

My 40th Anniversary - I was married with 2075 other couples in Madison Square Garden in New York

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Of what? We talk about our blessing in 1982 when Josef and I participated in a ceremony with 2075 couples at Madison Square Garden. We had only met a few days before. Physically met that is. We were introduced to each other 18 months earlier by proxy. We say we were "matched". Our "match-maker" was Reverend Moon (SMM) who certainly has the record of matching more couples than anybody else in history.

Is that in the Guinness Book of Records? I think that is a record that still needs to be claimed. I know that our blessing was in the 1982 Guinness Book of Records as the largest mass wedding in history. It was the first such mass wedding outside of Korea.

Then in October SMM blessed another 6000 couples in Seoul Korea.

Our anniversary celebration

Our anniversary celebration was the 40-year anniversary celebration of those two blessings: 2075 and 6000 couples in July and October 1982.

Our motto was "World Peace Through Ideal Families". Reverend Moon had matched couples from all over the world - including people from enemy nations, with one another.

Josef was in Austria, and I was in Australia. In 1980 he received a photograph of me from Reverend Moon in New York. I received his photograph two weeks later in Melbourne, Australia, when my colleagues returned from their trip to New York.

We began corresponding

We began corresponding with one another. I wrote to him in English. He wrote to me in German. Occasionally he managed to call me up on the telephone. I joined a mobile fundraising team (MFT). I remember once he managed to catch me during a team meeting in Sydney. The phone was in the living room. So was the team meeting. I have a photo of me standing by the wall with the receiver in my hand. He remembers paying over a thousand Austrian Schillings for a one-hour chat with me from the post office.

People said we were crazy. Our families thought we were crazy. People said we were brainwashed. They called us the Moonies.

We did what we believed to be right and followed our conscience. He in Austria. I in Australia. Then he also travelled around perhaps just as far as I did. Whereas I travelled up to the North of Queensland and into the outback of New South Wales and Queensland, Josef travelled to Denmark, Holland, and Belgium.

Fundraising

We had our experiences fundraising for our faith. We learned a lot about rejection and persecution and faith and courage. It was called "The Formula Course". The formula course was the training for an eternal marriage which will take us to heaven. As we learned to accept rejection and still go on and believe that results would still come - we were being trained to overcome our own shortcomings. We learned to love, and trust, and forgive. We learned to live with others, to serve. We got up early to pray.

Praying salesmen

I led a fundraising team and there was a newspaper article about "The praying salesmen" as I prayed in a circle with my team before sending them off in different directions for the morning or afternoon fundraising sessions.

Today I meet many people of different faiths and beliefs. I am fascinated by what people believe. And I am convinced that I have never met anyone with a better explanation of the meaning of life than what I got from Reverend Moon's Unification Principles over forty-five years ago.

The Blessing vows we made on July first in Madison Square Garden were made for eternity. We vowed to take responsibility if we failed.

Application form

When I filled out an application form for the matching in 1980, I did not feel prepared. I was working in headquarters in the office going off to the American Embassy almost daily, getting visas for the blessing candidates. The conditions were strict: A certain physical age: A certain time of active service in the movement ("Spiritual age"); A pure life.

We were full-time missionaries working in our hometown and around the country. Then we (the Australian movement) also sent missionaries to the islands. As I was working in headquarters it was my job to transfer the support money to our missionaries in the islands: Fiji, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga.

My national leader sent me off to get my application photos taken before I had officially reached the current given age of eligibility for the blessing. We were a faith community. I loved my job in the headquarters at the hub of the movement coordinating the business and church activities nationwide. It was shortly after the Melbourne and Sydney churches had joined. We'd had public persecution. We had Pentecostal experiences. We had our ups and downs.

When asked: Who do you want to get blessed to? I could only answer: "Father knows best". I felt it was impossible to choose the right partner. How do you choose? How do you know who is the right one?

I had studied the Unification Principles and found a truth which I already knew inside myself. Only deeper. I came to appreciate that these principles were a revelation from God. And the revelation came to me through Reverend Moon. So, I trusted that God would also use Reverend Moon in finding the right partner for me. Anyhow he already had a reputation as a very successful matchmaker.

Danube cruise

On Saturday 3rd September about forty couples went on a Danube cruise to celebrate their 40th blessing anniversary. Each couple has their own very unique and exciting story. I have so much more to tell. My husband has a very different story. We also have our common story.

A statement of faith and belief in marriage

Our celebration is that forty years later we are still here. Together. Our blessing celebration was a statement. A statement of faith and belief in marriage. We believe in family. We believe in God.

God has blessed us with love, life, and lineage. We are grateful. We are celebrating.

Forty years. Can you match that?