

This week in history, January 22-28:

Michael Mickler
January 23, 2017

January 22, 1976 Unification Church Center in Paris Bombed



On January 22, 1976, the Villa Aublet, a Unification Church center in Paris, was bombed, leaving a young woman from Norway seriously injured. Persecution and bomb threats toward Unificationists in France began in 1975 and were fueled by the French media.

The French media portrayed True Father satirically, as a monster and a Nazi. This finally led to the bombing of the church center by a communist group.

Other events followed, such as kidnappings and an increasing number of bomb threats across

France, and the government did little to protect the persecuted Unificationists.

True Father instructed Henri Blanchard, the national leader for the Unification Church in France, to organize a protest against the violence toward the church. With the headline “Accepterons-Nous la Violence et le Mensonge?” (“Are We Going to Accept Violence and Lies?”), Unificationists in France stood up for justice.

The Paris City Hall was reluctant to give them a permit to protest but in the end had no choice. The message of the protest was that the French people should not tolerate violence, and—as France prides itself in the words “freedom, equality and brotherhood”—these key values apply to Unificationists just like anyone else.



January 22, 1995
Japan-USA Sisterhood Ceremonies Begin



Beginning on January 22, 1995, and extending to March 8, four thousand Japanese women traveled to Washington, D.C., to be paired with an equal number of American women in eight sisterhood ceremonies sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP). These were set to coincide with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Each ceremony included a dramatic "bridge-crossing" during which a representative group of the Japanese delegates crossed over a special bridge and met their American counterparts in the middle, where each bowed, embraced the other, and then walked down together, hand in hand. Following the highly successful Washington, D.C., conferences, WFWP 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, WFWP conducted a number of "African-American/Caucasian-American" ceremonies. Activities in the United States inspired Austrian-Croatian, Czech-German, Russian-German, Hungarian-Slovakian, and Italian-Slovakian sisterhood ceremonies conducted by WFWP chapters in Europe.

January 22, 2000
America Honors Rev. Sun Myung Moon on His 80th Birthday



More than 3,000 people from across the United States and more than 100 nations packed the ballroom of the Washington, D.C., Hilton Towers Hotel in America's celebration of True Father's 80th birthday on January 22, 2000. Participants included former U.K. Prime Minister Edward Heath, founding President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, representatives from numerous U.S. universities, institutes and societies, state legislators, international scholars and government ministers, as well as representatives from most of the world's major faiths. The program included birthday greetings from Washington, D.C., Mayor Anthony Williams and a City Council resolution detailing True Father's contributions to the District of Columbia, the United States and the world, proclaiming "Live for the Sake of Others Day" in his honor. True Parents received large bouquets and cut a huge, eight-tiered cake, representing his 80 years and eight stages of cosmic victory. True Father delivered a message, "The Path for America

and Humanity in the Last Days," in which he explained the meaning of living for others, and of God's love and purpose for America and challenged America to fulfill God's Will. Afterward Sir Edward Heath and Dr. Kenneth Kaunda were joined by U.S. state legislators and representatives of world peace organizations founded by True Father to present him with the "Peacemaker of the Millennium Award." Founding American Unificationists, together with current and former church presidents, honored True Father's investment in America with the "Forty Years Foundation Award."

January 23, 1991

21-Day Seminar for Soviet Students Starts in Hungary

A 21-day Divine Principle workshop for 420 university students from the Soviet Union took place simultaneously in Budapest, Hungary, and Leningrad, USSR, from January 23 to February 10, 1991. This workshop was meant to impart a deeper understanding of Divine Principle to the students who had attended the 10-day introductory International Leadership Seminars in the United States during the summer of 1990. After a fruitless search in the Soviet Union, Poland and Finland for workshop sites that would be free during the students' winter break, finally a friend of the Unification movement found the Hotel Ezuspart on Lake Ballaton in the resort town of Siofok, Hungary, 108 kilometers (about 67 miles) outside Budapest. Because not all the workshop participants could travel out of the Soviet Union on such short notice, a second workshop site was prepared in Leningrad. The staff for the workshop comprised 21 European national FFWPU leaders, 10 American Constitution Committee leaders and 10 students of Unification Theological Seminary.

January 27, 1951

True Father and Won Pil Kim Arrive in Pusan



South Koreans flee south after North Korea invades

After his release from Hungnam Labor Camp on October 14, 1950, True Father walked some 300 kilometers across the Korean Peninsula, arriving in Pyongyang ten days later. He spent 40 days in Pyongyang, searching for former members of his congregation, and finally departed for the South on December 2, 1950, in advance of the Red Chinese army. He was accompanied by his disciple Won Pil Kim and by Chong Hwa Pak, a follower from Hungnam Prison who was injured and had to be pushed on a bicycle. This began their nearly two-month trek to Pusan at the southernmost point of the peninsula. Abandoning refugee columns that were continually being bombed, they traveled

alternate routes, sometimes were set upon by vigilantes and were subject to all manner of deprivations. Hearing that Pusan was overflowing with refugees, Chong Hwa Pak, who had mostly recovered, stayed behind at a carpenter's house in the city of Gyeongju. True Father and Won Pil Kim bought train tickets from there to Pusan, some 50 kilometers away. As there was no room in the passenger coaches, they rode up front, clinging to the front of the engine, the warmth of the steam engine on their backs and a biting winter wind freezing their faces during the final two hours of their journey. They arrived at Choryung Station in Pusan, cold and hungry, on January 27, 1951. From there, True Father restarted his ministry.

January 27, 2001

World Peace Marriage Blessing Ceremony Held at the United Nations



True Parents conduct a World Peace Marriage Blessing Ceremony at the UN.

At Assembly 2000, True Father called not only for the establishment of a religious assembly or interreligious council at the United Nations but also for an official commemorative day to uphold the ideal of the family. The following year, on January 27, 2001, as part of the 7th World Culture and Sports Festival held jointly at the New York Hilton and UN Headquarters, True Father reinforced his proposal by conducting a “World Peace Marriage Blessing Ceremony” for 210 couples from 135 countries. Each of them was dressed in traditional ethnic or national costumes in the UN assembly room. The couples took an oath to establish eternal families based on true love and pledged their commitment to world peace. Because the assembly room was totally filled, WCSF participants had to watch the event via closed-circuit TV in another room. At the Marriage Blessing’s conclusion, couples and conference participants received chocolate bars with the words “True Love” inscribed on them. Once the newly blessed couples left, the participants returned to the assembly room and the conference resumed. Unfortunately, UN officials objected to the Marriage Blessing as a religious event and considered it a serious breach of the rules for the use of UN facilities. This, among other factors, led True Father to consider the necessity of inaugurating a complementary “Abel UN.”

January 28, 1965

True Father Begins First World Tour



True Father at the Twin Peaks Holy Ground in San Francisco

By the mid-1960s, work in Korea had solidified to the point that the Unification Church was ready to give serious attention to the world mission. The clearest indication of this was True Father’s first world tour in 1965. The main purpose of the tour was to connect the foundation that had been established in Korea to the world. True Father commented:

In 1965, I embarked on my first trip around the world. My suitcase was filled with soil and stones from Korea. My plan was that, as I traveled around the world, I would plant Korea’s soil and stones in each country to signify Korea’s linkage to the world. For ten months, I toured forty countries, including Japan, the United States, and the nations of Europe. . . . When I returned to Seoul, my suitcase was full of soil and stones from 120 locations in forty countries. . . . I connected Korea to these forty countries in this way to prepare for the day in the future when the world of peace would be realized.

After spending two weeks in Japan, True Father stayed in the United States for nearly five months, from February 12 until July 1. He set up 55 Holy Grounds in all 48 continental United States. After a short trip to Canada and several South American countries, True Father began the European portion of his tour. He then traveled to the more ancient lands of Egypt and the Middle East. While in Iran, True Father learned of the war between Pakistan and India. Avoiding Pakistan entirely, it was only after difficulty that his party got out of India and traveled to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, which was full of American GIs. Then followed the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan and finally Japan on September 29, where after 12 days, on October 10, True Father returned to Korea, 260 days after his departure.