

## Las Vegas Family Church's Blessing Ceremony and True Father's Seonghwa

Ken Doo  
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The celebration of the 5th anniversary of True Father's Seonghwa and the Hyojeong Cosmic Blessing Ceremony were held in Las Vegas on Sunday, September 10, 2017. It was a beautiful event that was made possible through the investment of over 60 volunteers from the local community. In total, 14 couples participated in the Holy Wine Ceremony, Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony and the Chastening Ceremony. 11 of the 14 couples arrived early and joined in the pre-program education on the significance and value of the Blessing Ceremony.

With a packed room of 310 people, including families, friends, participants in the purity ceremony, guests and Unificationists, the ceremony was filled with excitement, commitment, and love for the couples and their futures together centered on God.

Dieudonne Nkwethat, who emceed the ceremony, offered opening remarks. Rev. Wes McPherson, the founder and Pastor of the Desert Community Church recited a beautiful poem and delivered the invocation.

Following the opening prayer we watched a video depicting True Father's amazing life, from the time he took on God's calling to save this world to his ascension five years ago. This video helped everyone more deeply appreciate the significance of the work of True Parents and to realize that together with True Mother, through this Blessing Ceremony, we are all participants in helping this great work be fulfilled.

Special thanks to all the volunteers, especially to those who took charge of the different areas of responsibilities, who helped prepare this beautiful ceremony.

Following the video, Akira and Makiko Watanabe presided over the Purity Ceremony. 30 single adults, with their parents by their side, committed themselves to maintain a heavenly lifestyle in preparation for their future Blessing. Akira and Makiko gave encouraging words to the couples, and C. B., the College of Southern Nevada CARP president, who participated in the purity ceremony last year, detailed the ways in which this ceremony has had a positive impact on his life.

After the conclusion of the Purity Ceremony the couples of the Blessing entered the room, followed by the officiating couple, Andrew and Lydia Compton.

In preparation for the ceremony Alice Woodward, accompanied by Fermin Ramirez, performed a love song before the Heavenly Parent, creating an atmosphere of true love.

It was then finally time to start off with the Holy Wine Ceremony. Marta Hernandez said that during the concluding prayer of the Holy Wine Ceremony God spoke strongly to her, telling her that she must love her new husband the same way that she loves God.



The Holy Wine Ceremony was followed by the Blessing ceremony – the holy water, the exchange of rings, the vows, and the proclamation of the Blessing. This first part of the ceremony was concluded with three rousing cheers of Eog Mansei by James Oberg.

From this point forward Gregg Smith became the Emcee. Before we began the dinner, he invited Rev. and Mrs. Compton back up on stage to conduct the indemnity stick ceremony. With a promise that they will never ever do violence to their spouse, all 14 couples participated in the ceremony.

From this point there was a great spirit of celebration. The food was served, the cake was cut, and couples took turns taking photos on the stage. There was music and entertainment as well as dancing. Couples danced together, parents danced with their children, and friends and relatives all got into the festive mood. It truly felt as though heaven and earth were united together in this cosmic celebration.

Special thanks needs to be given to all the volunteers, especially to those who took charge of the different areas of responsibilities.

