



## Happy and blessed Thanksgiving!

Michael and Fumiko Balcomb  
November 26, 2013

Dear Families,

Fumiko and I would like to wish you a very happy and blessed Thanksgiving! I hope this year, more than ever, God will richly bless you and fill you and all your family with hope and encouragement! Thanksgiving Week is always an important opportunity to take stock of ourselves, our families, and our churches, and above all to be grateful to God, our Heavenly Parent, for his continued grace and mercy. True Father always had a special appreciation for the American Thanksgiving tradition, and more than once he said that the faith and piety of our Founding Fathers (and Mothers) was an important foundation upon which God could create his providential plan for America and the world.

*"They attributed all their precious harvest to the grace of God. The beautiful tradition of Thanksgiving thus originated. Following the next severe winter, the first thing they built was a church. I am sure they prayed, "God, we want to build a place for You which must be better than the Old World. We want to build a place where You can dwell and be master."*

*True Father: God's Hope for America, October 21, 1973*

This month, we were reminded of how very fortunate we are compared to other nations in the world. For example, we saw the sorrow and pain caused by the typhoon in the Philippines, which killed thousands destroyed so many other lives and dreams. Our families quickly responded, quickly donating tens of thousands of dollars to urgent relief efforts. Thank you all for your generosity and compassion.

It's not always easy to be grateful and this last year has been very trying. Our Founder and beloved True Father ascended to the spiritual world, and we miss him dearly. We have supported our True Mother as she valiantly continues to lead the providence; yet we have been saddened and humbled by the reality of our continuing struggle as a movement to forgive, love and unite as one family.

Whenever I ask God for guidance, though, He reminds me that He never allows any challenge to come to us we cannot bear, nor is there any situation, however miserable, that does not also contain within it the seeds of redemption and grace. I find myself needing to remember this all the time.

This Thanksgiving I see many signs of hope for our church family. At the end of October we said 'thank you, and goodbye' to many of our District Pastors, and I am encouraged to see communities all across the country come together in prayer, making diligent efforts to find the new pastor of God's choosing. A couple of weeks ago, when I participated in the Energize! Youth leadership conference in Texas, I met with almost eighty young men and women who have already made a firm commitment to serve God and love others. Our future will be in good hands.

Once again, thank you for your commitment to God and True Parents holy providence,

Sincerely,

Michael and Fumiko Balcomb  
President