

## Las Vegas Church Appreciation BBQ at the Cheon Hwa Gung

Lydia Compton  
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Nearly 50 brothers and sisters who had helped with the September 10th Blessing and Purity Pledge event at IPEC gathered at CHG for a delicious BBQ Dinner!

Reverend and Mrs. Doo had invited the volunteers to express Heaven's gratitude to them for their hard work in making such a great Tribute to True Father on the 5th Anniversary of his 2012 Seong Hwa. The Doo's, together with the Japanese missionaries and a few Las Vegas brothers & sisters, prepared baked salmon (offered for the event by Ocean Challenge), steamed shrimp & chicken deliciously grilled by Thanh Le, kimchee & rice, salads, desserts & drinks for the occasion.

Over the meal, brothers and sisters at first shared informally with each other about their experiences on September 10th, then Rev Doo asked specific volunteers to share their reflections with everyone. He began with Mrs. Compton, who had acted as event coordinator during the pre-program / preparation phase of the process. Mrs. Compton shared how happy it made her to see so many Blessing Couples sharing the Holy Wine together in IPEC this year, and how deeply she felt that the greater success of this year's Blessing compared to previous years was due to the sincere investment of heart and energy by each volunteer.

At the conclusion of her remarks, Mrs. Compton ceremoniously carried the microphone to Steven Jares, who had been Event Coordinator during the event and, even though he was caught off-guard by being so dramatically presented the microphone, Mr. Jares still managed to strongly express his appreciation for the volunteers and all of their hard work and to offer his sense that the greatest victory of this year's program was the unity of all of the brothers & sisters.

Following his remarks, Rev. Doo invited Mimi Morse, Kaye Yamaguchi, Makiko Watanabe, Sang Moo Borneman and Yasuko Oberg one after another in succession, asking each to offer reflections about the event.

Mimi Morse expressed gratitude for the effort that had been made by her FEEF & LVFC brothers & sisters working together for these past five years; she truly felt that because of that foundation, her dreams to Bless Karina & Yumezo in the presence of the entire Acosta family---4 tables of them--could finally be realized!



Kaye Yamaguchi shared some of her experiences with the eleven Las Vegas minister couples she brought to Korea for the 5th Anniversary of True Father's Seong Hwa. She was especially happy that they joined Archbishop Stallings and others of the 172 ACLC ministers to pray at the border between North & South Korea & she was moved that Rev. Alma Faye McDonnell, American Woman President of COGIC testified so lovingly and powerfully to True Mother.

Makiko Watanabe, somewhat apologetically shared that in the beginning of the event preparations, she seriously doubted that we would be able to really make this happen, but that when she thinks about it now, she can see that although it was not perfect, we had made a beautiful event. Mrs Watanabe ended her remarks by sharing the sense of wonder and awe she felt when she saw the parent of one of the Purity Pledge participants embrace his son in tears when giving him the 'True Love Waits' ring.

Sang Moo Borneman shared that she had made many personal conditions and offerings in order to give Holy Wine to 430 couples and that, after she finished, Rev. Doo asked her to bring at least one couple to this Blessing on the foundation of her efforts. She again invested many hours and much energy trying to invite her 430 couples, but, however in the end, it was not any of those couples, but her husband's own nephew & his wife who could finally come & receive it.

Yasuko Oberg shared that since she is retired, she had time to volunteer. So when Mrs. Doo asked her to become team leader for flowers & decorations, even though she didn't really have any experience in

flower arranging, she said yes and began looking on the internet. She found directions for making brides' bouquets & studied them. She also asked many other people for help and learned many things from them. She visited many flower shops and warehouses to find her supplies and in her comments, paid tribute to her husband for being her driver and taking her to the places she needed to go.

Later, when James Oberg was recognized for having offered the Ok Mansei at the end of the Blessing Ceremony, Mr. Oberg asked if he could make a comment, then stood and offered a light-hearted Ok Mansei to the crowd.

At this point, Rev Doo recognized the youth and young adult volunteers. He introduced each of them by name: Julia Walton, Registration Team Leader, Nica Macalinao, Head Usher, Tamami Nozoe Assistant Stage Manager & Onka Herstein, Child Care Coordinator for their valuable contributions to the success of the event.

And he expressed gratitude to Steve Pierce for arranging the donation of salmon by Ocean Challenge.

Before this point in the program passed, Sera Hirano stood to make sure her team, the Blessed Couple Attendants were recognized for their vital role in the event: Grendel Lyn & Joshua Lorenzana, Jim & Leslie Rigney, Akira & Yoko Ota and her own couple.

It is possible that some of the volunteers were not directly recognized, but Heaven's appreciation for everyone in the room was widely felt and few, if any, left the BBQ unhappy.

And finally, Rev Doo shared his own story of True Father's Seong Hwa Anniversary & Hyo Jeong Cosmic Blessing Ceremony in Korea. Using photos and videos that he had taken during his visit, Rev. Doo gave us a precious glimpse of the happenings there. He presented photos of True Mother's most recent building projects, showed video clips of the special meetings she held with and for worldwide religious leaders (including the 172 ACLC ministers), photos of the FFWPU-USA leaders touring some of the new facilities & video clips of the musical entertainment, including pictures of the LA Band renamed "Hollywood Apple Heaven" featuring our own Mike Smith on Bass. And he told us what he saw, what he learned and how he felt.

He pointed out changes he noticed in the ways things were being done from what he had seen done in earlier years. He also highlighted a videotaped interview with Josh & Eri Yanais and photos of Mike Smith with his new bride, which helped connect our hearts with the Korean Blessing Ceremony & our LVFC members there.

As the evening ended, Rev Doo handed out Evaluation sheets for each of the volunteers so that they could record their reflections & offer comments or suggestions for next year and asked them to bring them filled out to Sunday Service .

He proclaimed that the Wednesday evening "Appreciation BBQ" was also the "Kick-off BBQ" for next year's event and he asked each of us to begin preparing for an even greater Blessing & Purity Pledge event in 2018!