

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Family as National Solution for South Korea

Knut Holdhus
May 5, 2026



From the large international [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony for 2,100 couples in Gapyeong, South Korea on 2nd May 2026



An [article](#) published May 4, 2026 on the online news platform of the large South Korean TV network MBN (Maeil Broadcasting Network) carried the headline "['Family Is Hope'... In the Era of Low Birth Rates, the 'True Family Movement' Draws Attention](#)"

South Korean TV network MBN report spotlights 'true family movement' promoting a new model as response to record low birth rate

See also [2,100 Couples in Global Blessing Ceremony](#)

The first summary bullet below the headline runs:

"[Family Federation](#) successfully holds [mass wedding](#) for [2,100 couples](#) from 70 countries [... a direct challenge to the trends of non-marriage and low birth rates]"



From the large international [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony for 2,100 couples in Gapyeong, South Korea on May 2, 2026

Basically, MBN News reporter Lee Sang-joo (이상주) writes about the large [Marriage Blessing](#)

ceremony in Gapyeong on 2nd May but angles his report as describing a potential solution to South Korea's persistently low birth rate and breakdown of family structures.

The country now has the lowest birth rate among OECD countries. The problem has evolved from a demographic concern into a structural crisis with far-reaching economic, social, and cultural implications. Declining marriage rates, the rise of single-person households, and shifting attitudes toward parenthood have collectively contributed to what some policymakers describe as a "national extinction" trajectory.

Against this backdrop, renewed attention is being directed toward initiatives that attempt not merely to incentivize childbirth through policy, but to reframe the cultural and ethical foundations of family life itself. One such initiative, as highlighted by the report from the MBN culture desk, is the so-called "True Family Movement" [See editor's note below], which positions the restoration of family structures as a central lever in addressing demographic decline.

At the core of this discussion is the recognition that South Korea's fertility crisis is not solely an economic issue driven by housing costs, job insecurity, or childcare burdens - although these are undeniably significant factors. It is also deeply tied to evolving social norms, where [marriage](#) and childrearing are increasingly viewed as optional or even undesirable.

In this context, the large-scale "2026 Hyojeong Cosmic [Blessing](#) Ceremony", held on 2nd May, emerges as both a symbolic and practical counterpoint to prevailing trends. The event brought together [2,100 couples](#) from 70 countries, all committing to [marriage](#) and family formation under a shared value system centered on what organizers describe as "[true love](#)".

From a policy-analysis perspective, what makes this development noteworthy is not simply the scale of the ceremony, but the model it proposes. The movement emphasizes two interrelated strategies: fostering multicultural family formation and promoting a cultural shift toward larger families. These elements directly challenge two major drivers of low fertility in South Korea - social homogeneity and the perceived high cost (both financial and personal) of raising children.

By encouraging cross-national [marriages](#), the initiative implicitly addresses demographic stagnation while also contributing to a more diverse and inclusive social fabric. At the same time, its explicit endorsement of multi-child families seeks to normalize higher fertility within a supportive community framework.



From the large international [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony for 2,100 couples in Gapyeong, South Korea on May 2, 2026

Critically, the movement frames family not as a private lifestyle choice, but as a foundational social institution with broader implications for societal stability. This perspective was reinforced by the participation of global religious figures at the [Gapyeong event](#). They characterized the family as the "school of humanity" - a primary site for transmitting values, fostering social cohesion, and mitigating conflict.

While such assertions are rooted in moral and philosophical traditions, they intersect with empirical observations: societies with stronger family cohesion often exhibit higher levels of social trust and

resilience. In this sense, the movement's emphasis on ethical reconstruction aligns with a growing body of discourse suggesting that financial incentives alone are insufficient to reverse demographic decline.

The [MBN article](#) points out,

"The [event](#) suggests that in the face of the massive wave of declining birth rates, the fundamental [value of 'family'](#) may serve as the most powerful solution for our society."

The initiative by the [Family Federation](#) may well be able to play a major role in solving the family breakdown problem of South Korea. Possible challenges the initiative may face include gender inequality in domestic labor, intense educational competition, and rigid labor market structures. The "True Family Movement" [See editor's note below] addresses the cultural dimension effectively, but its long-term impact will likely depend on whether it can be accompanied by broader institutional reforms - such as workplace flexibility, childcare infrastructure, and gender equity policies.

Nonetheless, the movement introduces a critical reframing of the issue: that reversing demographic decline may require not only economic recalibration but also a renewed articulation of social values. By promoting [marriage](#), cross-cultural integration, and multi-child family norms within a supportive community network, it offers a prototype for how cultural renewal might complement policy interventions.



The [event](#) described in the [report](#) by Lee Sang-joo (이상주) can be interpreted as more than a ceremonial gathering; it represents an attempt to put into action a value-driven response to one of South Korea's most pressing challenges. Whether this approach can achieve measurable demographic impact remains to be seen, but it underscores an important point: sustainable solutions to

low birth rates may ultimately depend on aligning economic realities with a clearly defined societal vision of family life.

Also other major news outlets mentioned the issue of South Korea low birth rate. TV Chosun wrote on 2nd May,



"A representative of the Family Federation stated, 'In order to address the issue of low birth rates, we will continue to uphold family ethics and promote peace activities that break down barriers of nationality and race.'"

The news agency News 1 commented on 2nd May,

"The Family Federation described the core meaning of the blessing ceremony as 'a practical peace movement toward a world as one family', linking it to the issue of low birth rates. With South Korea's total fertility rate at 0.8 - the lowest among OECD countries - the organization stated that it aims to use the event as an opportunity to reaffirm the value of family in response to the spread of non-marriage trends."



The finance paper Bridge Economy wrote on 2nd May,

"The event is also drawing attention as an alternative response to the low birth rate crisis. With South Korea's total fertility rate ranking the lowest among OECD countries, the Family

Federation's blessing wedding ceremony has served as an opportunity to re-highlight the importance of family in response to the spread of non-marriage culture."

See also [2,100 Couples in Global Blessing Ceremony](#)

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

[Editor's note: The "True Family Movement" (참가정 운동) is not a generic social campaign - it's a concept and organized initiative tied to the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - in Korea often referred to as [Unificationism](#) - a movement that originated from the teachings of [Sun Myung Moon](#) and [Hak Ja Han](#).

The term refers to a spiritually grounded model of family life based on ideas from [Unificationism](#). "True Family" is a doctrinal concept: a family formed through a marriage blessed by the movement, centered on what it calls "[true love](#)", and aligned with [God's ideal](#).

It emphasizes [marriage](#) as essential and universal (discouraging lifelong singlehood), lifelong union between one man and one woman, having multiple children as a positive moral good, personal development based on relationships within the family, culminating in marital love and parental love.

So the "movement" is essentially a global campaign to promote and expand this model of family, both among members and in broader society.

The "[Marriage Blessing](#) Ceremony" pairs or affirms couples (sometimes internationally matched), is seen as spiritually significant, not just ceremonial, functions as the primary mechanism for creating these "true families"]

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Solidarity Action By 150 U.S. Members In Tokyo

May 4, 2026 • Knut Holdhus

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As a display of international solidarity, 150 young U.S. followers of Family Federation rally in Shibuya, Tokyo for religious freedom and support for persecuted and socially

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Tokyo, 29th April 2026 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

About 150 U.S. Followers Protest “Dissolution” of Family Federation, Call for Religious Freedom

by editorial staff of *Sekai Nippo*



American and Japanese members of the *Family Federation* at Shibuya, Tokyo on 29th April 2026. Photo: *FFWPU*

In front of the famous scramble crossing near JR Shibuya Station, second-generation followers of the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* from the United States walked back and forth across the busy intersection holding panels reading “#Help Our Church”, while offering prayers for religious freedom.

See also [Faith Leaders Condemn Crackdown on Federation](#)

A 28-year-old man who came from the United States said,

“The **decision** to dissolve [the **organization**] is shocking and hard to believe. Members in Japan are devotedly active around the world, including in Africa. I hope people in Japan will come to better understand these efforts.”

Preaching on the street, Demian Dunkley, President of the U.S. *Family Federation*, declared,

“Even if our buildings, money, and positions are **all taken away**, what can never be taken from us is our hearts.”

His remarks drew loud applause from the onlooking crowd.

Prior to this, U.S. followers, together with groups such as the “Second-Generation Association for Protecting the Human Rights of Believers” – headed by Nozomi Kojima (小島希晶) – held a panel discussion within the ward.

When a male U.S. believer asked Kojima what kind of impact the street activities might have on the church and society, Kojima responded,

“In Japan, the *Family Federation* is often seen as a very small and problematic group. The fact that as many as 100 people came from the

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that as many as 100 people came from the United States is surprising in itself. This event will help change the image that Japanese people have.”



An American pastor street preaching in Shibuya, Tokyo on 29th April 2026. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

See also [Faith Leaders Condemn Crackdown on Federation](#)

Featured image above: More than 100 second-generation followers of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) from the United States visited Japan and did street preaching near JR Shibuya Station. Damien Dunkley, President of the U.S. [Family Federation](#), is pictured on the afternoon of 29th April 2026 in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀).

In [article on X](#), The Monarch Report, an X account that functions as a media outlet dedicated to promoting “narratives aligned with” the [Family Federation](#), wrote on 29th April,

“More than 100 members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) travelled from across the United States to Tokyo to stand with Japanese believers and to defend religious freedom in Japan.

The visit, organised in approximately two weeks, brought American second-generation members and pastors face to face with their Japanese counterparts at a moment when Japan’s [Family Federation](#) has been stripped of its legal status as a religious corporation.

The centrepiece of the visit was a public talk session held on 29th April 2026, hosted by the *Second-Generation Society to Protect Believers’ Human Rights* and livestreamed under the title ‘Talk Session Between Japanese and American Second Generation and Experts’.

The format paired three Japanese second-generation members with three American counterparts on stage for the first time. ‘We had no time to coordinate. We are meeting face to face for the first time right now,’ the moderator said as the panel opened.”

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American and Japanese members of the [Family Federation](#) at Shibuya, Tokyo on 29th April 2026. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

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