
- education of members to become True Family Values presenters;
- teaching of True Family Values in churches;
- giving of pre-Blessings at True Family Value Festivals; and
- bringing of pre-Blessed couples to the main Blessing event.

The major innovation in this formula was the concept of pre-Blessings and pre-Blessed couples. Basically, this meant movement leaders began to conduct Blessings, with all the ceremonial components, on behalf of Rev. and Mrs. Moon. The only missing element was True Parent's prayer of consecration which would be given November 29th at RFK Stadium.

In December 1996 and January 1997, the movement conducted seventeen True Family Values Festivals in thirteen North American cities. These resulted in eighty pre-Blessings or an average of slightly more than four at each. This level of result continued through February and March 1997 at which point the movement had held 50 True Family Festivals nationwide and pre-Blessed 200 couples, still an average of four per festival. It was encouraging that the first





*Dr. Tyler Hendricks, president of the True Family Values Ministry, lecturing in Washington, D.C.*

round of pre-Blessings in December and January included thirty Christian ministers, two Muslim imams, and three Native American chiefs. By mid-March, the total of 200 included 85 ministers. However, there was little evidence that ministers were bringing their congregations. There were two main reasons for this. First, while ministers might be open to the promptings of the spirit, congregations and review boards tended to be more conservative or at least less adventuresome. Second, the True Family Values Festivals format was too unwieldy. It simply was expecting too much that ministers and their congregations sit through several hours or even a full day of True Family Values lectures, then change their attire and mindsets to be pre-Blessed.

While there may have been some limitations of strategy, the more serious problem was that the UC membership had not yet caught the spirit. In an important speech, Rev. Joong Hyun Pak emphasized that members, like the early Christians, needed to make the transition “from Disciple to Apostle.” Pentecost was the “turning point” in this shift for early Christians. Unfortunately, the general membership had not yet experienced pentecost. Some were intimidated by the prospect of facing ministers and congregations. Others, having barely been exposed to the True Family Values material, were equally intimidated by the prospect of having to lecture it.

# 800 Ministers Attend DC True Family Values Conferences

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Eric Holt

The final True Family Values Ministry conference took place from December 10 through 12 at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. It had been just over six months since the first True Family Values Ministry seminar took place in June.

As the opening drew near, it became clear that many hundreds of ministers were registering for this, the final event. In the end, the tally was over eight hundred ministers from all over the country. There turned out to be so many participants that the originally planned hotel (the Sheraton in Arlington) ended up being too small and the conference had to be relocated to the much larger Washington Hilton, and even then, participants had to stay in five other nearby hotels in order for all to be accommodated. And so it was that the conference opened with an air of expectation as the overflow crowd packed into the auditorium to hear master of ceremonies, Levy Daugherty, offer the opening remarks.

Over the previous six months, the True Family Values contents had been revised, refined and improved with every conference. Throughout the conference, the 800 ministers gave their focused attention, while UC members listened with pride as Dr. Hendricks displayed confident mastery of his subject: True Family Values.

At one point, Dr. Hendricks explained how the situation confronted by Christians in America today is very similar to that faced by St. Paul when he traveled to Rome. In particular, the first chapter of Romans relates Paul's lamentation over the debauchery in Rome, a problem reminiscent of present-day America. During a lecture the following day, Dr. Hendricks asked the ministers which part a husband likes most in his wife: her hands, or is it, "Honey, I love you for your mind!?" The room erupted in a chorus of "amens" and loud acknowledgment as the ministers unanimously agreed on the value of their spouse's most holy place!

As most of us know, Kevin McCarthy has a unique ability to touch the heart, the mind and the funny-bone all at the same time. (Did you know that John the Baptist and Elijah shopped in the same mall?) This ability comes

in handy: for example, isn't it hard to justify the highly unusual way that God worked through the unique women of Jesus' lineage? By drawing attention to the humorous irony of each situation, Rev. McCarthy communicated the providential working of God, while avoiding sensitive moral and ethical dilemmas.

An unforgettable moment in the conference was the surprise visit of Dr. Bo Hi Pak, who brought greetings and God's blessings from our True Parents. The ever-charismatic Dr. Pak stirred the hearts of the audience when he related a story about how, during the Korean War, he was in the U.S. for additional training with a group of other Korean army officers. They took a taxi from Georgia to...New York City and Washington, D.C., in order to see the sights, and to behold beloved America, before returning to probable death on the battlefield in Korea.

The conference featured an impressive array of clergy, or perhaps one should say "clerics." Seated in front throughout the conference was a group of Moslem leaders, including a Sufi cleric from Pakistan with over one and a half million followers. In addition, three theological school presidents, several bishops, and clergy from every race and a multitude of denominations, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, were in attendance. Father Athanasius Paul, a priest from the Orthodox Church, traveled to the seminar from California. He had been instructed to come by his leader, Pope Shinoda III, a leader of over 800,000 Orthodox Christians.

One notable participant in the conference was a Sioux Indian Chief, a direct descendent of Chief Red Cloud and the head of more than 60,000 Native Americans. At the conclusion of the conference he offered a moving testimony, after which women from the tribe presented Rev. Pak with a beautiful ceremonial quilt which they had labored long to sew. Mayor Barry's assistant also came and shared a proclamation from the Mayor.

The conference concluded with an address by Rev. Joong Hyun Pak, President of the True Family Values Ministry. Speaking passionately, and quoting from Revelation 22:12-17, Rev. Pak emphasized to the ministers that one cannot enter the Kingdom of God without a family.

If this were not enough, reports once again came in that highlighted disparities between results in the U.S. and elsewhere. In Korea, blessings were “spreading like wildfire.” In Africa, reportedly, a million couples received pre-Blessing. Taiwan reportedly had reached its goal of 100,000, and according to Rev. Pak, “so many couples are coming that they don’t have enough staff to take care of them.” Even Mexico reported 170,000 completed blessing applications by early June. Apart from unflattering comparisons, members’ anxieties were stirred by their awareness that the bar had been raised for Blessing ’97. Instead of 36,000, the U.S. goal was 360,000 blessed couples. Rather than each member couple being responsible to bring 12 other couples, they now were asked to bring 160!

Fortunately, pentecost of a certain type did occur. It basically involved a momentous shift in strategy and sensibility. In terms of strategy, members dispensed with the elaborate True Family Values lecture/festival apparatus and took the Blessing to the people by going directly to their homes. Thus, the door-to-door Blessing strategy was born. As one member wrote, “It seems so simple now but at that time it was a big breakthrough.” Over the next several months, members devised ever more creative and efficient delivery systems. Blessing booths at county fairs and summer festivals were especially effective as were beach Blessings. In terms of sensibility, members no longer waited for direction or officiators from headquarters but took the Blessing into their own hands. Members, themselves, began conducting pre-Blessings, a practice that was quickly authorized by the movement’s leadership. Far from resisting a loss of prerogative, leaders felt as though they had been rescued. In this manner, the Blessing ’97 campaign became radically de-centralized.

It was difficult to pinpoint precisely where the breakthroughs began. Early reports of innovative approaches came from Minnesota, Alaska and Canada (also part of the North American movement region). However, the most compelling testimonies came from Kentucky. There, a tribal messiah couple, Joe and Sun Hyang Willet, became the first American couple to pre-Bless 160 couples. Their testimony along with that of the Kentucky State Leader, Dennis Wooley, helped liberate and energize members throughout the U.S. Essentially, they demonstrated that ordinary members who conscientiously went out during evenings and on weekends could fulfill the Blessing goal.

# Blessing the World

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## Sun Willett

In November 1994, my son, Sunder, was one year old when Father directed us to do tribal messiah work. We had just received a stroller from Sunder's grandma and when I was cleaning it, I received an inspiration. "Why am I washing the stroller?" Then I felt, "Tomorrow! You must go out witnessing. Right away!"

So rain, snow or sunshine, every day I went out with Sunder in the stroller to talk to students and teachers in Georgetown (KY). This went on for several months until Father said to bring ministers to the 30,000-couple Blessing in Korea. I began searching the telephone books in Lexington, Kentucky and central Kentucky. They had about 400 churches listed. I began cold calling to invite them to this event. I worried I might be missing many ministers, so then I checked the white pages from A-Z for Reverends. It took another week, but I found 250 more not listed with churches.

We were grateful for the three ministers who responded to go on the trip. The one Muslim minister said, "I have never been invited to anything like this before. I will go!" I was still frustrated with our results and prayed to Heavenly Father, please give me the wisdom to break through! When Father directed us to spread the Holy Wine blessing to 160 other couples, I was excited.

One day our regional leader, Rev. Won Suk Kang, called me to encourage us to help our region become the champion region in giving the Blessing. At that moment I was so excited, because I thought, "I can do it!"

We had our first Blessing of eight couples in a Chinese restaurant. A black Baptist minister played holy songs. We had 3 Viet Nameese couples, 3 black couples, 1 Chinese and 1 American couple. Our pastor performed the pre-Blessing at the second dinner. A Palestinian couple invited 4 couples among their brothers and sisters. The final total was 49 international couples at 4 dinners. Rev. Wooley and the church community made these events possible.

I wanted to go back and start giving the blessing in my community of Georgetown, Kentucky. Sunder by then was very large and heavy at 3 years and 9 months old. I had to push him, walking all over the hills of our town in the stroller.

Every day after lunch until night time, I visited homes to invite people to come to a Blessing dinner. Thirty people said yes. The day before our big Blessing I revisited these 30 people to make sure they would come. Rev. Wooley and some ministers traveled from Louisville, Ky, to help. We bought 30 take-out dinners to be served at the hall we rented for the Blessings. We waited and waited and no one showed up. I was so frustrated, and I talked to God desperately, "Heavenly Father, what happened? We were so close to them in their homes! How come nobody came? What can I do now?" At this lowest point I said to God, "If you were me, what would you do? Give me some wisdom!" Then it occurred to me, why don't we visit their homes and give the Blessing there? I suggested this to Rev. Wooley and he said, "Why not?"

We visited those who had promised to come and performed the first door-to-door Blessing. In one hour, six were Blessed. Rev. Wooley said he felt this was powerful and reported this to Rev. Kang and Rev. Joong Hyun Pak, who were visiting our region. Rev. Park said, "This is God's revelation! We should all do this!"

I strongly felt from this experience that God does not show the way too easily. We have to find out, and we can't give up. We have to hold onto God until the end. We have to overcome! When we really feel God's will, then God and the spiritual world are really with us.

Also, God is looking for the person to give inspiration to others. True Mother appeared in my dreams, driving a school bus with members on the bus. She turned to us and said, "What are you thinking now, and what are you doing for God's will?" In my mind I thought that I was working hard, but then I determined that I had to work harder.

One of our first Blessings was a couple who had lost their home in a flood, and were in public housing. They stood to receive the Blessing, but this older farmer smoked his cigar right through the Blessing! I had to run to the bathroom to throw up twice, but we persevered!

Another time, Joe stopped at this street and didn't know why. We looked around in this run-down neighborhood and there was a couple that pulled up in front of the worst house on the street. They looked so forlorn, looking at this house with a padlock on the front door that Joe hesitated to disturb them. I went up to them and gave them the Blessing. We discovered that he had just lost his job and his house, but I told them, "Because of this Blessing, you will prosper!" He brightened and said,



“Yes, today I got a new job.” As we left them, Joe felt that because of their ancestors, some people had to pay so much indemnity to receive the Blessing.

When we first started door-to-door Blessings, Joe and I Blessed one or two couples an evening. Sometimes four couples. The weekends were better. One weekend we went out for nine hours straight. It was very hot. I was very thirsty but I thought, I have to forget about thirst, and just give the Blessing to one more couple. That day nine couples were Blessed.

We pulled up in front of one house just as a woman was about to pull away. We leapt out of our car to Bless her just as her husband greeted her in the front yard. She had been driving non-stop for 18 hours from Texas to meet her husband at that moment, and receive the Blessing! It seemed that no matter how hard we worked, God was working harder to prepare people for us to Bless. We were amazed.

On Valentine’s Day I had baked over 2,000 cookies and handed them out to the whole town—schools, businesses, teachers and students. When True Parents heard about our Blessing efforts, they gave us money to buy some clothes and go on a speaking tour to many eastern and midwestern cities to speak about how to bless couples. One of my most precious memories is a dream of True Mother coming to hold and comfort me.

We received a great deal of Blessing from True Parents and our regional leader, Rev. Won Suk Kang. He inspired me at the right time in the right way to do God’s will.

## Blessing My Hometown

### Chris Bihary

**F**amily restoration and hometown tribal love has been a challenge for me and my family. The hometown providence has given us a new perspective on God’s historical heart. This story of one family’s perseverance shows that one has to set the goal and step by step through God’s formula of True Love, establish the victory.

In 1990, the message of the hometown providence sent us from the World Mission Center to do hometown in Northeast Ohio, and we moved to my home neighborhood in 1992. There, among my family, clan and old school mates, we started the work of true love. Every

year my home town holds a summer celebration in the town square. We set up a booth, hoping somehow to bring people to the Blessing. The first year, we sold gift items. The following year we tried an information booth on Women’s Federation, then Family Federation, and now the True Blessing Booth!

We became known as the city’s “Moon” family. At first we were persecuted, but folks here in this town are basically friendly, and knew the family I came from. I guess I was known as the rebel—the one who did things differently from the others. I was a hippie, I published my own underground high school newspaper, *Revelations*, and I was known as a person who was not afraid to speak out. Now it all came out that I had been in the movement for the last 20 years. People liked me, but they were somewhat apprehensive of my new religious beliefs. Most people changed their mind, however, after talking to us.

At each summer celebration we met lots of young couples, and they were really interested in the Proclamation for True Families. The message made a lot of sense to them.

We began to win the hearts of many people in this town. We became involved with others through our children’s activities and by doing volunteer work. I felt that it would take a long time for True Love to grow here, but I persevered, day after day, year after year. As a parent at the birth of a child, one feels such pride, but the job of being a parent is really just beginning. Somehow Blessing ’98 was such a beginning for Parentism here in my home town. Last year we Blessed many people at the summer celebration—a judge, and local city, state and national representatives. There were ministers, players from the Cleveland Indians, teachers and many others.

My wife, Eiko, went to Japan for three weeks for witnessing and Blessing activities in her own home town. She had come to America some 25 years ago, and only gone home once, after our first son was born, 10 years ago. She had not really had time to see her childhood friends back then. This time she could really proclaim her love of God and True Parents. She was a testimony to international marriage, and she Blessed many, many people in her home town.

On Father’s Day, Eiko and I had the opportunity to bless our tribal clans. Here in America, my cousin had a graduation party for his youngest daughter. I Blessed the celebration cake with Holy Wine and shared this special blessing with all my relatives, young and old. On the

other side of the planet, in Japan, Eiko was having a special banquet with all her in-laws and she, too, had a sharing of the Holy Wine, Blessing all there. This date is now our special Family Tribal Holiday!

Part of our joy was seeing the Blessed children who delighted in sharing Holy Wine and candy. They were so pure in heart, and even the toughest cases broke down and received the Blessing from them! Yoko, my 6-year-old daughter, was out there helping hour after hour. My two boys, ages 10 and 12, really helped us surpass our goal. We had set a goal of 8,000. I had not really believed we could do it, but by Sunday evening we were completely out of juice and candy, and we knew we had gone completely beyond our goal.

My biggest joy was Blessing so many friends and families in my hometown. My high school friend's band was in the gazebo, getting ready to play for the townspeople. I approached them with a silver tray holding 12 cups of Holy Wine. I announced that this was Blessing time. One of the twins in this well-known band, said, "OK—everyone drink!" The bass player asked, "Is this Moonshine?" The other twin replied, "No, it's Moon Wine!" I added, "Yes, it's Holy Wine and I want to give you all the Blessing." The entire band drank up.

At the upcoming County Fair in North East Ohio, members will have a Family Booth, and a Family Federation trailer in the County Parade. The Blessing is surely coming!

## Norman Presley

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I work in Kentucky as a real estate agent and I run a small picture business, My wife, Noriko, takes care of our four children at home. We were matched and blessed in 1982.

I went out with the state leader to see how to door knock and pre-Bless people. It seemed so natural and easy. I then went to the local religious store and purchased a "Blessing Kit." The first night Noriko and I went out we were going to go door knocking to pre-Bless people. That night I had to have some papers signed by one of my customers who was buying a home for investment. He is a C.P.A. I told Noriko we should try to Bless them. They are strong Christians. We asked them about doing the Blessing ceremony and they had some questions about our belief in Jesus and the Bible.

As I explained some of the very basics of our belief, I felt the spirit world move them. They then took the Holy Wine, a sprinkle of Holy Water, the Blessing Vows, a Prayer and they filled out the application. Not to mention signing the papers to sell them a house. We then door knocked for about an hour at some humble apartments. Most people were not married, but we became comfortable door knocking at apartments. No one was negative! No one!

The next day I called a long-time friend of mine from high school and told him simply, "Noriko and I are coming over to Bless you." He said, "We can use all the blessing we can get.... Come on over!" His father was there, who is now single, and he witnessed the ceremony. We then explained about the matching and boldly told him we could have him married by Nov. 29th. My friend's wife sincerely thanked us for Blessing them and we then went door knocking at some nicer apartments. We door knocked for less than an hour and Blessed a Mexican couple.

Tonight I had to have some real estate papers signed by a very nice couple, so I called them and told them my wife would be coming and we would like to Bless them. They said, "Come on over!" I thought, this is great, so before leaving I called another old friend who I used to be in a rock band with. He is happily married and only lived two blocks from my real estate customer. I told him we would like to come over and Bless them. He said, "Come on over!" We then loaded up all four of our children and Blessed my customer and signed the real estate papers. We then went to my friend's home, Blessed them and spent about an hour socializing while the children played with each other. At 9:30, after taking my wife and children home, my friend and I went fishing until 1:00 a.m. We were catching one fish after another. I thought of Father's lifestyle and his tireless energy.

Each night after Blessing people we can't sleep! You can feel God laughing with you! You really can! Noriko and I sometimes talk for hours before falling sleep in the wee hours of the morning. Then we wake up on time to get the kids to school with plenty of energy.

Without calling we went to my old neighborhood and knocked on the door of an older couple who were good friends. After spending a little time reminiscing, we asked them if we could Bless them. They said, "We'd love to." We Blessed them as it became late and without realizing it, our little time had become a couple hours. Again every night we feel close to Father's heart.

## Officiating the Blessing

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### Edner & Juanita Pierre-Louis

On May 15, 1997 at the historic Manhattan Center, an especially historic event took place, presided over by a man and woman who are history-makers. We're speaking of none other than Rev. Al Sharpton and his wife Mrs. Kathy Jordan Sharpton.

In the rain, by bus, by train they came to hear words of inspiration and recite vows of rededication of marriage led by Rev. and Mrs. Sharpton.

Nothing could dampen the spirit of the enthusiastic crowd. As the night quickly moved along, there was stimulating music performed by the Henry T. Wilkerson Gospel Combo, a rousing rendition of "Bye and Bye" by the Lady Grace ensemble of Phoenix, Arizona. The group's leader, Evangelist Elayysandria London, had the crowd on its feet, ready for Rev. Sharpton.

Whatever the difficulties Rev. Sharpton has encountered in his efforts to understand and lead people, it should be clear to all reflective thinkers that his techniques of dealing with them are a vindication of love.

And it was an act of love that ushered in the officiation of Rev. and Mrs. Sharpton and Rev. and Mrs. Pak for 21 waiting couples from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

In His mercy, God sent Jesus to save us and empower us through the Holy Spirit. Today the Lord is opening the gate of the original Blessing of Marriage. This is the day God and Jesus long desired to see (Rev. 22:14). The officiators were adorned in white Holy Robes. Rev. and Mrs. Sharpton offered the Holy Wine. The Holy Wine Ceremony contains deep spiritual significance. Jesus turned water into wine at the marriage at Cana. Through the Holy Wine Ceremony, God changes our sinful blood lineage into a sanctified blood lineage in preparation to bestow His Holy Blessing.

Rev. and Mrs. Pak sprinkled the Holy Water. The sprinkle of Holy Water represents the sanctifying love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit upon the couple.

John the Revelator told us, "The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Rev. 22:17). And they came to receive the Blessing of God, and His Holy Communion.

Another highlight of the evening was the crossing of the bridge by husbands and wives. They met in the center of the bridge and embraced. It was like watching two worlds come together in a peaceful manner.

This bridge has also been called the bridge of peace, and has been crossed by nations and races. Maybe someday future former Mayor Giuliani and future Mayor Sharpton will cross this bridge at City Hall, and chant together, "No Justice! No Peace!"



The liberation of members also helped liberate some of the movement's more influential supporters. A limitation of the True Family Festival approach was that it required a movement officiator. To some extent this was an affront to ministers, especially when the festival was in their churches. Thus, in late May, Rev. T. L. Barrett, who had made his church available previously for pre-Blessings, "asked to be the host and sponsor of the Blessing—rather than have the UC host the event." As one member explained, "He felt that the Blessing belonged not to the Unification Church—not to his own Life Center COGIC, but rather to God." Having conducted a highly successful ceremony in his church for sixty-one couples, Rev. Barrett continued "to be on the forefront of God's work." In New York, the Rev. Al Sharpton and his wife rededicated their marriage in a pre-Blessing ceremony and then officiated at several more. In a memorable response to exposure of his association with Rev. Moon and the True Family Values Ministry, he stated,

[T]he world needs the message of true families. I don't care if it comes from Rev. Moon, Rev. Sun, or Rev. Midnight.

This is the message God is sending us today.

That Rev. Sharpton, a high-profile public figure and Democratic mayorial hopeful, was unapologetic about his participation in Blessing activities inspired other prominent clergy and elders to rededicate their marriages.

Blessing fever legitimately hit Unification communities during the summer and totals skyrocketed. Washington, D.C. members, working the Capitol Mall as well as residential areas, pre-Blessed 12,000 couples by the end of June. On July 4-5th, some 50 Minnesota members pre-Blessed 3,112 couples at a Hmong sports festival. On August 3rd, Rev. Joon Hyun Pak reported that 210,000 couples nationwide had been pre-Blessed, including 500 ministers. The hill of the Blessing was being surmounted, and the U.S. moved into the rank of leading nations in terms of Blessing count. More importantly, Rev. Pak could speak of "wonderful miracles" occurring. To be sure, quality-control measures were lacking, but members were having phenomenal experiences. They had discovered a message and a medium with which to engage the wider public at a mass level. Many, for the first time, had the feeling of being not simply a follower of Rev. Moon but a spiritual leader. This may have been the true miracle and blessing.

By mid-summer, it became obvious that 3.6 million couples worldwide were pre-Blessed. In fact, Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak conducted a ceremony in Seoul on July 16th to commemorate the goal being surpassed. On August 9th, July 7th according to the lunar calendar, Rev. Moon proclaimed the "Declaration of the Realm of the Cosmic Sabbath for the Parents of Heaven and Earth." This was later termed "Seven-Eight Day" as it was proclaimed in 1997, in the seventh month, on the seventh day, at the seventh hour, the seventh minute, the seventh second and it was his seventy-seventh birth year. There also were 7,777



*The Rev. Al Sharpton and his wife rededicate their marriage with Rev. and Mrs. Joong Hyun Pak.*



members invited for the announcement. Afterwards, Rev. Moon awarded prizes to four nations with the top pre-Blessing results. They were Korea with 1,051,852; the Philippines with 952,281; Nigeria with 748,814; and Ghana with 658,000. The U.S. placed ninth with a pre-Blessing total of 173,611 reported as of July 15th. There was a sense of vindication. Rev. Joong Hyun Pak, who attended the Seven-Eight Day ceremony, reported that many important leaders told him “how inspired they were” and “how secure it made them feel” to hear the U.S. result.

Although a cosmic sabbath had been declared, there was little rest for the movement’s worldwide membership prior to November 29th as Rev. Moon accelerated the Blessing schedule. Previously, he intended to conduct a 36 Million Couple Blessing after Blessing 3.6 million couples. Now, as a result of the progress made, he decided to combine the two. Therefore, the goal for the RFK Blessing was increased to 39.6 million couples. Over the next four months, the worldwide result exploded with countries such as the Sudan, Nigeria and the Ukraine reporting totals in excess of seven, nine and ten million couples. The thrust in the U.S. was different. Some tribal messiah couples, particularly those west of the Mississippi River, continued pre-Blessings. However, the main focus shifted to preparations for the Third World Culture and Sports Festival in Washington, D.C. and the mobilization of pre-Blessed couples to fill RFK Stadium.

The American movement’s strategy for the WCSF was to make it not so much a Unification Church or even a Family Federation for World Peace and Unification event as a Washington, D.C. event. The movement already had a strong media and arts presence through *The Washington Times* and Kirov Ballet

Academy. These connections helped WCSF III staff establish working relationships with a number of city officials. The theme that was adopted, “Rebuilding the Family, Restoring the Community, Renewing Washington,” reflected the organizers’ hope that WCSF III would appeal to the city’s mainstream. The movement formed a large “welcoming committee” and secured an official invitation. According to Dr. Tyler Hendricks,

This is WCSF III, but it is also a Washington renaissance festival! The entire city will be transformed. And the intent is to make the impact a lasting one; not just to fold up our tents after Nov. 29. We want to create a foundation for the future and a model for the regeneration of our cities and nation.... Of course, the foundation is the grassroots door-to-door, heart-to-heart life for the sake of others. But what is new, in America at least, is the preparation of the soil and the potential for important institutional revival, centered on marriage and family, beyond race, nation, and religion.

These were heady sentiments. Whether the movement could pull together all the contacts it had established with Christian ministers, conservative educators and media, academics, business types, and now civic officials into a coherent urban-renaissance package was, perhaps, doubtful. However, it appeared to be the direction Rev. Moon wished to go. He wanted the WCSF and Blessing to be popular events, exerting broad appeal. The first two World Culture and Sports Festivals, held in Korea, were rather isolated and movement-centered affairs. They consisted largely of conferences in expensive hotels and stadium Blessings. Significant numbers of couples participated from outlying regions and rural areas, but there was not the sense that the festivals penetrated mainstream Korean culture. This, undoubtedly, was one reason why the movement moved WCSF III to the U.S.

On October 29th, WCSF III Chairman, Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak, held a press conference at the National Press Club at which he provided background information and schedule details about the November 23-30th festival. He also cited Rev. Moon as saying, “There can only be a peaceful family of nations when you have nations of peaceful families.” As with previous festivals, the schedule included an array of conferences, a youth sports competition and the Blessing. These were to be complemented by week-long cultural activities: an international art exhibit, jazz concert, various classical recitals, ballet, and a “Love Alive Concert” to benefit The Hospital for Sick Children of Washington, D.C. In addition, there would be a parade and rally by the Pure Love Alliance, a national movement-related organization which promoted sexual abstinence. The Blessing, billed as “True Love Day at RFK,” was to include such world-class entertainers as Latin pop idol Jon Secada, Korean rock superstar Cho Young Pil and American Grammy Award winning singer-

actress Whitney Houston. A twilight laser and fireworks display was to conclude the event.

It was fairly obvious even by October 29th that WCSF III would fall short of “restoring the community” and “renewing Washington.” A stronger case could be made for the Festival’s role in “rebuilding the family.” However, even if this were not conceded, so long as WCSF III was accepted by the local establishment, it still would be counted as an advance. Here the movement got off to a promising start. Mayor Marion Barry extended a written letter of welcome and held a press conference at city hall with WCSF organizers. In response, Rev. Kwak pointed out that the first two festivals had no official invitation or welcome and that “extensive positive press coverage” about WCSF III prompted an invitation for WCSF IV from the government of a “big Asian country.”

The mobilization of 30,000 pre-Blessed couples to fill RFK Stadium was the top priority of members in the field. The general direction was each tribal messiah family within reasonable driving distance of Washington, D.C. should bring twenty pre-Blessed couples, or a single busload. The movement chartered busses and arranged for motel lodgings in the greater D.C. area. It also arranged for various package rates for round-trip transportation, food, overnight lodging, and admission to the stadium event. Most trips also included a monument tour. Costs were kept low. For example, the upstate New York fee was \$160 per couple. Fees were less for those residing closer and more for those farther away. However, in many cases, tribal messiahs helped or entirely subsidized payments.

Still, members had to find pre-Blessed couples to attend. This required deeper relationships with their couples. For members who adopted a scatter-gun approach to pre-Blessings or who failed to record names and addresses on the Blessing forms, follow-up was exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. For those who had worked more systematically in residential areas and kept adequate records, including photographs of pre-Blessed couples, the task was easier. Members were often surprised that couples pre-Blessed in relatively simple, usually less-than-five-minute ceremonies remembered the occasions so clearly. However, it was one thing to be remembered and even invited warmly back into living rooms. It was another to mobilize pre-Blessed couples for departures by bus for Washington, D.C. the Friday after Thanksgiving at a cost of \$100 or more.

Some pre-Blessed couples were inspired and agreed to attend immediately. Others required convincing. Members found themselves pressed into new levels of spiritual leadership. They had to visit and re-visit contacts. They had to educate them more deeply about the Blessing and, on occasion, offer counsel. They had to coordinate schedules and logistics, handle money, and manage group dynamics. In short, they had to minister. A large number of members worked the residential areas of Washington, D.C., Maryland and northern Virginia and several hundred buses were chartered to circulate back and forth

*Opposite: Blessing '97 at  
RFK Stadium in  
Washington, D.C.*







from selected pick-up points. These were methods used with success twenty-one years before during the movement's Washington Monument Campaign in 1976. However, the Washington Monument rally was conducted during the summer. Blessing '97 was to be an open-stadium event in late November. For their part, organizers thoughtfully included plastic ponchos and seat warmers with the Blessing programs and hoped for the best.

In most respects, they were not disappointed. The front-page headline in the December issue of *Unification News* described Blessing '97 at RFK as a "Resounding Victory." In the lead piece, Richard Lewis commented on "the unseasonably balmy air," the "crowds everywhere," the paltry number of demonstrators whom he described as "[q]uite a drop from the massed protestors we had to run the gauntlet of at Yankee Stadium," the impressive satellite transmission equipment, the breathtaking stage, banners and Jumbotrons, the Blessing shawls that everyone wore, the greetings from six representatives of the world's religions, the "break in the clouds" just as "True Parents raised their hands to proclaim the victory," the cheers of "mansei" (ten thousand years), the entertainment and spontaneous "boogying all over the field," and the "fabulous" fireworks. Of course, not everything could be perfect. Lewis acknowledged that the entertainment program's headliner, Whitney Houston, was a no-show. However, he cited national communications director Michael Smith who, when asked to comment on what her absence meant, replied, "In a word: refund."

The mainstream media generally ran straightforward and respectful accounts of the event. However, during the preceeding week, *The Washington Post* published a series of articles that depicted Blessing '97 as a "Moonie" affair. Chris Corcoran, the church's public relations director, pointed out that it was the first major newspaper to use that epithet in an article about the Festival. The series, as a whole, depicted the Unification Church as a cult, its members as barely knowing their church-selected marriage partners, and questioned whether WCSF III was a "Festival of Faith or Self-Promotion?" The series unfortunately had a chilling effect locally. Mayor Barry decided to spend the weekend out of town, and local Catholics ran spots on Spanish radio discouraging the faithful from attending. It also may have helped induce Whitney Houston's sudden illness. More importantly, the series ran directly counter to the movement's core strategy of making WCSF a Washington, D.C. event. The movement hoped that WCSF III would appeal to the city's mainstream. That obviously had not happened. In fact, *The Washington Post* did its utmost to consign WCSF and the movement back to the margins of society.

What saved the event was the presence of so many ordinary people. It was one thing to dump on the "Moonies" who could be counted upon to be arranged in neat rows with identical suits and gowns. They were easy targets. It was more difficult and risky to take on a stadium-full of normal folk. A substantial number of mostly Black ministers and members of their congregations

had come by bus from as far away as Chicago. In addition, East coast members successfully bused in a rainbow coalition of pre-Blessed couples. *The Washington Post* set attendance at 40,000, CNN put it as 45,000, and the Associated Press counted 28,000 couples/56,000 people. Railing against this group, most of whom were minorities, would be politically incorrect. Besides, almost all of them appeared to be having a great time. In effect, the pre-Blessed couples formed a protective ring around the 2,500 or so church member brides and bridegrooms on the stadium floor.

The media picked up on this and distinguished between the “mass wedding” and “marriage rededication” aspects of the ceremony. However, the question was whether the movement shared this double-consciousness, whether there were two categories of sanctification. The opening of the Blessing, the lessening of ritual requirements, the empowerment of members and even pre-Blessed couples to conduct Blessings, and the determination of WCSF III organizers to go mainstream reflected a universal approach. Yet the segregation of “newly-matched” member couples on the stadium floor from previously-married couples in the bleachers suggested that the transition from closed to open Blessings had not yet been fully realized. It raised the issue of whether some couples might be more blessed than others. This was not experienced as a tension at RFK. Nevertheless, as the numbers zoomed into the hundreds of millions, questions as to the meaning and purpose of mass Blessings arose for many.

# Reflections on the Dispensation of Performing Arts

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David Eaton

It is obvious that my reflection is but that of one person among many who have made offerings to the arts dispensation in America. From the earliest days of our movement in the United States there has been a constant creative impulse present, an impulse that has produced many wonderful and historic artistic endeavors, from simple heartfelt songs of worship and fellowship to major productions at some of America's preeminent venues.

The tradition of having performances as a significant part of the celebrations of our church's high Holy Days reflects our True Parents' love of art and creativity. Indeed, the fact that God endowed human beings with the attribute of creativity, that unique aspect of His own character, is an expression of His love for His children.

I've had numerous experiences in the performing arts in America, from the historical campaigns at Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument with my brother Kevin Pickard and the Go World Brass Band, Sunburst and The New Hope Singers, to touring with the C.A.R.P. Performing Arts ensembles Blue Tuna Band, the Front Group, Prime Force and the International Folk Ballet under Rev. Chung Goo Tiger Pak, to producing dozens of Holy Day entertainment programs with Linda Chapman Eisenberg.

Through the years I've always believed that the arts could exert a powerful influence over the society in which we live and be a powerful witness to the vision and ideals of our True Parents. This has always been an underlying motive for utilizing my God-given talents.

Prior to meeting our movement in 1974 I felt strongly about the altruistic aspects of the arts. Father's vision for art and culture was something that attracted me to the performing arts. As with many artists in our movement, I had to put my personal desires on the altar in the manner of Abraham in order to gain a certain purity of heart.

The role of the artist in society is something that I personally find to be very important. The fact that art is the manifestation of beauty and emotion—realms of the

heart—makes it an important front line in God's dispensation. I know to some, that might sound a bit presumptuous; however, when I think of how creativity was invaded at the fall via sexuality, the supreme creative act, I feel that regaining God's sovereignty in the creative process is a primary aspect of the dispensation.

At the World Culture and Sports Festival III in Washington, D.C. in 1997, I had several particularly deep and tearful experiences. The Festival included a week-long series of concerts and related cultural events which I produced under the guidance of Rev. Kwak and Mr. Neil Salonen. This was the first such cultural endeavor that our movement had attempted in the United States and I felt a deep sense of history, as if this was a culmination, an offering of many foundations that had been laid by True Family and many brothers and sisters who were members of the Performing Arts over the years.

In the spirit of Father's vision of creating a harmonized cultural expression, music, dance and art representing many styles, cultures and ethnic traditions were to be included in the Festival. Artists from around the world participated in WCSF III.

In the days just prior to the Festival's beginning, problems occurred which seemed insurmountable and threatened the entire endeavor. I was faced with the prospect of having to inform a number of important artists that their performance might have to be canceled.

Through this difficult circumstance I reflected on past trials and tribulations that many performing arts members had faced in the past; all the fund-raising, witnessing, battling with communists on campuses with the CARP ensembles, the struggle to attain artistic perfection in less than perfect circumstances. The emotions of performing arts history seemed to be flowing through my heart. I was feeling that perhaps the culture aspect of WCSF III might have to be sacrificed for the greater purpose and I had this intense feeling that I was experiencing God's heart of *han*.

In a tearful meeting with Mr. Salonen, I expressed my desire of what I had always hoped that the performing arts could become and how the Festival might be representative of that hope—not just for me, but for God, True Parents and brothers and sisters who sacrificed so much in order to attain the spiritual development that Father urged us, instructed us, implored us to achieve as representatives of the arts dispensation. It was as if the entire endeavor now rested on faith—one more



*World-renowned violinist, Aaron Rosand, performing with the New York City Symphony at the Manhattan Center, David Eaton conducting.*

*“Give credit where it is due: The Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s International Cultural Foundation has helped the New York City Symphony become one of America’s finest orchestras.”  
—New York Daily News*

test, one more condition of indemnity to be fulfilled, though now on the world level.

In the eleventh hour (literally), on the brink of mass cancellations, the seemingly insurmountable problems were solved. The Festival events went on as planned. The Festival performances were artistically highly successful and I felt that God and the high spirit world worked powerfully to bring victory to all of the cultural events.

In retrospect, knowing that creativity is a front line

of heartistic restoration, I should have known that a major test of faith would have been inevitable. I believe that the performances and endeavors of so many talented individuals who had participated in WCSF III represented America’s offering to True Parents at a very significant time in God’s dispensation.

The 19th-century composer, Felix Mendelssohn, stated that “music is more specific about what it expresses than words written about it could ever be.” That is how I feel about so much of what I’ve experienced in my 23 years in the cultural dispensation. Words seem so inadequate to express the feelings and emotions that I’ve experienced.

Again, I am but one person among many who’ve given so much towards advancing the providence of culture in our movement. Hopefully we will see the day when all of our artistic endeavors can be fully representative of a culture of peace and True Love.



## Blessing '98

Rev. Moon brought to the surface issues of meaning and purpose by continually pushing for higher results. In the weeks before RFK, with 11 million more couples to go to reach 36 million, he set the goal at 500,000 blessings per day worldwide. Immediately afterwards, he announced, “by the end of May [1998], within 180 days, we have the goal of blessing 360 million couples.” Originally, he said, “the 36,000,000 Couples Blessings was to be held in May” but “Heaven was in such a rush that a waterfall came down.” Rev. Moon clearly understood that the present moment was fraught with possibilities. As he put it, “The spirit world became mobilized and pushed the physical world.” Theology and the sorting-out process could wait. The emphasis now was on achieving breakthroughs.

If Rev. Moon pushed theological categories to the breaking point, he also pushed members beyond their self-imposed limits. His criticism of American members for their tendency to specialize and focus on one task at a time was mentioned. He also was critical of what he regarded as Americans' preference for professional management and rational planning techniques over reliance on the mysterious power of the spiritual world. The Harvard Business School approach was simply not the way he intended to run the movement. Too frequently, that style had collided with his response to immediate providential mandates. The blessing of 360 million couples before the year 2000 clearly was a providential mandate. Just as obviously, it would force members, once again, to break through their concepts of what was possible or permissible.

Ironically, members had just gotten comfortable with the measures pioneered for Blessing '97. Now, in effect, they were put on notice that these methods were obsolete. There simply was not enough time for door-to-door, person-to-person Blessings in order to achieve the expected result. Blessing three, five or even eight couples an evening and, perhaps, double that on weekends was not sufficient. Beach Blessings and Blessing booths at county fairs might have put a dent in the totals. Unfortunately, the beaches were closed, and there would be no county fairs before May. In fact, major portions of the Northern hemisphere were wrapped in ice and snow, making any Blessing work difficult. At a February 3, 1998 International Leaders' Meeting in Korea, Rev. Kwak reported that the Blessing Ceremony of 360 million couples would be held in twelve major cities around the world on June 13th. Sometime after that, it was decided that Blessing '98 would be conducted for 120 million couples and that the remaining 240 million would be Blessed at a later unspecified date.

This was hardly a reprieve. The North American goal was still 10 million couples, an exponential leap from the 400,000 that Rev. Joong Hyun Pak reported North America had Blessed in 1997. Furthermore, it was decided that the main ceremony again would be in the United States. This came as a surprise. American members had expected that the next Blessing would be in

Japan. In fact, a key point in obtaining the maximum exertion from tribal messiahs during the RFK campaign was the assurance given that this was the last Blessing True Parents would ever perform in America and, hence, the final opportunity for members to demonstrate their wholehearted support. The reason why Japan could not host the main ceremony was clear. As a result of his felony tax conviction, Rev. Moon was barred under Japanese law from entering the country. The reason why the United States was again chosen for the main ceremony was less clear. Some of the same reasoning as for Blessing '97 undoubtedly applied. In particular, a U.S. venue offered the most substantial opportunity for global impact. According to Rev. Pak, America's Christian base and the movement's breakthroughs with Christian ministers, 2,000 of whom reportedly had been Blessed, were decisive. On the other hand, North America's Blessing '97 total of 400,000 was only one percent of the 40,000,000 reported worldwide.

Although the U.S. was given responsibility to host Blessing '98, the specific city was not yet clear. Some east-coast members hoped that Chicago or Los Angeles would be given the honor. However, this was not to be, and New York was chosen. Once this was decided, there was a debate over the site. Some favored another stadium event; others pushed for a more intimate venue. In the end, Madison Square Garden was selected. It was famous and large enough to be acceptable. Although the rental and set-up costs would be substantial, it was simpler to work with than a stadium. There also was the possibility for more intimacy and control. In addition, there was the advantage of MSG being directly across from the 2,000 room, church-owned New Yorker Hotel and within blocks of HSA National Headquarters. Finally, there was a sense of connectedness to the movement's tradition. Members liked to think in threes and Blessing '98 would be the third major event the movement had sponsored at MSG. Rev. Moon's 1974 Day of Hope speech on "The New Future of Christianity" was a formation-stage event. It overflowed the Garden and served as a coming-out occasion for the movement in America. The 2075 Couple Blessing in 1982 was a growth-stage event. It brought together members who had joined during the 1970s and pointed them in new directions through the 1980s and early 1990s. Blessing '98 would be a perfection or completion stage event. Members hoped it would define the movement's mature identity and role in the U.S. and elsewhere. However, Blessing '98 was a far more concentrated campaign. There were two years to get ready for Blessing '97. This allowed time for trial and error, the refinement of methods, the building of morale, the convening of a multifaceted WCSF, and the elaboration of complex mobilization strategies. This was not possible in the little more than six months between RFK and MSG. In fact, by the time major decisions were made, there were less than four months to prepare.

In an effort to come up with "ideas and guidelines" for Blessing '98, Dr. Tyler Hendricks convened a "Brainstorming Session" for some seventy-five



*Blessing '98 at Madison  
Square Garden, New York*

elders of the U.S. and Canadian movements at Unification Theological Seminary in February. The conference was carefully structured to include plenary meetings on Reflections From RFK and Evangelism and Marketing the Blessing followed by break-out sessions on Program Design; High Level Outreach; Financial Planning; Youth, Singles and Matching; Media Strategies, and Education of Blessed Couples. Bill Lay, who covered the conference for *Unification News*, noted that “many approaches to life and the UC were on display over the weekend.” Dan Fefferman, a respected elder member, commented that America’s goal of 40 million couples out of 360 million, “taken as a percentage of all married couples in America,” represented “a greater market share than that of Coca Cola.” He argued that this level of market share only gets achieved through a “serious commitment to mass marketing.” Others held that “there are no problems, we just need to buckle down and believe” or that the only real problem was that members were “all so distant from the level of [Rev. Moon].”



The Barrytown conclave was purely advisory and had only a limited effect upon pre-Blessing activity. As during the RFK campaign, tribal messiahs and members were thrown back upon their own resources. Reports of pre-Blessing totals were taken at face value with no questions asked and no attempt to verify results. Objective pre-Blessing norms and guidelines increasingly gave way to subjective ones. Previously, the ingestion of holy wine, recitation of vows, the sprinkling of holy water, a forgiveness ceremony, a completed FFWPU form, and in most cases a photograph were required. All of this might have taken only a few minutes, but each element was regarded as essential to a bona fide pre-Blessing. Now, pre-Blessings seemingly could take a variety of forms so long as members maintained a proper attitude. All night song, testimony and prayer meetings were common in areas dedicated to reaching the highest pre-Blessing totals.

If the movement was *laissez faire* as to pre-Blessing activity, it was hands-on and well organized in its effort to fill Madison Square Garden. It also adopted a different approach. Essentially, the movement pulled back from the cultural dimension of previous World Culture and Sports Festivals. There was a three-day Special Convocation on “The Family and World Peace.” The nine co-sponsoring organizations united their previously separated conferences into a single meeting. The focus was on the Blessing ceremony itself.

While the short turnaround between the two events and the character of New York were important, the major reason why the movement soft-pedaled the WCSF was because it focussed its effort on religious contacts. In doing so, the movement developed a number of specific strategies. Early in the mobilization effort, it set up an Ecumenical Action Office directed by Rev. Ki Hun Kim from Chicago. Rev. Kim set a goal of mobilizing 10,000 people from Christian churches for Blessing '98. A key strategy of this office was the convening of Blessing '98 Meetings and Banquets in each New York City district as well as New Jersey and Philadelphia. These were intended to re-connect ministers from past campaigns to tribal messiahs and District leaders. A second strategy was the convening of a “Pro-Family Rally” at MSG with “Blessing '98 Family Awards” given immediately prior to the start of the Blessing ceremony. A third strategic step was the creation of a massive 2,000-voice choir from 77 churches. Finally, the movement subsidized the cost of chartered buses for congregations and flew in ministers from distant locations.

These strategies were hugely successful. The clearest indication of this was the packed arena. An estimated 20,000 people turned out. In fact, the doors closed more than an hour before the start of the Blessing event. Rev. Kim noted, “Over 200 churches brought their congregations.” Over 120 ministers and 14 buses of parishioners came from Chicago alone. The Pro-Family Rally was highly successful in helping insure an early turnout and an appropriate focus in the pre-ceremony proceedings. It also demonstrated the movement's connections within the religious community.



## Blessing 30,000

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### Bill Selig

**W**e've had an interesting time Blessing with the holy candy. I've been going out with my wife, Donna, and daughter, Hannah for two-hour periods to local events including RFK (DC United) Stadium, Camden (Orioles) Yards, a 4H fair, county fairs in Prince William, Montgomery, and Howard Counties, an Indian Ethnic Fair, and the beach in Rehobeth, DE and Ocean City, MD. We went two hours a day for about two weeks and we finished our 30,000 with a day at the beach. We decided to do an extra three thousand to cover dupes because there were times at RFK or Camden Yards when other members had already blessed many people, or sometimes, kids would quickly grab a handful of candy.

From the beginning, Rev. Lee, the regional director, had said to follow our conscience, so we decided: 1) to go beyond 30,000 and to avoid dupes, and 2) to give a copy of the pledge with each candy, as much as possible. In mass gatherings we tried to oblige everyone, so sometimes we got dizzy walking in circles trying to catch people coming and going.

We had no problem uniting with Father's direction.

If anything we're getting off lucky. If the providence is such that all it takes is a piece of candy to open the door to heaven, then I say, "hallelujah, thank you True Parents!"

It's really nice to go as a family. Most people take the Blessing as candy, but about a third capture the value of the pledge and give us positive feedback. Some ask why I'm doing it. I explain I have a 11-year-old daughter and I want her to grow up with pure love. No one can argue with this and when I point out that my wife and daughter are here with me doing this, then they are greatly impressed and grateful.

In a sense, Blessing is just like fundraising. Be faithful and believe God is with us. On the last day, my sign kept blowing away. I was locked into a concept that people wouldn't take candy from a stranger. (Is there a maxim more pounded into our heads than, "don't take candy from a stranger?") Anyway the sign kept blowing away so I said, "what the heck," and went for it. In the end, it really didn't matter. People responded whether they saw the sign for free candy or not. I'm not promoting candy, I'm giving the Blessing.

You can't discriminate. Once you start choosing to give the candy to certain "easy" types, such as people of color, Latinos, overweight people, or children, then Satan wins. The Blessing is for everyone.



*Bill and Donna Selig (right) give holy wine to Margaret Herber's sister and her husband in Rockville, MD.*

Rev. Dennis Dillon, publisher of the *New York Christian Times*, served as emcee; a Hispanic pastor offered the invocation; a white Pentecostal Philadelphia evangelist was the first speaker; a diverse mix of twenty or so ministers received Blessing '98 Family Awards for demonstrating outstanding leadership in their churches and communities; PBS film critic Michael Medved and his wife Diane delivered a video message of support and appreciation over the jumbotrons; the 2,000-voice choir electrified the audience with spirited renditions of "Kumbaya" and an original piece entitled, appropriately enough, "Blessings"; and Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, senior pastor of the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ in Harlem and Chairman of the Board of the National Action Network, delivered the keynote address.

Blessing organizers were thrilled by the response. Although recently matched member couples still were arrayed in neat rows on the floor and the Pro-Family Rally was distinct from the Blessing ceremony, there was more of a unified thrust. Part of this was due to the 2,000-voice choir which filled the hall with its massed voices during "Amazing Grace" and the "Hallelujah Chorus." There also was the opportunity for more milieu control and intimacy. At precisely 11:00 a.m., the satellite hookup was established and a highly polished "Welcome to New York City" video clip began on huge jumbotrons. The hall lights similarly dimmed for video introductions preceding benedictions by representatives of eight world religions. Unlike in Washington D.C., there were few, if any negative newspaper articles in the days preceding the Blessing or afterwards. Even the NYPD expressed appreciation for the movement's "good organization in unloading and loading 520 buses."

Amid all the good feeling, there were a couple of dissonant notes. One of these was the tendency to highlight distinctions between godly and ungodly forces in society. This was especially apparent in the Pro-Family Rally. It was also evident in depictions of Madison Square Garden as an "ark of salvation" within a largely reprobate city. The fact that there was a torrential downpour and savage thunderstorm going on outside during the event accentuated participants' sense of being among the elect. Rev. Joong Hyun Pak credited "God with the weather" and cited someone who said, "Inside MSG was Noah's Ark, outside was judgment!"

However, it was Dr. Tyler Hendricks, President of the Unification Church in America, who worked the ark imagery into an extended reflection and who drew the clearest, or at least the most stark distinction between those who responded and didn't respond to Blessing '98. In a section entitled "Where Were You on June 13?" within his regular "UVViews" monthly column, he criticized New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and the Dalai Lama, both of whom were invited but declined due to schedule conflicts, the mayor to join a gay pride parade in Brooklyn, the Dalai Lama to preside over a two-day Tibetan benefit rock concert, ironically enough, at RFK Stadium, Washington, D.C. According to Dr. Hendricks, "A religious leader chose an event on behalf of his nation

instead of one on behalf of the world. A political leader chose an event on behalf of homosexuality instead of one on behalf of godly marriage.” Utilizing the “ark of salvation” metaphor to evaluate the contrasting outcomes, he wrote,

We could consider Madison Square Garden on June 13 as a place of salvation, like the ark. Those who heard the call came inside. The weather was fine as we entered. The doors were closed, courtesy of the Madison Square Garden staff. Outside were the gay pride activists, the anti-Moon demonstrators, the Hollywood rock concert for Tibet. When the doors closed, when the Blessing started, the rains came. Torrential rains washed out the gay pride parade. The rains wiped out the anti-Moon protesters. Lightning struck RFK Stadium, seriously injuring eleven people. All these events were called off. Inside the Garden, no one was in the least bit aware of the weather raging outside. And when we emerged, when the doors opened, the rain had stopped. We walked out onto literal dry ground. The air smelled fresh; something was washed.

A delicious irony, of course, was that many of those drenched on the outside, with the possible exception of the gay pride activists and anti-Moon demonstrators, were in all likelihood either knowingly or unknowingly blessed!

The introduction of spirit world Blessings at Blessing '98 was a second discordant note. This was quite unexpected. It already was a stretch for more than a few ministers and their congregations to countenance Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Muslim benedictions over the proceedings. The thought that billions of spirit world couples, including a select group of religious founders and some of the worst criminals of history, were also participating in the Madison Square Garden event surely would have been either incomprehensible or unacceptable for most. Nevertheless, the first order of business once Rev. and Mrs. Moon, as officiators, had taken their seats was a “Report to Heaven” delivered by Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak. Rev. Kwak reported that True Parents were tearing down all the existing walls in the spiritual world, including the wall of hell. He announced that on this occasion, they were extending the pre-Blessing to “16 billion couples in the spiritual world.” He stated, “This may sound unbelievable, but it is true.” He announced,

Included in the Blessing of numerous spirits are 34 couples who will receive a special Blessing as the representatives both from God’s side and from Satan’s side. These include: Jesus, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Mary, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, John the Baptist, Socrates, Swedenborg, Sundar Singh, Syngman Rhee, Hwal Ahn Kim, Park Chung Hee, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Nobusuke Kishi, Takeo Fukuda,

Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse Tung,  
Kim Il Sung, Adolph Hitler, Hideki Tojo, and Benito  
Mussolini.

Rev. Kwak commented, “There is no corner that the Blessing of true love cannot reach.” It was “an amazing grace, not just for good spirits but for bad spirits as well, since it opens even the door to hell.” He asserted that through “this historic Blessing ceremony of the spiritual world and the earthly world, officiated by True Parents, all religious spheres can be harmonized to form a unified realm of blessing” and that the two worlds, spiritual and physical, “can unite into one, thus establishing the realm of liberation.” He concluded by proclaiming “this is the great, pivotal Blessing ceremony that will launch the era of Heaven on earth and in heaven centered on God and True Parents.”

There were several ways to interpret these extraordinary claims. They could be judged to be evidence of a retreat from engagement with the world, not into self-righteous sectarianism, but toward an otherworldly mysticism. At the same time, there were good reasons for maintaining that this was not the case. First, as has already been noted, spiritualism was an integral part of the movement’s tradition and had not interfered with its engagement with the world. Spirit world Blessings also were not unprecedented. A day prior to the 360,000 Couple Blessing in 1995, Rev. and Mrs. Moon blessed Mrs. Moon’s physical mother, Rev. Moon’s physical elder brother, and Rev. Moon’s physical mother, each of whom had passed from the physical plane. Blessings in which one partner was in the spirit world and the other on earth also had occurred. Previously, reference was made to the union of Heung Jin and Julia Moon. Even earlier, on January 3, 1971, Rev. Moon was understood to have blessed Jesus with a Korean church member. At Blessing ’98, immediately following his “Report to Heaven,” Rev. and Mrs. Kwak, presumably with Heung Jin and Jesus, presided over a “physical and spiritual world ceremony” in which “four Korean women elders were...Blessed as wives on earth to four major saints of the spirit world—Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, and Socrates.”

A second reason why the introduction of spirit world Blessings might not be considered a retreat had to do with the logic of the Blessing and the movement’s teachings. As Rev. Kwak indicated, there was no corner of reality that the Blessing of true love could not penetrate. Spirit world Blessings were a logical extension of this principle. Further, if Rev. and Mrs. Moon’s status as True Parents and their declaration of messiahship were to be taken seriously, they ought to be lords of heaven as well as earth. In an editor’s note accompanying its coverage of Blessing ’98, the *Unification News* held that “Unificationist ideology is firmly planted on earth” but also took the spirit world “very seriously.” It cited a passage from *The Exposition of the Divine Principle* which stated,



During the period when the providence of restoration is to be completed after the Second Coming of Christ, God will complete the cosmic foundation for the Messiah by working throughout heaven and earth based on the Completed Testament Word.

*Four elder Korean women received special spirit world blessings at Blessing '98.*

According to Richard Lewis, *Unification News* editor, this indicated that “from the 1950s, it was clear that Reverend Moon’s work would ultimately relate directly to the spirit world. Therefore, what is taking place now should come as no surprise.”



The public acknowledgement of spirit world Blessings was really more of a risk than a retreat. Had the movement acknowledged them only among its membership as a form of compensation or consolation for the lack of external results, the retreat label might have applied. However, Rev. Moon was springing mass spirit world Blessings on an unsuspecting public in much the same way as he sprung his declaration of messiahship on unsuspecting guests in 1992. This, in fact, was typical of his approach. Though members may have settled, or wished to settle into stable routines, he quite literally was living in apocalyptic time. At the very moment the movement had achieved a certain comfort level with its minister and parishioner guests, he introduced content sure to upset or even scandalize. For many, the spirit world announcement was unclear. Rev. Kwak read from a prepared text at a side microphone in soft tones with a Korean accent. The report itself was elaborate and dense, probably more suited for a gathering of academics than a mass audience whose senses had just been overwhelmed by a 2,000-voice choir and distracted by the spectacle of a lavishly decorated and packed arena. Most heard something about a Blessing of saints; and the names Stalin or Marx may have struck a dissonant chord for those listening carefully. However, there was no context for the report to have much of an effect, and explanations would have to wait for later.

# The 2,000-Voice Choir

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## Adruma Victoria

All praises and glory to God as I attempt to share how Christ and the Holy Spirit brought the victory at Blessing '98 through the 2000-voice choir.

Long before we did anything, God and True Parents paved the way for the saints of heaven and earth to rally to the call of the God-centered family. With Heavenly Father pushing my wife and personal messiah Fiona and I to go to Kenya, our nation of providence, we knew clearly it was time. Yet it had been two decades since I could make a substantial offering to God in America, where I was born.

I told my sons Justin and Alex that after Hoon Dok Hae every morning, I was going to do some running. Justin suggested that I run around Madison Square Garden, as a condition for victory, so two to three days a week I would run four to seven times around the Garden. It seems that God accepted my offering.

Just before Fiona left for Kenya with Ashia and Kiah, two of our four children, I spoke with David Eaton and asked if there was a need for Performing Arts support for Blessing '98. He said there just might be something I could do to help out.

I understand that at Barrytown, Rev. Levy Daugherty of Norfolk, VA first came up with the inspiration of a thousand-voice choir to perform at the Blessing. Praise God, on April 29 I met with David Eaton, Rev. Yang of Washington, D.C. and Dr. Tyler Hendricks, who welcomed me to the task.

Dr. Hendricks explained that we wanted to put together a thousand-voice choir and needed a few appropriate songs. I thought the songs should be exciting, yet simple, so that many voices which had never before sung together could learn them. I suggested "Amazing Grace" and a contemporary version of "Kumbaya." Dr. Hendricks liked my impromptu rendition.

David Eaton indicated that we needed a music director and a choir director. That night we got on the phone and pulled in Mr. Horace Donnell as music director. I thought he was the best choice, because he had been my high school teacher and was the music director at my own Blessing at Madison Square Garden in 1982. One of my requests to David was that my support team would include my sister, Sandra Lowen, who wrote so many beautiful and inspiring songs in our church. I just wanted

the honorable root of our Black membership in our True Parents' kingdom to be with me as this grace of Father God touches His children.

## Choir Director

Now we needed a choir director. I went to a National Action Network (NAN) Prayer Breakfast in Harlem and met Bishop Billings. I asked him if he had a choir director, to which he answered "Angela Moses." I had brought a tape of the songs I thought would be good, and I gave them to Angela's secretary, Monique McAllistair. When she spoke about Ms. Moses, I felt the tingle of the Holy Spirit. I called Ms. Moses and shared about the idea of the thousand-voice choir. She said, "I bet you don't have a woman on your list." I said, "Yes, we do." When I mentioned some famous folks, she said humbly, "Well, I guess you'd better choose them; they're famous." Yet I had the thought in my mind that a worthy person without great recognition would be just fine.

I decided to go to New Life Tabernacle to check out their choir that Tuesday. The following Sunday, Rev. Joong Hyun Pak and Dr. Hendricks heard them and were quite inspired.

When I entered New Life Tabernacle, the congregation welcomed me warmly, and I said, "Let's pray, so that our time together will be in God's hands." They freely offered love and respect to a person they never saw before. When they sang, I felt proud to be Black. I told them they should be on a global level, as they were so filled with the Holy Ghost's power and heart. I said, "You've all heard of the Spike Lee movie, *He Got Game*? Well, when it comes to NLT, 'They got God!'" Then I met the wonderful Angela Moses, pure and lovely in the Lord. Angela prayed, "Dear God, you know why Brother Adruma came here. Please bless him, Lord." And He did.

I knew God chose this choir and Angela to lead the thousand-voice choir to victory at Madison Square Garden. Yet I waited for the proper channels to approve what I knew was approved in Heaven. I told Angela, "God chose you. There may be others more famous, but you are a lady unknown who is worthy of being known by the world." So I reported to Rev. Pak and David Eaton that we had the central part of the choir.

## Building the Thousand-Voice Choir

During the whole process of assembling the choir, I felt guided by God and the Holy Spirit. Amen. It can be likened to the yarmulke worn in Judaism. I felt a spiritual yarmulke connected to the top of my head as True Parents' spirit guided me past obstacles, pitfalls and loneliness. New Life Tabernacle was to learn "Amazing Grace," "Kumbaya" and later the "Hallelujah Chorus," which Rev. Pak chose. Sandra Lowen, my production assistant and consultant, came with me to start work on the arrangements of the few songs we had. Together with Mr. Donnell, we were feeling hopeful. I just had to check our "Kumbaya" arrangement for copyright purposes. At Mr. Donnell's studio, Sandra Lowen and I laid the foundation for the song "Blessings." Sandra and I would call each other and discuss our lyrics as we sourced out the song. David Eaton, producer of the event, gave the budget and went to the studios to record the pilot songs. NLT had a version of "Amazing Grace" arranged by Mr. Charles Minor, and Miss Timmany Figueroa had a version of "Kumbaya." I told David that NLT's version of "Amazing Grace" was better than mine: let's just start the song with the traditional intro and then go into the contemporary downbeat. It was a done deal.

On the production side of things, I interfaced regularly with David Eaton. Yet I was also responsible for mobilization of the choir, and Rev. Pak assigned Rev. Eric Holt as my new Abel. This was my first opportunity to work with Rev. Holt. I found him to be so supportive of me—assisting and fine-tuning the details—and he helped me so much in making my offering that I discovered a new brother in True Parents.

### June 13

Prior to the event, Rev. Pak had us report on a regular basis to him on the choir's progress. Pastor Figueroa received hurtful persecution because of his affiliation



with Rev. Moon, to the point that the venue for his ordination to become a bishop was revoked. Ms. Moses, too, weathered many storms of scorn and ignorance. I could feel Rev. Pak's deep concern that everything would turn out alright. I assured him that Ms. Moses and New Life Tabernacle's leadership were committed to this event because of their love for God, and the persecution they faced from other religious institutions would not deter their faith or their commitment.

I sent Rev. David Reed to Ms. Moses' home to personally escort her to the Garden that morning. My sons Justin and Alex helped out as ushers, along with Aliso Lowen. At the choir registration on Eighth Avenue, Mrs. Billie Sabo and Sandra Lowen helped register the choirs. The choir members began to stream in. With everything secured at registration, I went to the choir area and directed the groups to their respective seating.

It was ten minutes before "show-time." We had well over 1,600 people in the choir, and people were still streaming in. Mindful of the need to be prompt, I was concerned that we start on time. Miraculously, Ms. Moses lifted her arms and "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound" filled the Garden with God's love and glory. Sandra Lowen and I were standing with the choir and bathing in the Love of God. Admittedly, hearing 2,000 voices singing the song we had written together for the glory of God and True Parents was a Blessing in itself. Ms. Moses was fabulous, and the choir sang better than she had expected. As I looked toward Heaven, my greatest joy was sharing this victory in my heart with my beloved wife Fiona.

May this Godly victory spread forth forevermore.



## Blessing '99

The U.S. movement assumed center stage during Blessings '97 and '98. Although it did not achieve the highest blessing totals, it convened a respectable gathering at RFK and an exemplary one at MSG. The American movement especially distinguished itself through its work with Christian ministers. Nevertheless, Blessing '99 once again was held in Korea. Most members did not regard this as an affront. Having operated at a high pitch of mobilization since early 1997 or even before, many were ready for a less prominent role. To some extent, the U.S. movement reverted back to its pre-1997 level of involvement. That is, it was largely responsible for bringing VIPs to Blessing '99 and handling them once they were there. However, this wasn't the whole story. American members also had learned the secret of conducting pre-Blessings on a mass scale.

The secret, as already noted, was to be utterly committed and sincere in one's efforts and to break through spiritually. This allowed God to work. Once God was free to work, there were no limits in terms of permissible methods or achievable totals. The leading proponent of this approach was Mrs. Young Soon Kim, commonly known as "Lady General" Kim. She was assigned to the U.S. by Rev. Moon as a "prayer lady." Highly expressive with a disarming habit of embracing members in trademark bear-hugs, she organized midnight prayer meetings and fasting conditions in Alaska, Boston and Washington, D.C.

Many members began employing mass distribution techniques. They prepared plastic bags with holy candy and Blessing commitments printed on FFWPU business cards. The technique was to purchase large bags of hard candy from wholesale outlets, to sanctify the candies with prayer and sprinkles of holy wine while still in the package, and to re-pack it, two individual pieces of candy at a time, with a single FFWPU card into small plastic baggies or sealable pouches. This was time-consuming but had the advantage of involving entire tribal messiah families in assembly line-type productions. Bags, then, could be distributed where there were large gatherings of people. Dr. Hendricks noted, "Even a dour sort such as I am can hand out two hundred in 20 minutes on a crowded Manhattan corner at rush hour." Others tar-





geted sports stadiums. Some families took to placing the bags on the windshields of parked cars in mall or county fair parking lots, rows at a time.

Spirit world blessings and spirit world mobilizations continued to play a role in Blessing '99. Rev. Moon spoke many times about good and sometimes evil spirit world assaulting the earth. The difference in 1998 and 1999 was that rather than speaking in general terms, the movement was quite specific. This, to some extent, flowed from the MSG event, which cited thirty-four particular spirit world representatives among the 16 billion spirits blessed. Rev. Kwak reported that on October 5, 1998, "all spirit persons who have received the Blessing were assigned to mission countries on earth, and they will help us if we focus our efforts." At Blessing '99, 56 billion spirits were reported to have been blessed. A list circulated by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification International (FFWPUI) included the names of sixty-five Old Testament figures, twenty-seven New Testament figures, twenty-seven figures from Christian history, fifty-seven popes, twenty-six Byzantine emperors, and twenty-eight emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. The Blessing, at this point, was understood to have transcended the limitations of time and space. It had become not only a global but a cosmic event.

However, all of this came at a price. The movement was conducting Blessings on a mass level with double or even triple the number of participants, virtually every six months. It conducted Blessing '97 for 40 million couples in November 1997. MSG for 120 million couples followed in June 1998. Blessing '99, scheduled for February 7, 1999, was to include 240 million couples. Factoring in the billions of spirit world unions, these events exerted an extraordinary amount of material, psychological and spiritual pressure upon members. The movement dealt with this pressure essentially by ignoring it and pressing ahead. Nevertheless, it had accumulated a backlog of deferred internal maintenance needs which were reaching the breaking point. Still, it would take a major breakdown or two to force the issue. This is precisely what happened in late 1998. If the movement did not fully resolve the problems, it at least paused long enough to acknowledge them.

The first breakdown resulted from publicity surrounding the divorce of Rev. and Mrs. Moon's eldest son, Hyo Jin, and his wife of fifteen years, Nan Sook Hong. In actuality, Ms. Hong fled from her husband in August 1995, taking their five children with her. Divorce papers were filed in December 1996, and the divorce was finalized a year later. It was a private, family matter until Nan Sook Hong published *In the Shadow of the Moons: My Life in Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Family* (Little, Brown and Company, 1998). Prior to that, most members had only a vague idea of problems in their marriage. Hyo Jin's early struggles were common knowledge following his decision to inform the membership in a public speech a decade before. However, members generally assumed that his situation had stabilized since then. The minority of members who knew of the separation or even that the divorce had been finalized still

hoped for a reconciliation. For this group but far more so for those who were entirely unknowing, the charges in Nan Sook's book as amplified in her nationwide promotional book tour, on various radio and television talk shows, and on CBS's popular "Sixty Minutes" were shocking and unsettling.

The book itself was one-sided and retaliatory. It also was ghost-written, having been penned by Eileen McNamara, a Pulitzer Prize-winning Metro columnist for the *Boston Globe* who had written articles critical of the church and of Hyo Jin Moon previously. In this sense, the book packed a triple or even quadruple punch. It was, first and foremost, one partner's account of a failed marriage. However, it also was an apostate account since Nan Sook rejected the Unification faith. Third, since Eileen McNamara, the book's unacknowledged ghost-writer, was a self-described gender-obsessed "shrieker," the book had an element of feminist rage. Finally, as Nan Sook's lawyer was Herbert Rosedale, a long-time Unification Church opponent and president of the American Family Foundation, the book reflected an anticult perspective.

The end result was an "atrocious tale" worthy of its predecessors in the nether world of confessional apostate literature. There was a dramatic "captivity and escape" motif, wild allegations of all manner of excesses and deceptions, especially of a sexual or financial nature, and a sympathetic depiction of Nan Sook's readjustment to the values and behavioral norms of conventional society. There were no ambiguities, no nuances. Nan Sook was the heroine, Hyo Jin the villain. Apart from this, Nan Sook took a number of gratuitous swipes at Mrs. Moon; at select members of the True Family; and at Rev. Moon whom she alleged had extramarital or, more accurately, "providential" affairs. She also asserted that he had at least one illegitimate son. Her conclusions? Rev. Moon was a "con man," he and Mrs. Moon were indifferent parents, and the True Family was dysfunctional.

Sociologists and historians of culture who have studied religious atrocity narratives point out that they are not rightly personal or factual replications so much as they are cultural renderings of what mainstream society has "already agreed upon to see." This was not to assert that Nan Sook's claims had no basis in fact. The fact pattern was such that she won a divorce and handsome settlement. However, observers would have been well advised to exercise caution in leaping from a failed marriage to a failed messiah or a failed messianic movement. The media, of course, was not subject to these constraints. Nan Sook's revelations corresponded to what they had "already agreed upon to see." Conditioned to probe for flaws and operating under a hermeneutic of suspicion, which oddly enough did not extend to Ms. Hong, most media accounts took her testimony and conclusions at face value or corroborated them with those of other disaffected members, including Rev. and Mrs. Moon's third daughter, Un Jin, who appeared on "Sixty Minutes."

The irony was that *In the Shadow of the Moons* had a relatively short shelf life. There was an initial flap surrounding the book's publication and Nan Sook's pro-

motional tour which included pointed comparisons between what the movement preached and what it allegedly practiced at its core. Some pieces juxtaposed photos of Blessing '98 against Nan Sook's allegations. "Sixty Minutes" was especially cunning in leading an "unidentified" bride and groom into comments about Rev. and Mrs. Moon's "true family" and "children of goodness." However, the public soon tired of this. Essentially, Nan Sook was saying that the Moons were "like everybody else, but a little more dysfunctional." This was not exceptionally news-worthy. It was the bizarre and unusual that kept the public's attention. The 1970s image of "moonies" as brainwashed zombies had far more staying power. The effect of Nan Sook's disclosures on the membership was more difficult to gauge. Some members were devastated. Others refused to read the book or discuss any of the issues. Others marshalled many of the same resources and arguments by which they coped with previous charges.

Nan Sook's book certainly wasn't the first apostate account the movement had endured. There were literally dozens of them. Many of them included similar wordplay on the name "Moon," i.e., *Moonstruck*, *Eclipse of the Moon*, *The Moon Is Not the Son*, etc., and were ghost-written. However most of the accounts were written from the standpoint of ordinary members or, at best, mid-level leaders. Many attempted to inflate their credentials or insinuate that their role was more than it really was. Some published books on the basis of having attended several workshops or of having been a member for a matter of weeks or months. These were easily dismissed. Nan Sook's book had considerably more insider credibility and clout as it was the first apostate account to come from a member of Rev. Moon's family.

A second important difference related to the time and circumstances of publication. Virtually all of the other apostate accounts had been penned between 1975-85. Especially during the early years of that period, the movement was almost universally regarded as a cult. The situation was quite different in 1998. Although the movement had not entirely shed the cult label, it made numerous inroads into American society and was accepted as legitimate in many quarters. Some members still engaged in full-time spiritual or business missions, but many others had returned to their hometowns as tribal messiahs or worked outside the church and were, more or less, independent. These circumstances created a much different environment. Between 1975-85, the movement's defenses were up, and most members had neither the time nor the interest to assess criticisms. By 1998, the movement's defenses were down. If members still were disinclined to read apostate accounts, many were forced to assess this one if only in response to their older children who were as yet not fully formed in the faith and who were sensitive to public criticism. In some cases, this led to painful reassessments.

The movement as a whole responded to the situation in several specific ways. Hyun Jin Moon, recently inaugurated as Vice-President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, International (FFWPUI), sent a



letter addressed to all members on September 9th which was intended to share “the heart and spirit of my family.” He stated that they considered “Nan Sook to be part of the family...do not criticize her, even though we do not agree with what she sets forth in the book...[and] are ready to take care of unresolved problems and...would like Nan Sook to be part of the healing process.” The following day, HSA Headquarters sent a letter to members intended to help them respond to issues raised by the book. The letter outlined the movement’s position on personal and marital abuse, financial accountability, issues of political power, religious freedom, the teaching and practice of family values, and lifestyle issues. Finally, though declining to speak with media representatives, Rev. and Mrs. Moon submitted a brief statement to “Sixty Minutes” stating in part: “We commiserate with Nan Sook’s over the suffering arising from the tragic personal problems our son has faced. We, as parents, feel a deep sense of responsibility.”

On Monday, September 21st, the day after the nationwide “Sixty Minutes” broadcast, Rev. Moon addressed the movement’s East Coast members. Calling them together indicated that he took the book, the media attention, and members’ concerns seriously. Nevertheless, he placed the controversy “in the same category as other attacks upon his work” and made it clear that he would “not allow these attacks to interfere with his fulfillment of God’s will.” He told mem-

*Rev. Moon inaugurates Hyun Jin Nim as the vice-president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.*



bers, “Don’t worry about Nan Sook’s story” and denied that he “even spent one hour talking with her.” He said that he had no regrets, that there was nothing of which he was ashamed in his life, and that he committed no fall. He concluded by asking members to send him off “with a comfortable heart, by reassuring me that you will be strong to deal with this media and keep going toward the goal.” These were the last public statements he made about the incident. However, Rev. Moon reblessed Hyo Jin at Blessing ’99. He commented, “I have forgiven some of the worst criminals of history. Can’t I forgive my own son?”

A second breakdown during the latter part of 1998 precipitated less a spiritual than a material crisis. It revolved around the apparent collapse of Tongil Group, a conglomerate or *chaebol* of the movement’s business and industrial holdings in Korea. According to one report, difficulties facing the Tongil Group had become increasingly apparent since May when one of its member firms, the Il Hwa soft drinks maker, went out of business. This was followed by failure to win the right to develop a tourist resort in North Korea, part of an agreement Rev. Moon had reached with the late North Korean Premier Kim Il Sung but which was lost during the autumn as a result of financial concerns about Tongil. On November 30, 1998, four companies of the Tongil Group—Tongil Heavy Industries, Hankook Titanium, Il Song Construction and Il Shin Stone—filed for court protection after having failed to keep up with bank loan repayments. An official of the South Korean government’s newly formed financial supervisory service said that the debts of the group’s sixteen companies exceeded \$1.7 billion U.S. dollars.

South Korea’s economic crisis, particularly restrictions on bank lending following the International Monetary Fund’s \$58 billion bail-out of the Korean economy, contributed to Tongil’s decline. The wider Asian economic crisis, especially in recession-hit Japan, an important market for Tongil Group products, also contributed. However, the main problem, according to a South Korean analyst, was that “The Tong Il companies suffer from bad management.... They relied too much on church donations. It was a kind of moral hazard.” There also were misunderstandings between management and labor. Tongil Heavy Industries laid off 800 workers who then charged that they had been illegally dismissed without pay. Those who lost their jobs staged demonstrations and even threatened violence during a speech tour Rev. Moon conducted in Korea during January 1999.

Amazingly, these breakdowns had little effect on Blessing ’99. Rev. Kwak announced that on September 29, 1998 the worldwide movement had accomplished the goal of pre-Blessing 240 million previously married couples. The focus now was on finding single Blessing candidates, unmarried young people willing to be matched. However, the venue for the main ceremony was still undecided. Rev. Moon expressed the desire to hold it in Japan but the problems with obtaining a visa for him could not be overcome. He also offered to conduct it in Taiwan but the movement there was not ready. Finally, in January, thirty-three



days before the event, scheduled for February 7th, Rev. Moon settled on Korea. Still, this wasn't the whole story. As related by Rev. Joong Hyun Pak,

About twenty days before the actual day of the Blessing...I received the news that...Blessing '99 would be held not in ChamShil Gymnasium as planned by the Korean Church, but rather at Seoul Olympic Stadium!! Outdoors! In February! Wintertime! I remembered how shocked leaders were when they heard in 1997 that we were going to use RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., also an outdoor stadium! In November! Wintertime!

How the Korean movement mobilized more than 100,000 people and 3,000 buses, filling practically all seats in the stadium three hours before the event was something of a mystery to Western observers. However, it was apparent that the weather had cooperated. Sub-freezing temperatures warmed considerably, and conditions on the day of the ceremony were quite good.

Blessing '99 and associated events penetrated Korean society far more than had the previous two International Blessing Ceremonies and WCSFs in 1992 and 1995. The key breakthrough was South Korean President Kim Dae Jung's presence at the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the movement-owned *Segye Times* newspaper on February 1st. Though Tongil Group might be suffering, *The Segye Times* had "placed its founder on the map in Korean society and in its corridors of power." Kim Dae Jung not only disregarded those who would dissuade him from attending but, according to a movement report, "brought with him the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the leaders of political parties, and other figures central to the administration of the nation." He shared the podium with Rev. Moon and participated in an anniversary cake-cutting.

Gen. Alexander Haig, Jr., former U.S. Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan and White House Chief of Staff under Richard Nixon, provided a similar focal point for the WCSF's Special Convocation on "Family Ethics and World Peace." In an introduction to Rev. Moon, Haig described how their lives first intersected during the Korean War, praised Rev. Moon for his conciliatory approach to President Nixon during the Watergate crisis, and again praised Rev. Moon for his role in the downfall of communism. At a well-attended press briefing, when asked if he were a Unification Church member, Haig replied, "No, but who couldn't support the values espoused here at this conference? It would be like being against motherhood."



## Blessing 2000

Many members expected that Blessing '99 would be the final Blessing, certainly in the current sequence of International Wedding Ceremonies conducted on a global and mass scale. The goal of 360 million couples had been accomplished, a total that Rev. Moon had said would turn the world upside-down. He set forth an elaborate projection, stating, "the 360 million—really 400 million—couples constitute 800 million husbands and wives and, supposing that each couple has four children, this is approaching 3 billion people." Thinking in this way, it was possible to conclude that more than half the population on earth was connected to the Blessing. In other words, the scale had been tipped in the movement's favor. Global transformation was inevitable. Moreover, all this had been achieved prior to the dawn of the new millennium, which served as a kind of finish-line for some tribal messiahs. It was a neat package.

Members with this mindset, therefore, were surprised when Rev. Moon announced another 400 Million Couple Blessing to be conducted in conjunction with his 80th birthday, on February 13, 2000. They were even more surprised to learn that the 400 million were to be "matched couples only."

However, as early as July 1998, Rev. Kwak communicated Rev. Moon's request "to find many who can become candidates for the matching and participate in the Blessing." Rev. Kwak repeated the direction to find unmarried young people as single-person blessing candidates for Blessing '99 in September and October 1998. However, the reality was that matched candidates constituted only a small fraction of a percentage of the global blessings: some 6,500 out of 40 million in Blessing '97 and approximately 3,000 out of 120 million for Blessing '98. The added push for matching candidates increased the total for Blessing '99 but not enough. Church spokesmen set the number of



*At the Blessing Ceremony*



newly wed, i.e., matched couples at Seoul Olympic Stadium at 12,000. There may have been several thousand more in other locales. The Philippines, for example, reportedly brought 14,000 Blessing candidates itself. Yet, obviously, these numbers were dwarfed by the 240 million previously married couples.

Rev. Moon spoke with some candor about the situation in November 1998. He said that “ideally, the heavenly blessing should be received on the tradition of the value of the blessing.” It was “supposed to be dealt with very inwardly and with internal value.” However, because of what he termed “the failures of Korea, America, and Christianity,” the Blessing was “given out now as a token to people all over the world.” It was, he said, as if “a royal family member... [were] being finally cast out...and marrying a beggar on the street.” This much “devaluation of the blessing” was occurring. He drew some consolation from a scene he had observed on occasion during his visits to the South American interior where the movement was expanding. As he described it,

When an alligator catches a big animal or fish such as a shark or a snake, the alligator first just makes sure that he swallows it. Of course, birds and animals have fur, skin, and bones and all kinds of dirty stuff, but they are just swallowed. There is no cleaning process. I came to understand then that God is the king of swallowing. It is like casting a net and catching everything.... God is casting a net to swallow everyone, evil people, good people, and mediocre people. Likewise, when I give the Blessing to the world, as for example at the Madison Square Garden Blessing Ceremony, I cast my net out to the entire world. Whoever comes into the net, even if they may have been criminals and murderers, is swallowed. That is why two thousand years ago God gave the message through Jesus Christ to love one’s enemy. God’s representative can swallow everything from the individual to the cosmic level, including the cosmic Satan, without a problem. Can you do that?

Within the same discourse, he acknowledged, “[N]ot all the 360 million couples who received the blessing are fully ready to come...and meet God and True Parents.”

Rev. Moon expected that the millions of blessed couples would keep heavenly traditions. After Blessings ’95 and ’97, for example, there was an expectation that the 360,000, 3.6 million and 36 million couples would keep a forty-day purification period following the Blessing before consummating, or resuming marital relations; that they would pay a substantial blessing fee; that they would meet regularly for *Hoon Dok Hae* reading; and that they would bring ten of their relatives or friends to the next Blessing. After Blessings ’98 and ’99, Rev. Moon still had every expectation that the 360 million couples would help create “a family culture in which all people have affection for me.” He took out adver-



tisements in newspapers in major capitols throughout the world to address “Blessed Couples Worldwide.” He also sent Mrs. Moon on world speaking tours following each major Blessing to educate newly blessed couples and others in the Completed Testament word.

*Rev. and Mrs. Moon  
matching candidates  
for the Blessing*

However, there was a sense of dissatisfaction with the results. By January 1999, this evolved into a sense of sorrow and even repentance. Amid expressions of gratitude and determination in his Midnight Prayer at the beginning of that year, Rev. Moon also stated,

I am truly so very sorry that even today, after fifty years have passed, I have still not been able to hold a victory celebration wherein I could offer the entire nation and world to Heaven through establishing Your will on this earth.

This was the fundamental motivation for the shift in emphasis from previously married to matched couples.

The movement had reached the outer limit of what was achievable or credible, even for Rev. Moon, in the 360 Million Couple Blessing. It wasn't that the 360 Million Couple Blessing was unreal. It was very real in Rev. Moon's mind. As he put it, “People think it's a joke, but it did happen through God.” However, its fruit was largely internal. It remained to make these vic-

stories substantial, to truly transform people and the world. In the movement's terminology, the 360 Million Couple Blessing, and the global blessings that had preceded it, were a spiritual condition, a foundation of faith. They needed to be complemented by a foundation of substance. This is what the 400 Million Couple Blessing was intended to be, or to begin. Together, the foundations of faith and substance would establish an unshakable foundation for global salvation.

This brought Rev. Moon back on message. "The 400 million couples and the 360 million couples," he said, "will influence the entire human race." Elsewhere, he stated, "The 400 million couples who were blessed in 1999 can be the foundation of the 400 million youth blessing. Just one youth for every couple." If members used "photo albums of blessed couples, young people will get inspired to see so many wonderful matches made by Father. They will want to get matched by Rev. Moon." He noted that "the spirit world must be mobilized" and reported that on April 13, 1999, 1.6 billion young people were blessed in the spirit world. In addition, 106 past saints were sent to America and welcomed in a ceremony at Headquarters. Finally, on May 14, 1999, "Lucifer voluntarily surrendered to God." At several meetings, the texts of several astonishing letters of apology were read. Rev. Moon urged the membership not to take these lightly, but to believe in them as genuine and from God. Mrs. Moon also embarked on a world tour as a kick-off to the 400 million couple blessing, presenting a speech on "The Path of Life for All Humankind."

In America, this tour brought to fruition much of the work with Christianity at the grassroots level. Members had been encouraged to visit Christian churches. Many had taken this seriously and had developed good relationships with pastors and their congregations. Nowhere was this more so than in Chicago. When Mrs. Moon spoke there, over 4,000 guests, the vast majority being Christian congregations, gave her an extremely warm welcome.

# 4,000 Gather in Chicago to Embrace True Mother

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Russell Sucharoff

From the very beginning of this campaign, one could feel that everything was going to be different than ever before. Just the fact that we have over two-months notice that True Mother would be coming was so different and unusual that many of us didn't quite know what to do with it. Yet we began, in the most usual of ways, and that was by going out and visiting our ministers. For the past two years our Bishop, the Rev. Ki Hoon Kim, has designated the 2nd Sunday of every month as church visitation Sunday. We have a small Sunday Service at our Ashland Avenue Church, but the majority of members and Tribal Messiahs go out and visit their adopted churches at least once a month.

Over the past six months we have also been on an intensive witnessing and workshop campaign. CARP rented a workshop site up at Lake Geneva about 1 hour from Chicago and members were going up every weekend for a 2-day workshop, which lead to many 7-day and 21-day guests who were now becoming members. When CARP went on their Christmas fundraising campaign, the workshops transferred to the church and we began having evening programs every night and weekend. Through this experience, many new members were joining and many members were becoming lecturers and workshop staff.

As February 7, 1999 began to come closer, of course, our emphasis focused on the Blessing. But we continued to witness through passing out flyers for our evening programs. Through this process many new guests became blessing candidates. So when word of True Mother's tour arrived, we were ready to welcome her back to Chicago.

It was hard to believe that it had been almost a year since True Mother had come to Chicago. In fact, April 10, 1998 was Good Friday, when 3,000 guests filled the Grand Ballroom of the downtown Chicago Marriott Hotel to hear True Mother deliver her speech, "Blessed Marriage and Eternal Life," amidst the amens and hallelujahs of the assembled churches in the congregation. But again, the spirit was telling us that this event was going to be different.

As we began to work through our network of established churches, a new phenomenon began to occur. We have done so much with our churches, that planning for this new event was beginning with a tremendous response, especially from our best ministers. Over the past four years, through the series of blessings, and everything else, we have been in constant relationship with our churches. And our network is growing. Our best ministers are becoming more and more important; many of their churches are growing; many of them are being promoted to superintendents and bishops; and many of them are introducing us to new pastors and friends. Also, one important aspect of the African-American Church Community is the importance of Church anniversaries and Pastors' Birthdays. Our support of the events, often buying a table, or group of tables, develops an ongoing relationship with the churches. And the ministers most always will return the favor, by attending your banquet or church anniversary.

The next new phenomenon was that certain ministers have now elevated to new levels of commitment in their work with us. We have come to realize that given their incredible schedules and the fact that so many of the ministers are so serious, so dedicated and being led by the Holy Spirit, these men and women of God can go only so far with us on a horizontal level. In other words, they would only be willing/able to walk so far with their friends. Only the fact that they themselves are experiencing the presence of God and the Holy Spirit is the basis for their continuing walk of faith and commitment with our True Parents.

I remember our old friend, Dr. Richard Quebedeaux, who had a deep experience with God at one of our New Era Pastoral Academic Conferences. After that point, Dr. Quebedeaux would refuse to discuss our conferences with his friends. He would just invite them to attend, knowing full well that their concepts about our movement would be destroyed through their experience with God at our conferences. And the same holds true for our best ministers. Men such as Rev. T.L. Barrett, who offered the prayer representing all of Protestant Christianity at the RFK Blessing, attended our Inter-religious Conference for World Peace in December in Washington, D.C., bought two tables and was the M.C. for our True Family Values Banquet two weeks later and then turned around and flew to Korea for Blessing '99 where he once again was asked to offer the Prayer representing all of Protestant Christianity. Now, Rev. Barrett



did not need go to Washington, D.C. or even to Korea just for the trip. This man works about 120,000 hours a week leading a vibrant and spirit-filled church to new heights every day. The street that goes past his Life Center Church is named in his honor. His church was the first one in America to fly the Family Federation Flag on its flagpole and I could go on and on. So it is God alone who is calling Rev. Barrett to work alongside his Unification Church/Family Federation brethren in the fight to save America.

The same can be said of Rev. Dr. Leroy Elliott, the Pastor of New Greater St. John Baptist Church on Chicago's great West Side. Rev. Elliott, whose older brother Charles hosted True Mother at his King Solomon Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, is one of the, if not the, top evangelist in America. Rev. Elliott is on the road doing revivals 46 weeks a year. I witnessed one in Macon, Georgia, where the Beulahland Baptist Church was filled to its 2,500-seat capacity every day for the week that he was preaching—and oh how this man of God can preach! Rev. Elliott tells the story of how as a child down in Kentucky, they used to catch squirrels by leaving some squirrel food in a box. Once the squirrel crawled into the box, the door would slam closed and the squirrel was caught. Last January, Rev. Elliott gave testimony to Rev. Kwak at a breakfast in Chicago, that the door to True Parents' box had slammed closed behind him and that he is now caught. In other words, he has experienced God while working alongside of his Unification Church brethren and that "what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6). Rev. Elliott has a vision to save all of America and it seems that God has set him up to have access to almost every major Baptist pastor in the United States. Basically, he wants to take True Family Values to every corner of America.

A third phenomenon that is occurring is the inter-relationship between the ministers. Years ago, after the ICC trips to Korea, Father asked the ministers to begin to fellowship together—even having a joint service once a month. During this campaign, more than ever before, the ministers seriously began doing this. Many of them, who were from different denominations, began to come together to bring others to the event. Many of them began to preach in each other's churches and invite and encourage other congregations to attend True Mother's speech. Even unto the last minute, many of our best ministers were preaching at other churches and inviting

them to True Mother's speech.

So the 4,000 guests that filled the International ballroom of the Chicago Hilton & Towers Hotel were the guests of over 185 pastors who attended the event. The invitational committee of more than 100 ministers took up more space than the program. But that is just the point—this was not a Unification Church event—it was a product of the joint cooperation of the ministers, political leaders, business leaders, civic leaders and ethnic leaders of the Chicagoland area in an effort to support True Parents' North American speaking tour in Chicago. Filipinos, Hispanics, African-Americans, Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Native Americans and Jews joined together to welcome True Mother back to Chicago.

The program began promptly at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. For one hour, choirs from Rev. Wendell Lowe's Acme MB Church, COGIC Bishop Bennie Allison's Corinthian Temple Choir, Rev. Jesusa Barrett's Iglesia de Cristo Misionera Choir, Rev. Levan Brayboy's Mt. Zion Inspirational Choir, Rev. Edwin Simmons' New Friendship MB Choir, COGIC Bishop Ocie Booker's Tabernacle Church of God in Christ Choir and Rev. Marvin Alexander's Union Missionary Baptist Choir performed. From the moment anyone set foot in the auditorium, even just after 3 o'clock when the room was just beginning to fill up, one was immediately caught up in a mighty powerful spirit.

By 4 o'clock nearly every seat was filled and Rev. Jenkins began the program promptly. Bishop Cody Marshall, Pastor of the Freedom Temple COGIC and Chairman of the Religious Coalition of Illinois opened the program with a rousing prayer of hallelujah.

After Bishop Marshall, Rev. Jenkins read off proclamations and letters of greeting from the Governor, Secretary of State and Treasurer of Illinois. A very personal letter was read from the Mayor and proclamations were introduced from the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago proclaiming Saturday, March 27, 1999 as Family Federation for World Peace and Unification Day in Chicago and in Illinois. As Rev. Jenkins read the proclamations, members of Chicago's second generation paraded across the stage holding the framed proclamations up high.

The program went very smoothly with Mother's videotape receiving deep appreciation. And when Pastor T.L. Barrett, Jr. was shown giving the prayer representing all of Protestant Christianity at Blessing '99 in Seoul, each of his 250 members and guests in attendance gave

resounding applause. After a beautiful introduction by one of Illinois' most popular political leaders, True Mother took the stage to a standing ovation that did not want to sit down. Her speech was received with constant amens, hallelujahs and applause in the spirit-filled hall. We were truly having Church!

After she finished, Mother received flowers from Mr. Eric Seim and his beautiful new Japanese bride and then Mother walked down to the first row of seats and shook hands with the 30 dignitaries who were blessed to have been seated in the first row. Two of the ministers were so inspired that they just followed Mother out the back door and through the corridors up to the celebration room. They were just like true children following Mother wherever she was going!

The program concluded with two more choral selections from Minister Yakeerah and Rev. T.L. Barrett Jr.'s Life Center Church Choir and Rev. Constance Bansa's Church of the Living God Choir.

By the time many of the members and guests entered, the celebration room was filled to overflowing as many of the pastors, including Rev. Elliott, Rev. Barrett, Rev. Constance Bansa and her sister Shirley Sims, Rev. A.I. Dunlap and Rev. Helen Cooper saluted True Parents in praise and song for nearly two hours. Leaders from the Nation of Islam presented True Mother with beautiful gifts and greetings of *ab salam alakem*. Rev. M.E. Sardon celebrated his 87th birthday, and the growing Chicago community of second generation blessed children serenaded True Mother with their Children's Choir. Mother and Father returned the favor, each singing three songs and Mother moved each of our hearts with "Home Sweet Home."

Our true goal in this campaign was not just to fill an auditorium, but to bring true joy to True Mother. We sincerely hope that we were able to do this. On the way to the airport, Mother asked the motorcade to turn around and take her to the shore of Lake Michigan before heading for the airport. When she got there, Mother got out of the car and walked down to the shore to look at the Chicago skyline and pray. Quickly joined by all 30 people in the motorcade, Mother posed for pictures with the skyline in the background and reiterated her instructions that we should be diligent to take care of the 4,000 guests who had attended her speech. Even after entering her plane, she came back to the open door

twice to wave good-bye to the members, and, as her jet soared off to Atlanta, several members could see the horde of angels surrounding her airplane.

Comments from ministers who attended the event:

The program was great, but when I saw how many young people were moved by Dr. Moon's sincerity, warmth and love, I truly realized the power of her message.

—Minister Earl Christy, *Former Member of the 1969 New York Jets Superbowl Champions*

I found Dr. Moon to be more correlative with other denominations in her presentation. Rev. Moon was actually converted into the Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church always talks about love. Dr. Moon sounded like a modern Presbyterian.

—Dr. Paul Swanson, *Lutheran Professor of Theology, Emeritus*

What I experienced was a coming together of all church denominations where we had the opportunity to mingle and mix. The Unification Church is truly carrying out the meaning of its original name, to unify all churches under the banner of coming together to worship God together through the Holy Spirit. I experienced the reality of the words that Jesus spoke in John 12:32, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." In my opinion, nothing is greater than unity—this is the only way that we can eliminate the wars, the breakdown of the family and the child abuse that are destroying our Christian society.

—Rev. M. E. Sardon, *Holiness Community Temple* (Rev. Sardon, who has worked with UC projects for over 15 years, was celebrating his 87th birthday during Dr. Moon's speech.)

When I sat at the lunch table with Mother Moon, I felt that totally I was her true son.

—Pastor T.L. Barrett, Jr., *Life Center Church of God in Christ*

In the end, responsibility fell on the membership to mobilize single people for Blessing 2000. For those who responded, this necessitated at least two new shifts in consciousness. First, members had to shift their focus from previously-married couples to young people. Second, they needed to shift their focus from pre-Blessing activity to finding and preparing persons for matchings. These shifts were not easy or simple. At the same time, the level of commitment expected of participants had been raised to a level approaching that of full-time members. Apart from this, the movement provided no clear guidelines. As before, members were expected to accomplish the goal on their own.

Under these circumstances, the necessary shifts in consciousness did not occur all at once. Early in the campaign, many members shifted their focus to young people. However, they were not able to shift their consciousness from pre-Blessing activities to finding and preparing people for matching. As a consequence, they proceeded in ways only slightly different than before. During the spring and summer, members targeted school graduations, movie theatres, ball parks, beaches, fairs and other places where young people congregated, passing out “Pure Love Pledge Cards” and candy. This was only a slight variation from previous pre-Blessing work, targeting as it did, a different audience and offering a slightly different message. The Pure Love Pledge sought the following commitments from young people:

- To refrain from all sexual relationships before marriage;
- To respect and honor the ideal of purity in myself and others;
- To learn how to practice pure love as a child, friend, spouse, and parent;
- To dedicate myself to absolute fidelity within marriage;
- To encourage others to do the same.

These were admirable sentiments. However, it was impossible to determine how many young people were responding simply by calculating the total of cards and candies distributed. In addition there was a major chasm to be bridged between accepting and affirming the Pure Love Pledge and agreeing to a matching.

By late summer 1999, it was apparent that the movement needed a breakthrough. On previous occasions, Rev. Moon had called the movement’s leadership together for intense encounters in mostly isolated locales. Before Blessings ’98 and ’99, he called the movement’s leadership to forty-day trainings in the interior of Brazil. He did something similar before Blessing 2000. However, rather than call leaders to an isolated setting, he instituted a forty-day “Japan-America Leadership Exchange.” Some fifty-two leaders from both countries traded places for a month’s time, and then both groups went together to Korea for the final ten days. Immersion within an alien culture was a spiritual condition and wilderness course of a different type. The intention was that the U.S., as a representative of the world, inherit the dedication and heart exemplified in the lands of the movement’s origin.

## To Japan and Korea

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Eugene Harnett

From the island of Kodiak, Alaska, on August 18, 1999, Father announced an exchange between Japanese and American leaders, the key point being to create one nation of three: Korea, Japan, and America. Father directed 52 American leaders to go to Japan for 40 days; and, concurrently, 52 Japanese leaders to go to America, beginning September 1st. (It was determined that 30 days be spent in Japan with the final 10 days in Korea.) America, the Elder Son nation, needed to make the condition to inherit the heart of the Mother nation, Japan, and to learn the tradition of the Father nation, Korea. Father said that America will receive blessing from this and that very meaningful things will arise from it. Having attended that whirlwind meeting, I found myself embarking two weeks later for Japan, still uncertain of many details. Though expecting to experience something exceptional, I never could have imagined the extraordinary course into which I walked while in Japan and Korea for 40 days.

Assigned to Kumamoto, Japan, on the southern island of Kyushu, I went through some of the most humid weather available in Japan. Because Japan is surrounded by water, and the humidity had made me extremely sweaty, and it had rained a lot, I described being there like bathing in the water of Mother's womb. And more water (tears) would swell inside as I substantially felt the life of sacrificial offering from the Japanese members. All to give new birth to America, the elder son. Father had asked us to inherit the heart of the mother nation from Japan. Though I had for years worked with them in America, nothing conveyed their true course more than being on their own soil with them. Not just myself, but all the Americans assigned to different places in Japan, witnessed and absorbed their overwhelming life of quiet, tearful sacrifice.

I actively sought to embrace their heart and could weep in prayer each day, feeling united with my Japanese family. After three days there, I had a dream that I was held by my mother, Japan, and taken to Korea and embraced by True Father with such a love as I had not known before—a warm, familial comfort. It became crystal clear to me the principle that we cannot but go through the Mother to get to Father.

This was the time to inherit the Mother's heart, to know her situation, intimately. The Japanese Family lives on the front-line of God's Providence, with many young members witnessing and fundraising, eagerly and endlessly. Their spirits shine bright and energetic as they pray in tears, desperately seeking results, huge goals, and to fulfill the conditions given by Father for Japan. Of course, many are tired. I observed some quality, quite remarkable—and as such unnamed by me—about the character of the Japanese to consistently sacrifice for God's Will. The Japanese described it to me themselves as the heart of the mother who is willing to give even her last drop of blood for her children. For the most part, the spirit and regimen was very similar to my old American MFT days. To me, being assigned to stay with the Youth Church offered me a special blessing. Their schedule began with *Hoon Dok Hae* at 6:00 a.m. It ended with prayer service and testimonies at 11:30 p.m. Every night the leaders and several members would stay up past 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. Every night. As the deadline for their goal approached, the schedule became more intense with the nighttime prayer service lasting well past 1:00 a.m. and often past 2:00 a.m. But they continued to rise at 6:00 a.m. I loved their schedule.

Going out with them, though I was limited, allowed me to meet the people of this land directly, albeit approaching them in broken Japanese. We felt a powerful bonding in this joint activity. Some previously unfelt feelings of love emerged. My Japanese wife of 18 years, a former fundraising star and team mother in Japan, had many idiosyncrasies not understood before by this feeble American mind of mine. This time in Japan, however, my mind expanded along with my heart to grasp a deeper respect and gratitude for my wife's uniquely Japanese characteristics. I cherish her more now.

One day, we drove 100 kilometers to visit the Shiro Memorial in Amokusa. Shiro was a very faithful 16-year-old Christian boy martyred there about 350 years ago along with another fifteen thousand Christians as the Japanese elite decided to eliminate the growing influence of this strange foreign religion. One sister could see many angels at the shrine where we prayed. I sensed the happiness of the spirit world there at my presence representing Christianity from America. I believe American Christianity needs to join hearts with these Japanese martyrs. They pioneered but were never able to establish a ground for Jesus in Japan as the Christians did in America. Upon True Father's foundation we can now



work side by side with them.

The next day, I was inspired to visit a local Christian church. I met the minister's wife and prayed in the church with her—a long, tearful prayer such as my heart felt. I could see the minister's wife drying her tears, too, when I left. The next day, I returned and met the minister himself. We talked for a good two hours—a rich discussion. We prayed together. We hugged, and he invited me to speak at his service the next day, Sunday. I told him the name of our church, but the translation may not have been clear. And I mentioned the name of Sun Myung Moon three times, but he wasn't fazed. He said to me that he felt as if he had known me for a long time as a brother.

I spoke the next day at his church service about how Jesus has touched my life. I spoke about the suffering course of Jesus' life, and, therefore, we should not just ask Jesus for things in our prayer but ask what we can do to comfort Jesus, instead. It was very well received. Though he later turned passive, I will never forget this minister's original heart of acceptance and joy at receiving me. This I offer to Heavenly Father.

I experienced Japan as the substantial Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit convinces Christians to repent in tears and to come to Jesus, I felt the Mother's heart of Japan convince myself and my fellow American leaders there to feel the tears of God in a special way. It is this substantial Holy Spirit quality that Japan, the Mother Nation, represents. As the Japanese sisters tour America, I believe they have the potential power of the Holy Spirit to convince our Christian friends to cry in repentance as we witness to our True Parents anew. Literally, Japan gave me the opportunity to bathe in sweat, during their intense humidity, and to bathe in tears, amidst absolutely sincere sacrifice and dedication. I soaked it in. One example was 2:00 a.m. in a meeting room filled with 195 brothers and sisters who did 210 bows together. Even an air conditioned room will not prevent the sweat from rushing down backs during such a bowing session. This demonstration of their determination to reach their goal was normal. I sensed no resistance from the members with this condition as directed by the central figure. When I returned to my sleeping place about 3:30 a.m., I went to sleep right away, but some of the youth team members knocked on my door at about 4:00 a.m. to have me pray with them for tomorrow's area. I slept through their knocking, being informed of it the next morning.

This kind of effort is naturally created by the atmos-

phere of the Japanese leaders who lead with uncounted tears. America has been dry, for the most part. In America, we have uncovered but sparsely the hidden heart of God. But I believe this must and will change. Now that the American leaders have been baptized in the spirit, so to speak, in Japan, members in America can inherit this foundation by mixing their tears with the Japanese members now in America. Mother's heart will revive America.

One concluding thought about what this "condition" means in the Providence. Previously, America in the position of Archangel Nation could not receive directly the love of the True Parents as did Korea and Japan. Father speaking through translation, in one way, represents the indirectness of Father's ability to give to America. But today, Father has bequeathed to us the position of Elder Son nation. This means not only that our responsibility increases, but that we must understand the internal situation of the Father completely. We must no longer seek to receive love but be in the position to give mature love back to them as True Sons and Daughters. By going to Japan, through this bath of tears, Americans understood Mother's situation and could inherit the realm of the Mother's true heart, exactly as Father requested of us. Emotion so quickly fills me now just by looking at the photos of my brothers and sisters from Kumamoto. My heart has been relieved by Mother's love, and I continue to be bathed in the mystical heart of tears induced by my precious Japanese brothers and sisters. I wish that such gracious feelings will touch each American member.

On my very first day in Korea, within hours of landing, I felt a victory of heart in the fatherland. The first day, the Americans stayed at the Ilhwa Central Training Center. Many historical photos of our True Parents line the hallway walls there. Upstairs from my sleeping quarters, I discovered a huge, elaborately framed photograph of Father and Mother, relaxed amidst a background of an autumn forest's resplendence, smiling charmingly at each other. Literally, engaged, I felt swept up by the scene. The Parents' love emanated from this photograph. It felt magical. I had arrived home, not literally, but home in a spiritual sense. Home, where my heart is at rest and at peace. Home, from countless years traversing the wilderness. Home, as cannot be felt but through the desire of a lost and loveless child to be with his true parents again. Such an answer it was to my long prayers. The following days added icing to the cake. Staying with three churches



*Tyler Hendricks shares a light moment with Japanese members.*

over the next nine days, allowed me to see and experience Korea from the unique viewpoint of being both an honored guest and a longtime family member. To mention the land of Korea now invokes images and feelings in me both vast and intimate. To describe them fully means dipping into the Kochuchan (hot pepper paste) of Korea.

This time the Americans were matched with the Japanese brothers who had just spent a corresponding month in America. We traveled in pairs everywhere in Korea. An amazing fact to consider is how much—because of Father’s training—we share a similar heart with our Korean Church brothers and sisters. Who could believe such a common feeling transmigrates over the oceans and cultures between us? Only due to Father’s training, by the hand of our True Parents’ love, have we become one. This trip by American and Japanese brothers and sisters who went to Korea confirmed what we know deep down in our hearts already: we are one in heart. It takes not 40 days to realize this. Members in America can realize this immediately based on the foundation of heart now existing. But I learned something deeply special in Korea. Two words encompass the totality of my experience there: parental love. With each Korean Church leader I visited, I put myself in a position

of son. I would think of True Father and how much he would be wanting to show us his homeland himself. I took everything like that. Father expects us to learn the traditions of heaven from the Korean church. One point that I could not have learned but by going there, was how close the family feeling is shared amongst all the Korean people.

Once when going follow-up witnessing to a home where the son is not married, the church leader spoke directly to this person’s mother about her son going to the Blessing. I felt, “Well, this is pretty strong. No informalities to ease into the situation.” Afterwards, I asked my Korean leader how he could talk so bluntly to this person who is not even a member. “Because we are all family in Korea. We don’t need informalities with those we feel are our own family members.”

This consciousness of a nationwide family had to seep into my Americanized brain. Americans cannot readily do that kind of talking. Because we come from a myriad of diverse backgrounds, we do not live with one national family culture in America. Instead, we try to be sensitive not to hurt another’s feelings. This family underpinning of Korea must be lived to be felt. This became my search while there: to feel at home in this family and to live as one in this family culture. In Korea, people hold hands freely. In America, if two men hold hands it would make people think they are homosexual. But in Korea nothing of the sort is considered. It is as natural as apple pie in America. Often I would hold the hands of the church members during picture time. With the “Sa Mo Nim,” or church minister’s wife, I became like a son, too. Occasionally, I witnessed her tears. Well, this one Korean “mom” took me in as her son. We would rub close to each other. She laundered my underwear despite my persistence to do it myself. She hugged me in the end and even patted me on my bottom, pushing me along. Such is the taste of closeness available to the direct children.

Another powerful lesson that I experienced during this short heavenly sojourn in Korea is the anguish of the language barrier. Korean leaders in America communi-

cate with us in English, though not smoothly, but we feel something from them. In Korea, however, it was Hangul all the way. More often than not, in every city in Korea no translator rescued us from sitting together and being empty of words. So much went unsaid. To make a simple inquiry such as “What Blessing are you?” sometimes took such an immense toll on sign language skills, producing awkward smiles, that these simple informative conversations never took place. Of course, we smiled and laughed together over jokes half translated.

For ten days in Korea, I lived in the Korean churches, eating, praying, witnessing and doing fellowship together. Fellowship is what they do as an art in the Korean churches. For example, the members of the Chonan church located in a countryside community of about 30,000 people would drop by the church center in the morning and settle in like family. Exchanges of greetings, of smiles, and of comforting fraternal laughter, would predominate. Food would be served. I vow never to forget those ebullient times etched in the memory of my heart.

My pinnacle experience occurred on the ninth day in the third church at which I stayed. That afternoon, I went with two Japanese sisters and one Korean sister to revisit their contacts in the countryside. We stopped at what looked like a shed, but it was the home of a grandmother. Her son who was interested in the Blessing was not home. She invited us to sit and served us *cha* on her quaint porch, it being a beautiful sunny day. A cute, little white dog with brown ears yapped at us, trying to get our attention. A faucet dripped continuously into a big water basin. About a dozen ceramic food pots filled the humble yard in front of us. The radio played some quiet Korean music in the background. The sun shone perfectly on a temperate day. We all sat on the porch, I with my glass of *cha*, slowly sipping it, slower than most days.

As I sat, feelings of peace warmed over me. The serene atmosphere melted my eyes to watering. My handkerchief kept absorbing the soft, peaceful tears silently seeping out. The invisible graciousness of God’s love in such a simple country setting welcomed my spirit as if coming home to the home of homes. The peace of such a place would not let me alone. I looked down in an effort to not look at anything, to quiet my tears away, but the plastic floor mat looked so beautiful my tears would not stop! Why this place? Why these tears? Why this absorbing tranquility? A couple of days later, we visited the first Unification Church headquarters church at Chung Pa Dong. There I stole away quietly to one of

the rooms and sat, again sensing the very peace as on the countryside porch: the quietest of quiet. I knew this was not just the peace of Korea but the peace of our True Parents. This absolute stillness lies in the bosom of our True Parents, where they beckon us ever patiently, ever anxiously to join them. This is our original home. Who could dream of this mind that carries on the task of restoration amidst severe turmoil and distress? The realm of True Parents’ heart contains such victory and comprehensiveness.

How can I take my experience and translate it for Americans? How can it become everyone’s victory? An undying love has been born in this American for my Japanese and Korean cohorts across the sea. This amazing 40-day experience submerged in the “womb” of Japan and, then, dipped into the *kochuchan* of Korea, as Father called it, seems unlike any other expedition of faith in our entire movement. I have to be ever grateful. To recall the faces of my Japanese and Korean brothers and sisters, the simple moments, the hands held, the Sa Mo Nim’s touch, the terrific determinations and internal spirit of the leaders, the upright joyous expressions of victory from their mouths, the hugs, the bows, the parental fondness expressed in gifts, their level approach to witnessing—to pass those images in my mind again overwhelms me with gratitude.

This 40-days interlocked our spirits forever. By fusing with the Japanese and Korean Family, Americans have unlocked the global realm of God’s Family. I hope that all Americans sense what we have created between our nations: “one nation,” as Father sees us. Americans need no longer breathe archangelic feelings of insecurity, or inferiority, in America. After twenty or more years, we have grown up as elder son. That is not just our position, it is our heart. Out of this time in Japan and Korea, after feeling intimately the tears of Mother’s sacrifice and the immensity of Father’s tears of reunion, the Elder Son’s victory of heart has been won.

In America, we can now develop as a true son. We can achieve what we always felt was ours to do. We can bring total expansion of the True Parent’s ideology to our fellow countrymen and to the fellow nations of the world. Without doubt, we can do it in united step with our Korean and Japanese brothers and sisters. Our three nation’s destinies are intertwined as we proceed to build the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. And the more we three work together, the more the gates of heaven will open. It is a great time to be on the frontline.





Beyond this, hundreds of Japanese sisters descended on major U.S. metropolitan areas. They actually were wives and mothers, many of whom already had sacrificed their immediate families to pursue world mission during the 1990s. A highly dedicated and well-practiced force, their mission was to find matching candidates. Beginning in October 1999, they hit the ground and fanned out, staying in church centers and members' homes. Activity in New York City was fairly typical. About eighty missionaries settled in at National Headquarters in Manhattan with smaller groups migrating to Brooklyn, Queens, Connecticut and the Mid-Hudson Valley. According to one report,

Every morning they are out on the streets carrying surveys on clip boards, diligently approaching the citizens and tourists of the city. Within the first couple of weeks they have brought over 1,000 guests to the 2nd floor of 43rd

*Japanese sisters were highly visible in mid-town Manhattan at the end of 1999. Here they witness for the Blessing outside the New York Public Library.*



Street, where they have set up a system of embracing the guests (sometimes teaching origami, sometimes reading their palms, and always smiling), educating them (introductory lectures are given every two hours), counseling them, and ultimately signing them up for the matching and a one- or two-day workshop.

This report noted, “From the beginning, there were many logistical problems, finding space for everyone to sleep, getting the toilets and showers in working order, and providing three meals a day for everyone.” One of the main handicaps was the lack of English-speaking lecturers and counselors. Nevertheless, the report concluded by noting that the “heavenly hurricane” True Parents wanted to bring to America through the Japanese sisters was “beginning to grow as more and more American brothers and sisters are becoming involved in the campaign.”

Initially, the thought was to find single people who could become full-time members and then matching candidates. However, this was too cumbersome, and within a month, Japanese sisters in San Francisco and Seattle reversed the process. Rather than have guests attend a lecture or evening program and a workshop or series of workshops prior to completing Blessing applications, West coast witnesses invited people to complete Blessing applications immediately, even on the street, prior to attending lectures or workshops. Emphasis was placed on finding those who wished to have a blessing partner, not necessarily on those who wished to become a full-time member.

This, basically, was the situation on the eve of the new millennium. While Blessing 2000 still was more than a month away, two realities already were apparent. First, Blessing 2000 had not penetrated mainstream American culture. In fact, the shift away from previously married couples to single matching candidates only heightened the challenge of attracting mainstream Americans to the blessing. Japanese sisters were far more successful among minority populations, ethnic groups and new immigrants. Second, Blessing 2000 had not really empowered the U.S. movement. This observation was more open to debate as many felt revitalized. However, the reality was that Japanese sisters did the street witnessing and Korean regional leaders handled the decision-making, particularly matchmaking decisions. American members were in a supportive role, providing housing, transportation, monetary donations, occasionally lecturing or counseling, and handling public relations.

Things had not yet substantially changed, at least not to the extent that Rev. Moon had envisioned. There were four major ways members interpreted these realities. At the negative end of the spectrum, some concluded that the Blessing and, by extension, the movement’s program of world peace and unification, were flawed. The most negative of these members essentially agreed with the movement’s critics. The problem was with the movement. Those holding this perspective either disassociated themselves or became inactive. Another group

of members concluded that the problem was not with the movement but with themselves. The Blessing was real, and the movement's program was sound. The problem was their own lack of sincerity, purity and commitment. Members holding this perspective craved revival and associated themselves with spiritual phenomena holding forth the promise of personal and communal liberation. A third group concluded that the problem was not with the movement or its members but with the world. The movement and its membership had given everything, but the world, as ever, was treacherous, disbelieving and stubborn, "killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent." Members holding this perspective tended to associate themselves with efforts to recreate the world from scratch. A fourth group decided that there was no problem at all. The Blessing and the movement's program of world peace and unification, in fact, had succeeded. Human problems at every level were overcome. What remained was to live out the fruits of victory.

It, of course, would be mistaken to think that all members divided neatly into one or another of the above-described groupings. It was true that some individuals inclined and even gravitated quite clearly toward one or another of the perspectives. However, others held all of the positions or several of them in different combinations within their consciousness simultaneously. It also was apparent that the movement had not broken into four separate camps, at least not yet. Still, it was important to attain some level of clarity about these orientations as they represented the movement's live options and were in significant respects, sign-posts to the future.

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## M.J. Yasuko Bang

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Love is something I knew intimately before I joined the church through the birth of my two children. God gave my husband and I a daughter and a son. Our family had gone through so much together. When the children were 9 and 11 years old, we lost our home, car and telephone because of a bad investment my husband had made, but nothing prepared us for the loss of our son. The evil circumstances surrounding his death caused me to question the condition of the world. At that time, my pain was so deep that no one could help me. Only God could possibly help me—that is, if I could find Him. The only relief I could get was to pour myself into my music and express my anger and sadness. Seven years later, I heard the Divine Principle. What struck me was that God was suffering from the same loss as I. Immediately, I knew the depth of His suffering and vowed I would try to help Him and hope I could also help my son in a round-about way. First, I had to serve True Parents by leaving my family which included a husband of 36 years, my daughter and two grandsons. This was the most difficult test of my life because I loved my family so much, especially my daughter and two grandsons. My husband had been an agnostic all his life and was angry at my new belief, so I had to leave.

After True Mother asked me to teach music to her children, it took 10 years of struggling how to help them despite their dislike for members who received more love from Parents than they. Only Heavenly Father knows how many times I wondered whether I was going to make it. Being a grandmother with gray hair was somewhat a help. I began to notice, however, that when it got too heavy, always there was a moment of joy or a flash of realizing that the value of my mission was going to mean something beyond my understanding at that time. Through this experience, I began to realize how deep God's "han" was and I wished I could help more children. The opportunity came when True Father requested that I compose and publish many more books after I presented the first book to him. I thought at that time that if I ever fulfill this project, my preparation in music for most of my life would be for a higher purpose than I ever would have known without having met True Father.

As True Mother commented later after I finished the first seven books and video, "These books will go to the world."

As an unexpected return, every year through my dreams, I saw my son in spirit world grow from a baby to an adult of 26 years old, the age he was when he died. I was so taken by his affection and gratefulness for my work here on earth. The ache in my heart began to go away. To relieve my soul, my children's father became my spiritual son the day before he died. Six years later, my mother at 82 years old, had to have a tube in her lung to breathe and could not speak. She came to me 40 days after her death and told me how happy she was to join us in singing "Amazing Grace" that all of us sisters sang in harmony at her bedside as she made her transition.

As the days and years went by, I soon had to think seriously about the Blessing which Father talked so strongly about saying, "Without the Blessing we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." With True Father's advancing age, I was concerned I would miss out to get his personal direction about the Blessing so I decided to pray about it. In 1995 after composing a choral work called "Holy Blessing," for the young people who were to be blessed, I was surprised one night to dream and see the face of a man I didn't know. He was washing dishes in our kitchen when I came home from work. He seemed to be my husband and the father of my children who were in the background playing together. Of course, the children were the children from my first husband. This confused and shocked me, but as it would turn out, I was later very surprised when Father would indeed match me to this stranger who happened to be a Buddhist monk. My first thought was of my beloved grandmother, a devout Buddhist, whom I had loved very much. As in every Blessing, I knew it would not be easy. The difficulties were many. I understood intellectually that I have to restore the historical Korean and Japanese resentments, our cultural differences and his half a century of being a Buddhist monk. I knew the older one gets, the harder it is to change and my husband was 69 and I was 65 in '95; however, I was older spiritually, so the responsibility was on my shoulders to lead the way to unite. Happily, I must say here that True Father gave us one unifying point and that was a common great love for music. My husband would say to me often,

“Please play the piano and good spirits will come into our home, our heavenly palace,” as he calls it.

In retrospect, I realized that at 56 years of age when I joined the Unification Church, God had never left my side. I would only search for Him through my pain, a mother’s pain of losing a son. I finally found Him through True Parents. Now I could extend my “love” because I knew God had lost His precious children through the fall. Music could be a springboard. I believe that because God gave me this gift, I had the desire to nurture it through hard work and develop a quality of love that can express itself through my fingers and hopefully go directly to the hearts of those that hear this music here on earth and maybe lift those in Spirit World!

## Building a Heartisitic World

### Hans Moyer

I met and joined the True Parents’ teaching on my birthday in 1977. One month later, True Parents proclaimed the year one of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, Feb. 23, 1977. So somehow, due to the merit of the age, I was invited to live in the Kingdom.

Having had no religious upbringing whatsoever, I was like a fish out of water in the new world I had entered. This soon became apparent to those who had been entrusted by God to give me this introduction. I imagine a decision to send me off to “boot camp” via the MFT was in my best interest.

The few belongings I had had, never made it onto the Greyhound bus I boarded in San Francisco for Minnesota, my new home for the next three years. When I arrived, the first thing my MFT captain, Doug Culbertson III, did was to buy me an extra-long sleeping bag and a pair of sneakers. I think he picked me up during one of the runs that he was doing with the other members of our team. I was of course encouraged to go out with a partner, I think it was Pat Erlingson?, to test the waters on the local Target Store parking lot for donations.

Thus began my five-year initiation into the Unification Church. I worked for two years in the mid-western states before being transferred to the Carolinas for one year. In 1980, on the occasion of my matching, I

was to meet our True Parents personally for the first time. My first impression of True Father was that here was a man who knew how to farm. I had been raised mostly in the city and suburbs, yet my family originates in the northeast of Germany, where farming is a big thing. So, I can only imagine that it was my ancestors who were speaking to me at this memorable occasion of first meeting True Parents face to face. It was a reassuring experience for me.

After the wedding in Madison Square Garden and a few days together with my new wife, I was off to the Washington, D.C., area to work with MFT again. We worked as a team to begin a home delivery service. After a year the call came to join IOWC in the U.S.

IOWC was a chance to really see the States. We traveled in the motor homes, gave rallies and did lots of fundraising. At the end of the campaign, I found myself in New Hampshire. Here I worked for the first time in a witnessing center. My physical mother became my spiritual child at this time.

During Father’s incarceration in Danbury, I was working in Danbury with a small team as the City Leader. We had a motor home in which we lived and did witnessing activities. We tried to meet many ministers, but their response was not so positive. Eventually, I opened a CAUSA office in downtown Danbury where we gave lectures. It was also in Danbury where my wife (Felicita) and I began our family life. Our first daughter, Tasnah Young Sun, was conceived here and born in 1988 in White Plains, NY.

With the advent of the family came a new dimension of church life. We moved to Philadelphia which is near my hometown in the U.S. Here we experienced center life with family. Many new challenges arose and opportunities for spiritual growth were abundant. Our second daughter, Kyra In Sun, was born in Philadelphia. During this time, at the behest of our Center director, Mrs. Eu, I was able to complete my studies for a Bachelors Degree. On this foundation I attended UTS from 1991 to 1993.

Our graduating class was the first one to do so in the “Completed Testament Era.” We were all invited to participate in the traditional 40-day workshop with Rev. Ahn in Kodiak, Alaska by our True Parents. We had many lectures, but mostly we went fishing and spent time with True Parents. What a wonderful bonding time for me. At the end of the 40 days, True Father asked all





the graduates to go to Russia and help the movement there. So in the spring of 1994 we packed up the family and went to pioneer in Irkutsk, Siberia.

The two years in Russia opened our eyes to the suffering of people under the former communist system. All the CAUSA lectures took on form as we encountered the infamous KGB system and the oppression of the wonderful people of Russia. Living in Siberia awoke in me the compassion for my fellow men and women. We had a chance to visit Mongolia through a teachers' seminar and that magical land left a permanent impression. Our third child, our son Nikoli Hyo Young, was born in Irkutsk in 1994.

On our return to the States in 1995, we stopped to visit our relatives in Germany, renewing bonds and recuperating from the deprivation of Russia. While in the States, we suddenly found ourselves on our own. We had moved into the Philadelphia area again but the active center life was no longer for us. We longed for a Unificationist community in which to realize our lifelong ideas for building a heartistic world.

When the Chung Pyung Lake providence began and the call for National Messiahs was made, we didn't really feel prepared to take on such a responsibility. Yet, the need for volunteers for this project was such that we asked to be placed on a reserve list. In the fall of 1996 Felicitas went to the 40-day workshop and through the lottery picked El Salvador as our nation. I went to the 40-day workshop in the winter of that same year. For the next year we prepared as much as possible both internally and externally for the move to our new home.

After a few exploratory trips, we finally packed up the truck (literally) and drove to El Salvador. We arrived here in August of 1998 and have been busy trying to assimilate the culture and mission.

On reflection, these 21 years have certainly been filled with many experiences that only God could make happen. Our life has and continues to be filled with challenges, yet I would never exchange this life with our True Parents for any other. Thank you, Heavenly Father.

## God's Sweet Grace

**John Bowles**

Sometimes our lives change without our knowing it until better understanding arrives later.

Not too long ago, while lying on the floor under an industrial floor scrubber, repairing a broken hydraulic line, I had the most unexpected sensation of forgiveness—actually of both forgiving and being forgiven. While metal chips and oily dirt fell on my hair and face, there came suddenly out of nowhere strong and clear mental images of certain central figures I had formed a dislike of and even harbored resentment toward. My July 1997 visit to Chung Pyung relieved this resentfulness somewhat. But honestly speaking, deep down I still blamed others for difficulties in life.

But now, on this quiet Saturday morning, something was different. As these persons' faces appeared one by one before my mind's eye, there was a melting away of any anger towards them. In fact, I found myself wanting to serve them. Personally. Directly. If only I could get out of this place and give my support for even the most difficult, most obnoxious person on Earth, it would be great—as long as it was for God's will. It was then on that cool hard floor that the awesomeness of Jesus' words about forgiving seventy-times-seventy times hit hard. And True Father too, he has been doing this too, time and painful time again in his own life. It was a wonderful feeling. How was God's grace working for me like this? What was happening? Where did this new attitude begin? Was it some newfound desire to work in South America? Hopefulness? Wishful thinking? Nothing unusual had happened recently. What was going on?

As I reached for wrenches and disconnected fittings, my thoughts began drifting, searching, running in the background of my mind for some clue as to the origin of this new-found compassion. In reality it is very hard to link one specific cause to one specific effect in our complex lives, but there was one possibility that came to mind. An experience simple and humbling. Remembering it in this context made me choke out loud at the implications and brought tears to my eyes. I felt sorry for not trusting God and True Parents more over

all these years. Wiping a speck of dirt from my eye, I began to remember a bizarre event from the previous summer.

It happened at a Native American Pow Wow in the countryside north of Tulsa, Oklahoma. My family and I were tending a pre-Blessing cold drinks table to serve the thirsty dancers and Pow Wow visitors suffering from 100-degree temperatures.

It must have been late in the second day of our activities there that a young Indian girl, about 13 or 14 years old, began appearing at to our table. Our supply of "drinks" (served in little 5-ounce cups) was limited, so I began to get a little incensed at her repeated visits.

Claire cautioned me against taking action because, who knows what the spiritual world might be working out at an event like this—the whole Pow Wow event was incredibly spiritual, as was our own work. You are right, dear, I agreed reluctantly, as Miss Pocahontas brought a friend along for more refreshments. Yes, Claire must be right, I thought. Maybe we are here to right some wrong done to her ancestors, or to keep something bad from happening now, or she is actually distributing this blessing to her family members elsewhere. Who knows? Multiplication of goodness—of course, no problem. Yes, there's some hidden value I could not see.

But then, she and her friend returned with glass jars! I almost couldn't restrain myself. Claire, the true heart of our family, remained adamant. Maybe we have a big debt to pay to her, she cautioned, maybe a great big debt. I felt sorry inside and repented. The day ended without her returning. We did more Pow Wow work that summer and had other inspiring experiences, but I will always remember that unbearable sun and a young Native American girl. Is there a connection between these two experiences? My mind couldn't say exactly, but my heart said, Yes. Gratitude followed.

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## Hometown

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### John Doroski

Witnessing at bus stops was a bummer. Witnessing at college campuses or missionary work in a foreign country was a bummer if one succeeded to gain spiritual children, raise and become close in heart to them; for one had to move on to new missions and become heartbroken. Hometown is Heavenly Father's gift to us, the gift of settlement. When I was pioneering in Texas, I set up a new age book table on the main route that more than 2,000 students passed at each hourly class change. I would see my spiritual children and hundreds of contacts nearly every day. Of course we all became close in heart. This is what hometown is—taking up a community of people that you see daily or weekly and getting involved in improving their lives. It is neat. As I drive my car my hand goes up constantly to say hello. In the local supermarket and Seven Eleven my mind is challenged to add to the hello, to give some meaningful message. It is a great to dwell in a realm of endless give and take of love. We need not be gypsies anymore.

Prior to hometown most of us merely advertised about coming to hear lectures on Rev. Moon's Divine Principle. Now in hometown we have the opportunity to bear witness to the truth of the Divine Principle. It is great to not be a salesman anymore, but just to be loving and caring and have people all around ask: Who are you? Who are you and your wife? Why are your children so nice? Why is your home so peaceful? If they witness love, truth and peace within me through constant contact in the hometown community, they naturally come to believe my philosophy and that my God is real.

The Unification Church doesn't exist anymore. Only hometown and family church! God is everywhere and through hometown and restoration of the cow-dung culture, my wife and I are constantly discovering Heavenly Father's unsung heroes. We encourage them to give more, live longer and link up with the Family Federations International Networking Community to cross fertilize and add power to their kingdom-building work, already in progress.

Enjoy True Parent's gift. We are a thought form of God and the culture around us is a combined thought form of those living with physical bodies and associated spirit persons. Hometown is healing resentments and transforming thought forms to project Heavenly Father's Kingdom.

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## James Hammond Robinson

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I joined in May 1972, in Kansas City. It hasn't been easy being a black, American Principle-ian. With all the cultural baggage I've had to carry, the Divine Principle offered a challenge that was nearly overwhelming. The biggest challenge was to remember that I was in training, and therefore shouldn't take any experiences personally, while at the same time recognizing that everything I experienced was somehow meant for me.

Between the years of 1972 and 2000 I experienced many things, and learned many more. Strangely enough, those lessons made me the person I am today—a well-trained son for God, ready to influence the world.

Here is a list, probably incomplete and out of order, of my missions:

MFT/Belvedere Condition; Belvedere 120-Day Trainee under Young Whi Kim; State Representative for Missouri; Ministers' Witnessing Team with Helen Danby, Rose Chapman, and Pastor Wm. Luke in upstate New York; the Prison Program in New Jersey under Mr. Kamiyama; VOC Pioneer/FLF Field Representative in (New Orleans) Louisiana; member of Ron Pepper's IOWC; News World Communications—Misc. projects, *Harlem Weekly*, Assistant Managing Editor, *UFOs and Other Cosmic Phenomena* weekly tabloid; IOWC Assistant Commander Team #30; Blessed at Madison Square Garden in 1981; launched the *World and I* under Dong Moon Joo; and founded the American Space Culture Foundation.

One re-occurring theme encountered during my life has been outer space. This theme was first noticed shortly after I joined the HSA, and was visible in church teachings; it then reappeared at various times, from various places—becoming stronger with each appearance. The DP provides concrete answers to the more tricky questions concerning outer space.

Meanwhile, in my Home Church area, I've been working to build a personal foundation to stand on while attempting to influence the Armour Blvd. neighborhood. I returned to my hometown, Kansas City, in early 1993 and began community work: Midtown Managers Association Against Crime (later to become the Metropolitan Managers Against Crime when I became president of the organization); Armour Boulevard Neighborhood Taskforce (ABNeT), Armour Boulevard Resource Center at the Bainbridge Apts; teaching classes on how to use the internet for Elderhostle/SPARK at the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Now I'm striving to accomplish as much as possible on developing new habits. The immaterial side has been dominated; all attention is focused on external development. It's an exciting adventure because I'm having to do things I've never done before. Everything changes when you see the cosmos from God's point of view—there are no mysteries.

## An 8-Year-Old Explains God

### Danny Dutton, age 8

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die so there will be enough people to take care of things here on earth. He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think it's because they are smaller and easier to make. That way, He doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk; He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times besides bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV on account of this. Since He hears everything, not only prayers, there must be a terrible lot of noise in His ears, unless He has thought of a way to turn it off. God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere, which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting His time by going over your parents' head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't

any who come to our church. Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of Him preaching to them and they crucified Him. But He was good and kind like His Father and He told His Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said OK. His Dad (God) appreciated everything that He had done and all His hard work on earth, so He told Him He didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did.

And now He helps His Dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important, of course. You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to hear you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

You should always go to Church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong! And, besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim very good and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids. But you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and He can take me back anytime He pleases. And that's why I believe in God.

## Special Grace

### Tony Aparo

I believe that my whole life has been a special grace given to me by Heavenly Father. I was born shortly after my physical father's miraculous healing after his ill-fated airplane crash. At 18 months old, I was severely burned when I pulled a full urn of scalding hot coffee over me. My face, chest and two-thirds of my body were covered with second- and third-degree burns and the



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doctors at the time gave me a 50/50 chance of survival. Their prognosis was that even if I did survive, I would have severe scars over most of my face and body.

My parents were quite new to their faith, but as Pentecostals they were led to believe strongly in the miraculous healing power of God and Jesus. The church that they attended decided to do a 21-day prayer vigil for my healing and recovery. Towards the end of the condition, my mother later related to me that she awoke one night not being able to sleep and came to my room. I began to stir and as she turned me over the scab that had covered most of my face and body popped off like a cocoon or mask. Underneath the skin tissue was absolutely normal with no scar tissue remaining. My recovery started a major revival in the church that lasted for months.

I believe that this episode and the resulting emotional trauma caused me to create a kind of isolation shell around myself for many years. I was absolutely confident as a child and quite capable of caring for myself, but not at all secure around others. Even though I was a likable person, I never felt at ease around others and felt more comfortable alone. Although I realize this is not a good space to be in, I believe it served me to keep my own counsel and not to be so heavily influenced by others as I was growing up. God was an inner reality for me and the only one on whom I could ever depend. I would spend long periods in nature, feeling embraced by my surroundings. There was this kind of spirit around me often. So in a way, this was grace for me. Later I would have to learn another approach, and become more other-centered, but for a time I needed that.

In my life, I have often felt that God gave me many things that I needed, not always what I wanted, but certainly what I needed. I had a few mentors who came my way from time to time to help and guide me before my church life and after. These were special people, like father figures who took an interest in me and helped to guide me.

In my church life also, I felt tremendous grace from both Heavenly Father and True Father. All of my missions in the church after my initial joining and after I began working on the MFT were given to me directly by Father. At the matching in 1979, Father of course chose my wife and the next day, since it was her birthday, Father had us stand as the representative couple to

receive the Holy Wine.

I will never forget this moment ever. I have also had many special and precious moments speaking with Father and Mother personally, reporting to him about my business work, even sharing with him the Blessing of my own parents and showing him pictures. I could never have done this without God's grace and True Parents' grace to allow me to return to my hometown and Bless them. Without True Father's intervention in my life and suggesting that I return, I never would have. I had considered my parents unapproachable when it came to Blessing them.

Another experience sharing Father's grace was when we had the opportunity to Bless my wife's mother in her home on the way to our mission country in Thailand. We stopped over in Japan to visit Chiyo's mother and brothers. Although her father had passed away a couple years before, we took the opportunity to Bless them by picture as a single Blessing.

One recent experience I had with True Parents and Heavenly Father's grace was when I was able to return to an old mission site in Kodiak, Alaska. I never imagined that I would return to this place. When I left Kodiak in 1984, I left under difficult circumstances. I had been asking to change missions, because I was finding it increasingly difficult to unite with my CF and felt my continued presence there would just create more problems. I felt perhaps if we were in different locations we would find each other more bearable. Anyway, I always felt in some way that I had let True Father down. Over the years I felt myself paying indemnity for that decision, but during the recent Ocean Challenge 40-day workshop, I felt a sense of closure to that episode. Coming back and rededicating myself to the Ocean providence to inherit True Father's foundation. This was truly Heavenly Father's grace.

I cannot say more. Everything I am and will ever be is because of Heavenly Father and True Parents. Everything I have acquired in my life including my family, I owe to True Parents and God. I am quite certain that we are Children of True Parents and I give all the glory to them and to Heavenly Father.

## Museum of True Love

### Debby Gullery

Well, clearly marriage is the hot topic. As the providence goes, so goes the rest of the world—or at least NY! Case in point, the Museum of the City of New York decided to do an exhibition chronicling the history of marriage in New York City. And what would a display on marriage in New York be without a little something on one of the most exciting marriages ever to take place—ours!—at Madison Square Garden in 1982.

The curator of the museum’s costume collection, Phyliss Magidson, contacted headquarters in early spring, looking for a couple who would donate their wedding dress to the museum’s permanent collection. Peter Ross, then director of Public Affairs, asked us whether we would consider this. At first we were a little reluctant, having some vague idea that we would leave the dress to our children. We remembered, however, how Father had often talked about our things being in museums and we realized what a great honor it was. “The legacy of your family should be museum pieces for the world. The world in which you live centering upon yourself is not your treasure. Your treasure is only what you received in the public dimension.”

Taking the dress out of its humble cardboard box in the back of the storage closet was a lot of fun—our daughter tried it on of course, and the boys enjoyed goofing around as we went through all the keepsakes we had stored from the Blessing. It was a wonderful opportunity to share our experiences and stories with our children.

Phyliss was fascinated with our blessing. At first we thought her interest was in just acquiring the dress, but as the months passed between our donation and the installation and opening of the exhibition itself, we struck up quite a friendship. She really wanted to know about our matching, our feelings during the blessing

itself, and our thoughts about family life. Everything struck her as being so sensible! I had expected that her approach to us would have been much more academic.

At some point I mentioned that we had a video of our blessing that followed several couples through the matching and blessing process, along with footage of the wedding dresses being made. She was so excited! She hoped that somehow funding would be available to provide for a video in the exhibition itself. I gave her the video of the 1982 event and she became even more enthusiastic. This led to another person being genuinely interested in the event. Phyliss passed our video on to her when she was commissioned to produce the exhibi-



*Working on the veils for the 1982 Blessing at Madison Square Garden, Headquarters Building, New York City*

tion’s own video which followed four couples through their own weddings in New York. This young woman, in turn, was completely enthusiastic, and asked so many deep questions. In our years of dealing with the public and the press, we have become so used to pointed questions, to being looked at as sincere but a little odd! At each stage of inclusion in the exhibition, however, they would call us and say “We would like to say this with

your dress—this with your program—this with your photo—is that correct? Is that OK” etc., so we felt that we had complete control over everything they wanted to use. They were so careful to respect our own wishes and feelings, while also portraying an accurate historical account of the event.

When “New York Gets Married: Dressing for a Special Day, 1765-1997” opened on May 21, 1997, our jaws dropped. There, in the video were True Parents, arms outstretched, praying over our 2,000 couples, and then three manseis. In all, some five minutes of footage from our video was used, and we stood transfixed, along with everyone else watching! We could only imagine how many people watched that video, which ran continuously, from the time the exhibition opened until it closed on September 21. We felt that this really was True Parents’ symbolic blessing of all of New York, and all who came and stood there, in some way joined in our blessing of 15 years before.

## Blessed Life

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### Tony Aparo

In May 1979, I was returning from a trip to Atlantic City with Hank Lemmers. He and I had been working on a restaurant project for Col. Pak and had gone to New Jersey to purchase some furniture at auction. Some of the furniture was to be delivered to Mt. Kisco, one of our facilities. After driving all night long we pulled into the Mt. Kisco center at about 7:00 am, ready to rest for a few hours before returning to New York City. Just as we pulled into the drive, one young brother came out the door yelling that there was a matching taking place and that all eligible candidates should report to the New Yorker Hotel within the hour. One Japanese brother, Hiroshi Aono, and myself got into the van and took off down the Hudson River Parkway, arriving at the New Yorker just in time to participate in the song service in preparation for Father’s arrival.

Father came and began to speak. I was wide awake but my mind was a blur. I couldn’t believe that this was really happening. After a flurry of matchings, Father came our way, pointed to me and pointed to someone else. It happened so fast I couldn’t even tell who it was

that Father had pointed to. In any case, one sister stood up and we walked upstairs to talk. Somehow, even though I had tried to prepare for this moment and to accept whatever spouse Father gave me, I found myself quite unprepared and I told her so. I had believed for a long time that I would have an international marriage and that I imagined that she would probably be Oriental. Interestingly, this sister expressed the same thing to me, only she had imagined that her spouse would be European. We ended up expressing to each other that perhaps we should both go back downstairs and we politely parted.

This was an extreme trauma for me, and I began to repent and wonder if I was indeed ready for the Blessing. I decided that I wasn’t and went downstairs to tell my spiritual father and Mr. Salonen, who was helping the Americans at the matching. Mr. Salonen really encouraged me to try again. At first I didn’t think this was even an option, but I half-heartedly went to sit down in the group again, not really expecting Father to call on me again. After lunch, Father began again and within five minutes of sitting down, Father asked the brothers to raise their hands if they wanted an Oriental woman. I was surprised, because I thought that all the Japanese and Korean sisters had already been matched in the first round. But for some reason, this sister had not come until the second session, having been delayed. I raised my hand. I could not see who she was or what she looked like because Father was standing between us. He scanned the upraised hands and chose one brother. My heart sank. After looking him up and down Father told him to sit down because he was too tall. I was still in the running, but there were about 20 brothers around me with their hands up. At that moment, Father locked his eyes on mine and called to me to stand up. It was then that Father moved and I could see my future bride.

Her name was Chiyo Suehiro. I had met her before while working in Gloucester in the tuna business. She was working in Gloucester at the old Magnolia house. Father had chosen some members to live in Gloucester as a pioneer effort. Our first meeting there was when I had stopped back at the house to pick up some equipment at the end of the 1977 season.

So I was quite surprised to see her standing there being matched to me. As Father stood us together he sent me off with a slap on the back and said, “She’s good

for you.” I have never doubted those words since then for they have proved to be true over and over again.

Our life was a struggle at first. Her former husband had fallen while in his mission country and she had just learned of his infidelity shortly before the matching. I learned later that she had been willing to wait for seven years, but he had not. A few weeks after that meeting she was encouraged to be rematched at this matching. It took me a long time to win her trust. Her faith was also tested when shortly after our matching I was asked to go to South America to a business mission. These were exactly the circumstances through which her former husband had left. So she was again asked to wait faithfully. We separated until July 1982, occasionally being able to visit, always writing and making monthly telephone calls.

I will never forget our telephone calls. We would wait with anticipation on that day and I would be so nervous, wondering if she would forget or not. We took turns making the calls and when the phone would ring at the appointed hour, it would be such a relief. Then it would be over and I would have so much energy for the next month, feeling secure that my spouse was spiritually supporting me. In that 3 1/2 year period we grew in love and prepared for the day we would be together.

During this period, we had the opportunity to also visit with her parents, once in Japan, once in New York after the matching and once in my hometown of Omaha. Chiyo’s family is from a Buddhist background.

In July 1982 we were Blessed. My mother, who had then recently also become my spiritual daughter, arranged to come to New York City to witness the Blessing. One of my other spiritual children was also being Blessed at the same time, so it was a real family affair. After 40 days my wife joined me in Kodiak. Even though we thought we knew each other from 3 1/2 years of correspondence and brief meetings, we were quite unprepared for all the differences we encountered culturally. The hardest was communication on a heartistic level. The western concept is that whenever we have something on our mind, we let it out. But the Oriental mind is different. They keep it in, let it float around a little, then digest it. Then they work out a solution in their hearts that you may never hear about. For me it was maddening, because I thought I was being ignored and she probably thought I was losing my mind. If there was a problem, I wanted an immediate solution and reso-

lution. Somewhere between the two worlds there is an answer, and over the years we have learned to appreciate one another’s differences.

International marriages are probably the most difficult, especially those from completely different cultures. My wife and I consider ourselves fortunate to have had some preparation beforehand. She spent seven years with American brothers and sisters before the Blessing where she could at least learn the language and get acquainted with some of the culture. I also was able to spend a good deal of time with the Japanese members, even living with the Kamiyamas for a period of time.

One of the most memorable experiences for me was the birth of our fourth child, Daejo. He was our offering child to another couple. I would have to say that if there was one experience we shared that bonded us, aside from, of course, the birth of all our children, it was the experience of offering a child to another. This is a very personal experience that is difficult to explain in words. This experience led us to a place beyond culture. It was a glimpse into the realm of True Love.

My wife and I have come to a stage in life where we are interdependent. We rely on each other, support each other and complete each other. We are each other’s best friend.

I understand now why Father said that sometimes he wants to just follow Mother around. I feel like that sometimes. I can’t wait to tell her about the day’s events. We know there is more growth for each of us, but we are confident that our love and love for God will serve us in all situations. We trust also that the love that we share can also be a source of hope for our children.

In our current mission, the unity and trust that we have built has helped us to adjust more easily to our new environment and to support our children who struggled at first in a new culture. This is by far the most difficult mission that we have had, and we thank God for all the struggles that we have faced as a couple over the years that have helped us in some way to prepare. Without this we could never have accepted this calling.