

Kingdom Building Conference Provides Spiritual Renewal at Atlantic City

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Rev. Jeong Ok Yu gave 16 lectures over three days without losing anybody's attention.

More than 600 ministers, church activists of various denominations and Unificationists from states on the Eastern Seaboard renewed their marriage vows during a four-day theology conference concluding Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2011 at Bally's Hotel in Atlantic City.

The seminar, entitled "Registration for God's Kingdom and Fatherland," was a profound lecture series on the foundational principles in the Bible as revealed to Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) co-sponsored the conference along with the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (the Unification Church). Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, Jr., Co-President of ACLC shared, "Father Moon received an anointing from Jesus to bring to us 'New Wine' from the sacred texts of the Bible. Jesus told us that we must put 'New Wine into New Wine Skins,' meaning that we must approach this 'new wine' or new understanding coming from the scriptures with an open and 'new' mind. This experience, as with our experience in Korea with 172 clergy, will transform your spirit, your family, your clergy, and your communities in God's love."

The core teaching of the conference was based on the "Original Substance Divine Principle (OSDP), and was taught by Rev. Jeong Ok Eu of Korea, who told the participants that Original Substance of the Divine Principle represents a summary of True Parents' teachings about the Original Being (God), the Principles of Creation and Principles of Restoration.

Although the Balley's Resort at Atlantic City provided a premier resort experience on the ocean, it primarily was an experience of spiritual renewal that required sincerity and focused discipline. The clergy and faith leaders thrived on this kind of experience of devotion, praise, worship, and sincere study. A praise team opened each session with uplifting song. A beautiful video presentation featured Rev. In Jin Moon, ACLC's chief adviser, and renowned civil rights leader Dr. Joseph Lowery at the 2009 ACLC Convocation.

The afternoons had special sessions dedicated to discussion and evenings set aside for testimonies and a marriage-blessing for all couples and families, according to Rev. Joshua Cotter, vice-president of the Unification Church USA.

"The schedule was demanding, and yet the participants were remarkably attentive and punctual," Rev.

Cotter observed. "There were some clergy and guests who had heard nothing about the Divine Principle, but because of the recommendations and personal witness of the 172 clergy who went to Korea in September, they were eager to listen and could receive the contents well," he added.

Some of the participants reported that they felt the spirit of the Holy Ghost in the room from the time the lectures began. "What I heard was electrifying, that is, after hearing Original Divine Principle lectures about God's Original Masculinity and Original Femininity. The atmosphere of the seminar was one of total love and appreciation of the fact that God has sent His messenger, a messenger who has the key for total physical and spiritual salvation," according to Pastor Matt Goldberg, head of the Lovin' Life congregation in Maryland.



From left, Minister Tanya Edwards, Bishop Michael Sykes, Dr. Tina Saxon, Bishop Jesse Edwards, Rev. Michael Jenkins (at podium).

Bishop Sulanch Grant Lewis brought 19 ministers from many churches in Brooklyn as well as from her own Little Rock International Christian Church in Brooklyn, New York. She shared at one of the testimonial evenings that "Something happened to me in Korea with the 172. I was so moved by Father Moon's call to the clergy. I could feel his heart of urgency and compassion for all people. It moved me to answer his call to stay with other clergy in Korea to finish our mission there. Then he called us to bring 12 to expand the movement to bring God's Kingdom, and I felt so deeply responsible as a Christian leader that it is time to bring the churches together to realize God's Kingdom. I have had such spiritual insight and revelation from the Atlantic City Kingdom Building Conference. This movement will transform the body of Christ and the world."

On Tuesday evening, Oct. 18, 2011, all participants participated in a marriage rededication ceremony. Rev. Michael Jenkins, chairman of the American Clergy Leadership Conference, and his wife, Minister Reiko Jenkins, leader of Women in Ministry, presided over the ceremony. There were 72 couples that came forward to renew their vows. Rev. Jenkins shared with the clergy that "Adam and Eve disobeyed God and formed a family that God could not bless. Jesus came with God's lineage but was not supported, and the family was never established with God's lineage. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave the wine of communion, which represents engrafting spiritually into the blood lineage of God. However, this was only extended as grace to the individual. Jesus is now returning and has anointed Father and Mother Moon as the True Parents to extend the holy wine of this ceremony not only to the individual but to the couple and to the whole family as well."

Bishop Jesse Edwards and Rev. Tanya Edwards, ACLC Executive Clergy, told the conference about the impact of the marriage blessing on their lives. Bishop Edwards explained that they had been married for many years, however for about 20 years their marriage had been struggling and that without the blessing, it most likely would not have made it. Rev. Tanya Edwards quipped: "Actually, it was 25 years!"

[laughter] I want to sincerely share with you that this blessing that God has given through True Parents completely changed our marriage. I could feel that our marriage was 'sealed' by God through this, and that the Holy Spirit enveloped us with a love and protection that we never had before."

Archbishop Stallings gave a beautiful testimony about how he met his wife, Sayomi, through this movement. He was traveling with Father Moon on a 50-state tour and was deeply moved by True Parents' example of family. He asked Father Moon to bless him in marriage, and he testified that when he first met his wife, she was a secretary for Rev. Levy Daughtery, the executive director of the ACLC. "I felt something the moment I saw her -- however, I thought she must be married, because everyone in this movement is married," the Archbishop said. When Father Moon asked Bishop Stallings if he wanted to be blessed, he said "yes."



Participants raised their voices, their arms and their spirits as Bishop Jesse Edwards led singing

"Somehow I knew I was going to marry Sayomi, and Father Moon put Sayomi and I together," Archbishop Stallings said. "We are so happy. Dr. Cain Hope Felder of Howard Divinity School shared that Jesus was of Afro-Asiatic origins. I now see my two sons as anointed and special with that same Afro-Asiatic heritage. They are second generation! Any second generation know what I am talking about. When we walk in the airport, people will stop us and say, 'those boys are so special.' This is why I can see the blessing of True Parents brings all the cultures of mankind together in love."

Minister Rosa Hodges of Imani Temple, a minister under Archbishop Stallings, shared that "Everything I learned in this seminar for kingdom building just expands what Archbishop Stallings has taught us. Now I can see it with my own eyes and understand why Archbishop Stallings is so inspired by Father and Mother Moon and the ACLC. Also, I want to say that the best thing that ever happened to Imani Temple is Sayomi. She has brought us so much love."

Apostle Floyd and Dr. Yvonne Nelson, a prominent bishop of a major denomination, told the crowd that "This movement has the power to bring unity and understanding. It will strengthen your ministry and help your couples and your members live a much better life for the Lord."

During the workshop we heard from 12 of the 172 clergy, some of whom testified powerfully to their conviction that True Parents are God's messengers," Rev. Cotter told Familyfed.org. "We are at a new level of cooperation between American clergy and our True Parents as a result of the 172 ministers going to Korea to support the minister tour," he said, adding that True Parents have directed leaders of the Unification Church to implement two more Original Substance Principle workshops in Atlantic City. An OSDP seminar will start in Las Vegas on Oct. 21, 2011 that is expected to draw 300 participants.

Pastors and lay ministers at the Atlantic City OSDP were urged to take three action steps after they return

home, according to Rev. David Rendel, chief of operations at Unification Church headquarters in New York: “First, each pastor was urged to bring 12 members of his or her congregation to an OSDP workshop during the months of October and November; second, they should have local pastors' forums in their home cities, and third, they should implement marriage-blessings in their own churches.”