

## Tribal Messiahs' Convention: TribeNet in Las Vegas Days Two and Three

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Throughout the second day, we heard testimonies about the process and experiences of our first tribal messiahs here in America to share the Holy Marriage Blessing with 430 couples and families. With each testimony, the patterns behind their success began to emerge: they weren't waiting for directions, they were working together and supporting others to achieve their goals, as in the case of Tomiko and Denny Duggan; they were standing up, however alone or unworthy they felt, to bless the people in their lives.

“May I bless your couple?” and “May I bless your family?” was a simple, recurring phrase that the tribal messiahs demonstrated to be a simple but effective way to express their sincerity and speak to the heart of the people they met.

I was moved by how incredibly proactive tribal messiahs have been in their care and service of their neighbors and communities. The Acevedos and Claudette Kambara, for example, have continually offered support and love to local initiatives. In the case of the venerable Rev. Jeddie King and Rev. Elma King, they offered much needed gifts of food, clothing, and basic necessities, in the addition to the Blessing.

On Sunday, we gathered together with Unificationists from the local area for a morning worship service at IPEC, where Rev. Richard Buessing, president of FFWPU-USA, delivered the sermon. Rev. Buessing reflected on the course we've taken as a nation this year, from True Parents' Birthday and Foundation

Day celebrations in Korea, through Famicon to the incredible peak of our victory at Madison Square Garden, all the way to the current moment of TribeNet. So much has happened in just this year and Rev. Buessing expressed his excitement, confidence and hope for 2018 and the years to come.



Amid all of these testimonies and sharing, we also took ample opportunity to celebrate God, True Parents, and one another. We drove out to Red Rock Canyon to drink in the ever-unexpected, desert beauty of Nevada; we went bowling together—like we were taking a massive family outing together. Throughout the weekend, we had a game room set up for our younger and young-at-heart participants, creating one of the more family-friendly environments I've ever seen at one of our conferences.

And on the evening of the third day, we all dressed up for a formal banquet and celebration of our victorious tribal messiahs. This part of the program is probably the hardest to describe though also the most precious. There was excellent music and great food, a lot of laughter. We formally recognized our successful tribal messiahs: Joe and Sun Willett, Dennis and Mayuri Hoffman, Jeddie and Elma King, Tomiko and Denny Duggan, and Ken and Sang Moo Borneman, with three more couples honored in absentia.

And at one point during the evening, the couples in the room were all invited to come up to the front of the stage and dance. In that moment I felt how happy God must be that, amid all the suffering and brokenness in the world, there was at this little room where he could feel welcomed and at peace, knowing that the people gathered there knew his heart and are striving not only to grow in love themselves but to create a world where every single person can know such love, peace, and freedom.

As the program winds down this morning and we prepare to say our final goodbyes, I can only say that it's been a privilege to be here and that the experience is almost too rich to describe.