

This week in history, March 29-April 4

Michael Mickler
March 31, 2015

March 31-April 3, 1995 South American Declarations



True Father had been actively pursuing opportunities in South America since 1992 and made the decision to make South America a focal point of his work in 1995. That year, he undertook an ambitious speaking tour of twenty-three Latin American nations, which included audiences with eight heads of state. In these speeches and meetings, he emphasized the region's "stunning and abundant potential." He stated, "Latin America is a rich, peaceful, natural paradise of grandiose mountains and virgin lands. The mountains, rivers and jungles harken back to the original state of creation, the Garden of Eden." True Father pushed the heads of state to donate contiguous lands for development "as a model for an ideal, international and interracial nation and world." When that was not forthcoming, Unificationists began purchasing vast tracts of land in the South American interior and established New Hope Farm outside the town of Jardim (pop. 21,000) in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul as the centerpiece of their efforts.

True Father made two declarations to launch this initiative. The Sao Paulo Declaration, delivered on the occasion of True Parents' Day, March 31, 1995, called on Unification Church members worldwide to inherit True Parents' tradition of "loving the earth, loving all things, loving all [hu]mankind and loving God, single-mindedly for the realization of God's will." The New Hope Farm Declaration, delivered on April 3, 1995, declared that "people of the world will come together as brothers and sisters here and practice the building of God's nation." True Father delivered additional declarations as the South American providence developed during the late 1990s.

April 1, 1941 True Father Departs Korea to Study in Japan

After graduating from the electrical engineering department of the Kyongsong Institute of Commerce and Industry in Seoul, True Father traveled to Japan to continue his studies. Korea was under Japanese colonial rule, and this was the first time True Father left his native land. In his autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, True Father noted that he went "because I felt that I had to have exact knowledge about Japan." Nevertheless, his leave-taking was painful.

On the train from Seoul to Pusan, he "couldn't stop the tears from flowing," covered himself with his coat and "cried out loud." It grieved him, he said, "to think that I was leaving my country behind as it suffered under the yoke of colonial rule." He promised that he would return, "carrying with me the liberation of my homeland." True Father boarded the ferry from Pusan to Shimonoseki, Japan, at 2:00 a.m. on April 1, 1941. On arriving in Tokyo, he entered Waseda Koutou Kougakko, a technical engineering school affiliated with Waseda University. He stated that he chose electrical engineering "because I felt I could not establish a new religious philosophy without knowing modern engineering."



From the 1943 graduation album of the Waseda Technical High School, Tokyo. True Father stands in the back, center

**April 1, 1975
Day of Hope Rallies Begin in Korea**



True Father long considered the United States to be the gateway to the world. In early 1975, the church launched activities worldwide based upon its successes in America, particularly True Father's Madison Square Garden rally in September 1974. The initial step was the creation of a global "Day of Hope" team.

On January 14, the first global team, which included some 340 American and European members, boarded a chartered jumbo jet in Los Angeles for Tokyo. There they joined forces with an even larger contingent of Japanese members to evangelize and hold Day of Hope rallies in Japan.

After spending nearly 80 days in Japan, the global team of more than 500 members traveled by ferry to Pusan, South Korea, on March 27. There, from April 1 until May 17, they supported massively attended Day of Hope festivals in Pusan, Taegu, Seoul, Incheon, Jeonju, Kwangju, Taejon, Cheongju and Chuncheon. These culminated in the "World Rally for Korean Freedom," which was held at Yoido Island Plaza in Seoul before an estimated 600,000 to 1.2 million people on June 7.

April 1, 1980

***Today's World* Begins Publication**



The very first issue of *Today's World*

Today's World served as the Unification Church's leading international missionary newsmagazine for thirty-two years, from April 1, 1980 through 2012.

It included sermons of True Father and church leaders; extensive coverage, including glossy photographs, of the True Family and their activities; historical testimonies; and reports from missionary outposts in Africa, South America, the Middle East, Oceania and southern Asia.

It provided an indispensable account of international Unificationists, indexed by year, during its years of publication.

In its earlier years, *Today's World* was published out of New York. During the 1990s, it and the movement's World Mission Department relocated to Korea. After 2012, *Today's World* was superseded by Internet and e-publications, notably iPeaceTV and *True Peace Magazine*, which provide international coverage.

April 2, 2004

ACLCL Al-Aqsa Mosque Pilgrims Safe after Siege



Begun in 2003, in the heat of the Palestinian Second Intifada, the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI), a project of the Universal Peace Federation, organized several dozen "peace pilgrimages" to Israel, the occupied territories, and, on occasion, to Jordan over the course of the next decade. In its first two years, more than 10,000 religious leaders, civic officials, NGO leaders, professionals, and Unificationists from throughout the world participated in the pilgrimages. American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLCL) participants were prominent in the earliest of these, and a number of them undertook high-risk trips into Gaza.

During the fifth pilgrimage, four MEPI pilgrims went to Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Jerusalem Temple Mount to join Friday prayers and make arrangements for the larger pilgrimage contingent to visit when hundreds of Israeli soldiers stormed the compound. True Father was notified of the situation while in a boat on the Hudson River, where it was his practice to pray for the pilgrimages.

With the U.S. State Department, and even the U.S. Marines, at the ready, due to the presence of U.S. citizens inside, the situation was diffused only when Al-Aqsa negotiated the safe exit of the worshipers. Prior to their exit, Imam Bundakji, a member of the MEPI delegation, called from the mosque to say that he might not make it out alive but wanted to tell MEPI's Jewish delegation that his love for them "remained unchanged."