

This week in history, March 23-27:

Michael Mickler
March 23, 2020

March 23-27, 1997 Martial Arts Federation for World Peace Founded



Four hundred leading martial artists, including Grand Masters and masters from the main martial arts schools in 83 nations attended the inaugural convention of the Martial Arts Federation for World Peace (MAFWP) at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. from March 23-27, 1997. The purpose of the convention and federation was to foster cooperation among the martial art disciplines to provide moral leadership, inspire a moral and spiritual renewal among the world's young people, and support the establishment of world peace through the development of inner peace. True Father spoke three times at the convention and emphasized "the goal of absolute mind-body unity." The convention included plenary sessions, breakout meetings, an organizing session, and a public exhibition of martial arts in the Hilton Grand Ballroom attended by 1,500 people including the mayor of Washington, D.C. After being established, the Martial Arts Federation went on to set up chapters in about 40 different nations.

March 23, 2004 Crown of Peace Ceremony in the Dirksen Senate Office Building



True Father inscribes calligraphy at the ceremony.

The Unification movement conducted six "crown of peace" ceremonies from late 2003 until early 2005. The first of these was the coronation of Jesus as "King of Peace" in Jerusalem as part of the Middle East Peace Initiative on December 22, 2003. Most of the coronations did not generate controversy or significant notice outside of the movement, with the exception of the event at the Dirksen Senate Office Building on March 23, 2004. The program was elaborately prepared. Building on contacts established over the years through The Washington Times, the host committee included six congressional co-chairs and a partial listing of the invitational committee included three additional congressmen, as well as one current and one retired U.S. senator, four state senators, a former ambassador. Ninety-one Ambassador for Peace awardees represented all 50 states. There was a reconciliation ceremony between the three Abrahamic faiths, and one representative each from Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions were given

national-level awards. Several congressmen and ambassadors were given global level leadership awards. All of this served as a backdrop to True Parent's crown of peace award which included royal regalia. Following the brief ceremony, True Father delivered a keynote address on "Declaring the Era of the Peace Kingdom." In an unscripted moment, a Jewish rabbi, inspired by the "miracle" of Jews, Christians and Muslims coming together in reconciliation, came to the microphone and blew a shofar (ram's horn) signifying the coming of the Messiah.

The awards banquet was a closed event. However, postings on Unification web sites, including a 20-minute video, were picked up by independent bloggers and eventually the mainstream media. On June 23, three months after the event, the Washington Post published a front page article on the banquet. The New York Times reported on the ceremony the same day, noting, "Capitol Hill was in full-blown backpedaling mode, as lawmakers ... struggled to explain themselves." Unification movement representatives responded forcefully, charging that media accounts were "filled with misrepresentations, distortions and outright falsehoods." In an official statement, the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace called for "fair and frank consideration by an unbiased media" of questions raised by the "crown of peace" awards ceremony "before subscribing to the 'witch hunt' that this issue has become."

March 24, 1989 Universal Ballet Academy Dedicated

True Parents conducted a brief dedication ceremony in the chapel of the newly completed Universal Ballet Academy building in Northeast Washington, D.C. on March 24, 1989. The four story structure was restored and expanded by a Washington-based architectural firm. A new addition was constructed to house four large dance studios, equipped with mirrors and barres. Dormitory facilities (32 rooms), locker rooms, and a dining area were also built. Altogether, the Academy was built to house more than 60 boarding students in its dorms, with an additional 100 students in daytime classes. As patrons of the arts, True Parents had launched several dance institutions previously -- including the Little Angels Performing Arts Center in Seoul, Korea, where students are trained at an early age in the fine and performing arts. The Academy hired Oleg Vinogradov to head the school. For the previous 13 years, he was director of the Soviet Union's famous Kirov Ballet, the alma mater of Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

March 24, 2012 First Holy Marriage Blessing at the Cheongshim World Peace Center



Two days after its formal dedication, Cheongshim World Peace Center served as the venue for a major Holy Marriage Blessing. Officially, the "Blessing Ceremony in the Era to Open the Gates to the Victory, Liberation, and Completion of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind" convened more than 20,000 Unificationists from 54 countries. More than 2,500 couples participated as newlyweds and 1,100 couples participated to "re-affirm" their marital vows. Approximately 100 countries broadcast the ceremony live by satellite while another 92 held their own marriage-Blessing ceremonies with previously-recorded materials. Due to the impressive venue and the participation of attractive, young Unificationists, the Blessing sparked widespread interest. News outlets from some 100 countries covered the event. The BBC aired a largely supportive special in Britain, titled "Married to the Moonies," which followed three British youth and their partners as they prepared for and participated in the Blessing. A variation of the BBC version, titled "Getting Married to the Moonies," aired in the United States. It followed three American youths and their partners.

March 24, 2013
Dr. Martin Porter Ascends



On Sunday, March 24, 2013, Dr. Martin Porter, a pioneer of the Unification movement in the West, passed away. Dr. Porter was born in Hampshire, the United Kingdom, in 1942 and met the Unification movement in Rome in 1965. He was blessed in marriage by our True Parents in Europe in 1969 as part of the 43 Couples Holy Marriage Blessing that was celebrated in Essen, Germany. One of the earliest Unificationists in Europe, Dr. Porter served for many years as president of the Unification movement in Italy, from 1967 to 1977. In 1973, he moved to the United States to do evangelical work, including leading a One World Crusade team during True Parents' Day of Hope speaking tours in 1973 and 1974. Subsequently, Dr. Porter served as the president of the Canadian Unification movement from June 1, 1977 to August 31, 1983. He later was asked to lead a shipbuilding enterprise, Master Marine and IOE Fishing Operations in Bayou la Batre, Alabama.

March 25, 1994
Aewon (Garden of Love) Bank Established

True Parents established Aewon (Garden of Love) Bank on March 25, 1994, and it was given official approval by the city of Seoul on April 12. It was founded in order to realize True Parents' vision of true love with special focus on the underprivileged and handicapped. According to Aewon's statement of purpose: "A bank is where money is deposited. The Aewon Bank is where we deposit our love, service, and charity, however they may be expressed, for the sake of others, so that charity and true love will bring hope, courage and joy to the lives of our neighbors." Aewon has developed cultural welfare projects such as Dream Seed Lesson, Dream Seed Concert and Performance Delivery Service. As part of the Dream Seed Lesson, volunteers teach music, art and theater to underprivileged or handicapped children. Then those children take part in a Dream Seed Concert. Volunteers with Performance Delivery Service stage performances on location for people who live in the countryside or are handicapped. The Aewon organization also hosts North Korean art exhibitions and sends books to North Korea. Its volunteers help out in local soup kitchens and assist the elderly.

March 26, 1994
Luncheon Meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev



On March 26, 1994, True Parents hosted Mikhail Gorbachev, a former president of the Soviet Union, at the Hannam-dong training center in Seoul, where they had a meeting. Mr. Gorbachev was in South Korea to attend the Federation for World Peace rally. True Parents presented Mr. Gorbachev with a portrait and a necktie pin made of Korean jade. During their meeting, Mr. Gorbachev asked True Parents to pay close attention to Russia in the future. On the following day, during the second Federation for World Peace

rally in Seoul, True Father gave a speech, "The Fundamental Principle of True Peace," in which he emphasized, "As we enter the age of internationalization and globalization in the twenty-first century, we are confronted with the urgent task of overcoming a large number of difficult obstacles to world peace." (Materials provided by the FFWPU History Compilation Committee)

March 26, 2013

Prayer for Youth from True Mother



True Mother prepared a prayer for Unificationist youth based on her grandchildren's education. In her words, "Since Father and I have lived like a war period, I couldn't have created an environment for my children. But now I am doing the 'creation of environment' for my grandchildren. A few days ago, I announced and gave to my grandchildren and all blessed children in the world the 'Prayer of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind.'" She said she would like Unificationist youth to pray the following in the morning and evening:

"Heavenly Parent, I thank you and I love you. I, [one's name], will become a devoted son (daughter) who will inherit the tradition of true love established by the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind, and perfect the duty of a devoted son (or daughter), patriot, and divine son (or daughter). I report this in my name [one's name], a second generation member of a blessed family, Aju!"

Children and youth who joined recently should end the prayer saying "I report this in my name [one's name], Aju!"

March 27, 1980

New Ecumenical Research Association (New ERA) Inaugurated



Rev. Moon meets with founding members of New ERA at East Garden, New York.

In February 1977, Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) began hosting Theologians' Conferences for scholars of religion interested in learning about the Unification movement. These dialogues and others fed into longer conferences on Unification Theology. The conference program caught the interest of True Father, who committed resources to its development. This led to the founding of the New Ecumenical Research Association (New ERA) and the creation of a twenty-one-member board of consultants who planned conferences, publications and other events "to bring people together ecumenically worldwide." Hundreds of scholars participated in summer introductory seminars and winter advanced seminars. UTS published some thirty conference books, and New ERA gave birth to a wide range of ecumenical and interreligious organizations including annual "God Conferences," the Youth Seminar on World Religions (YSWR), the International Religious Foundation, and the Assembly of World Religions.

March 27, 1990

Proclamation of True Parents and the Establishment of Kingship



On the occasion of True Parents' Day 1990, True Father declared he had "restored the right of parents" and was "sending out tribal messiahs to put everything in order, just as God sent the returning Lord and just as He sent Jesus." The next step, "restoration of the right of kingship," he said, "remains." In True Father's words:

"Originally, when Adam reached perfection, the Heavenly Father would be perfected, and when Eve reached perfection, the Heavenly Mother would be perfected. Hence, if they become the lord and lady of the family, the kingship of the family-level heavenly kingdom would have arisen. Thus, Adam and Eve were to become king and queen on the level of the individual, family, tribe, people, nation, and world. Since we have reached the time when we can go beyond the national level, we can go beyond the kingship of the satanic world and establish the kingship of the heavenly world."