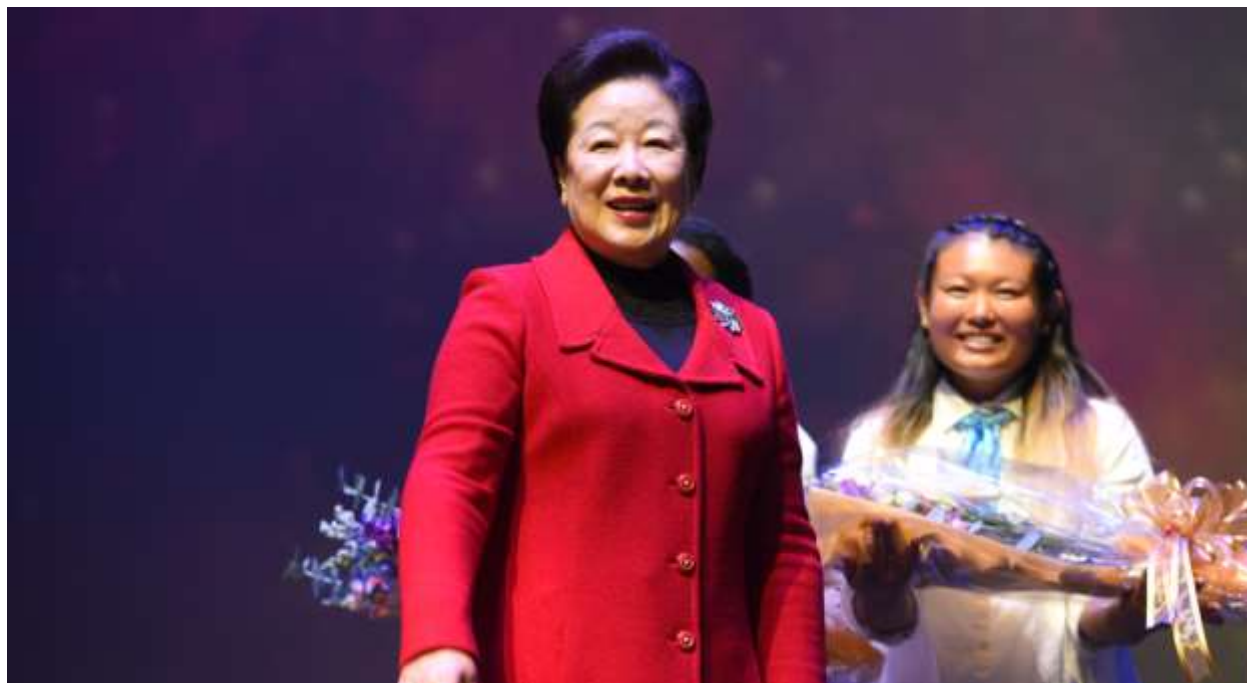


Over 2,000 attend Celebration with True Parents at Manhattan Center in New York

Michael Balcomb
December 3, 2016



On Saturday, December 3, 2016, over two thousand Unificationists and guests attended a celebration with True Parents at the Manhattan Center in New York City, while viewers worldwide tuned into the live broadcast to hear True Mother as she addressed Unificationists and shared her direction at this pivotal moment for America and the Unification movement at the close of 2016.

Participating in and attending the program were Unificationists from around the nation, members of True Parents' family, FFWPU leaders from Japan and Korea, members of the Generation Peace Academy, and young participants of the currently ongoing Aloha Workshop -- a program for youth to inherit the traditions of True Parents.



A band and dancers made up of members of the New Jersey and New York Unificationist communities opened the program by leading the audience in praise and worship songs. Bishop Cecil Riley, Pastor of Freedom Hall Church of God in Brooklyn gave the invocation, praying on behalf of everyone present for the fortitude to complete True Parents' vision to lead this world to peace. The audience then joined together in singing the Cheon Il Guk anthem.



The program was emceed by Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of FFWPU USA, who introduced Crescentia DeGoede, Director of the Blessing & Family Ministry, to read an excerpt of scripture from the Chambumo Gyeong, True Parents' life course in their own words. The reading explained the vision of building true families, who can then build tribes, nations, and a world in which God can dwell.



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chairman of FFWPU North America, then welcomed everyone and thanked them for their ongoing support throughout the year. "We feel we are on holy ground," he said, "because this is a special place where True Parents have shared the word of God so many times."



Dr. Kim introduced a new tradition, the Family of the Year Award, which will be awarded annually to a family who has done exemplary work in outreach, furthering the Blessing movement, and Tribal Messiahship activities.

The inaugural Family of the Year Award was awarded to Eiji and Naoko Hiraki. In 2016, Naoko had incredible breakthroughs witnessing on college campuses. She shared the Divine Principle with over 80 young people who are now members of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) and took many of these new members to Japan for a special visit with CARP Japan. Next month, she will bring nearly 100 new guests to the International Peace Education Center in Las Vegas for a Divine Principle workshop. Dr. Kim said, "When one family breaks through, other families can easily follow."



Introducing the next performance, opera singer Seiko Lee, Dr. Balcomb noted that "True Mother explained that the world changes not simply by words, conferences, politics or religions, but also by the culture of heart—one where we offer filial piety and joy to God." Seiko Lee then took the stage and delivered an upbeat and joyful performance of the song, "Rejoice Greatly, Oh Daughters of Zion."



Sun Jin Moon, FFWPU International President, then took the stage to introduce True Mother and prepare the audience to receive True Parents' message. She spoke of True Parents' unwavering faith and determination for the sake of America, in hopes of raising this nation toward serving and guiding the world to peace.



“True Mother came to America this time with deep concern and a heart of urgency,” she said. “She knows that if America doesn’t fulfill its responsibility, God’s providence will be prolonged.” Sun Jin Moon then welcomed on stage True Mother, our “heavenly trailblazer” who “lives each day with a single-minded commitment to liberate all of humankind and the creation from the legacy of the Fall.”



True Mother was welcomed with a long and loud applause. She began her address by explaining God's providential history and God's great hope for America, and reflected on how God first called True Parents to come to this country to bring this nation and its people back to God. She then challenged and encouraged everyone with a mission to restore America to God's lineage family by family, and state by state.



"The majority of you received the Blessing through True Parents," she said. "However the Blessing is not solely for yourselves. Blessed families have been given a responsibility, and when you fulfill that responsibility, the value of the Blessing increases exponentially." True Mother called on the American Unificationist movement to resolve to work harder for the sake of God's providence and sharing the good news of True Parents with the world. "In this nation we have 50 states. I hope that everyone can say that 'I am from this state and I am a Blessed family, and I have restored this state'.

"We cannot continue with the status quo," she said. "There are so many people who are waiting for you to visit them, to touch them. Please do not keep the good news to yourselves. That is the only way we can guarantee a future for humanity."



After True Mother's message, Rev. Miilhan Stephens, Vice President of FFWPU USA, led the crowd in three cheers, a rousing expression of determination to "renew our commitment to spread the word of True Parents and discover our calling at this time."



After a brief intermission, The Little Angels Folk Ballet of Korea graced the stage with a riveting show—a benefit performance for the [Nigeria Library Project](#)—concluding a festive and revitalizing celebration with True Parents in New York.