

This week in history, February 21-27:

Michael Mickler
February 22, 2016

February 21, 1977 74 Couples Holy Blessing

On February 21, 1977, True Parents officiated at the largest Holy Marriage Blessing ceremony yet held outside Korea. Seventy-four couples from eleven nations took part in the ceremony, which was conducted in the Terrace Room of the World Mission Center (New Yorker Hotel) in New York. True Parents previously had conducted a Blessing for 43 couples (13 couples in the United States, 8 couples in Germany and 22 couples in Japan) during their Second World Tour in 1969. True Father explained that the Holy Blessing of 74 Couples was made possible on the foundation of the victory of 1976 in America, notably the Washington Monument Rally. He said that he especially wished to give the Blessing to “sorrowfully separated couples from the 777 and 1,800 families” and those who had not been able to participate in the 1975 Blessing due to mission responsibilities.

For the first time since the Holy Blessing of 36 Couples, True Parents posed for photos with each couple individually. They also held a banquet for participants after the ceremony which included a number of “games” such as couples competing to stare into one another’s eyes the longest without blinking or trying to make one another laugh, then trying to make True Father laugh, unsuccessfully. Even though True Mother and the children joined in, True Father “refused to budge” until “there was a glimmer and he broke his seriousness to please us all.” It was reported, “The room filled with joy.” Col. Bo Hi Pak announced that such a banquet had not happened before.

February 21, 1980 True Father’s 60th Birthday



True Father fishing on the Hudson River near UTS circa February, 1980

In early 1980, elders of the Unification Church were eagerly preparing to celebrate True Father’s 60th birthday. This was because in East Asia, the 60th birthday has special significance, meaning that a person has completed the five 12-year cycles of the Oriental zodiac. It signifies accomplishing one big cycle in one’s life and starting another and is considered the most significant birthday in an individual’s lifetime. Therefore, church leaders were immersed in a multitude of detailed preparations for that celebration. However, unexpectedly True Father summoned Col. Bo Hi Pak and asked him to abandon all plans for a celebration and immediately go to Latin America. He had intuited the need for a new initiative to support Latin American governments which were increasingly under pressure because of the communist takeover of Nicaragua in 1979 and the growth of communist insurrection in countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. He gave Col. Pak instructions to establish contacts and offer resources in educating young people, the military and civic leaders so as to avoid a fate similar to Nicaragua’s. This led to the founding of CAUSA International and a new chapter in

Unificationists’ “victory over communism” activities.

February 21, 2010 Opening of the *Cheon Bok Gung*

True Parents dedicated the Cheon Bok Gung, or “Unification Peace Temple,” on February 21, 2010. In 2008, True Father had called for the establishment of a 20,000-member church in Seoul that would serve as a platform to influence the nation.

He later increased the goal to a 210,000-person congregation that would influence Korea and eventually the world, not just socially and culturally but also spiritually. Efforts to construct a “growth-stage” Cheon

Bok Gung began in earnest with the acquisition of a large public building in Seoul's Yongsan district. The church's worldwide membership, led by Japan and Korea, donated nearly \$100 million for the purchase and subsequent renovation costs.

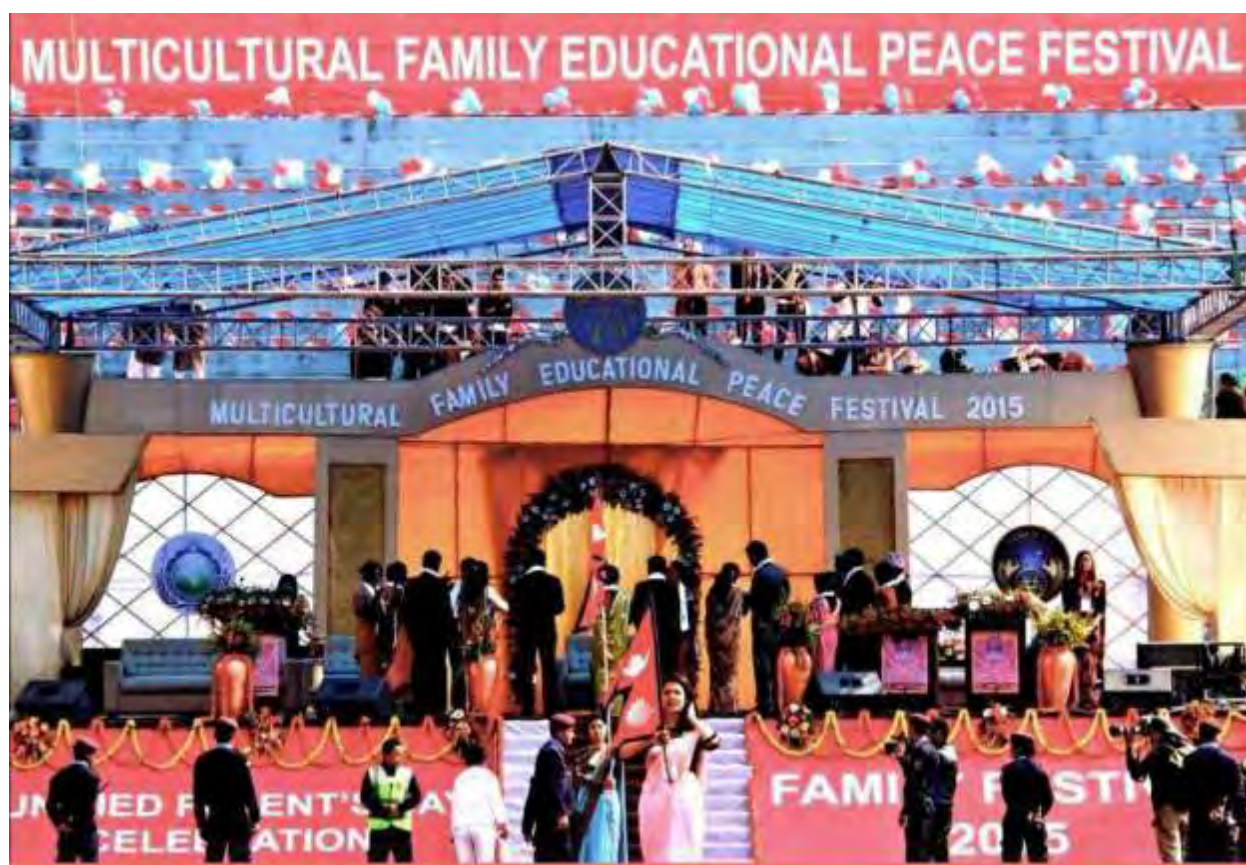


True Father at the opening of the Cheon Bok Gung

This was completed in early 2010, and Unificationists undertook an hour-long march from the previous church headquarters to the new sanctuary, which also would serve as International and Korean Church headquarters.

In his dedication prayer, True Father prayed that the Cheon Bok Gung “become the candlelight in a garden around which all people who resemble heaven in heart can assemble. ... Let it serve as an ecumenical foundation and become the temple embodying the original essence of Your exemplary love as it governs beyond all people and the universe.”

February 21, 2015
70,000 in Nepal Receive International Peace Blessing



Approximately 70,000 citizens of Nepal gathered to affirm marriage and family on February 21, 2015, as they filled the National Stadium in the capital, Kathmandu, to pledge to uphold premarital purity and marital fidelity. As many as 15,000 people were turned away. At the Multicultural Family Educational Peace Festival, which was organized by the Nepalese chapter of Universal Peace Federation (UPF), unmarried teenagers and young adults took a Pure Love Pledge in front of their peers and parents, promising to remain pure. Married couples reaffirmed their marriage vows of love and fidelity in front of their children, friends and neighbors, and the nation. Religious leaders from six faiths offered their prayers and blessings. Nepal Parliament Member and Family Party President Ek Nath Dhakal, who promoted the festival, stated, “This is the 18th time that the festival has been held in Nepal.”

The two-hour program was broadcast live on 10 television stations in Nepal and internationally via satellite. Nepal's Vice President Parmanand Jha told his compatriots, “Without first creating true love and peace at home, we cannot dream of building a peaceful and loving nation.” Concluding his remarks, he added, “This is the way to build a nation of peace.” Dr. Sun Jin Moon, international chair of UPF, spoke about the universal nature of the Interfaith Peace Blessing, saying, “Our hope is that, beginning with this Blessing, each couple and family will cultivate a higher awareness of our Creator's deepest heart and purpose.”

February 22, 1948

True Father Arrested a Second Time in North Korea

True Father received a revelation in 1946 which said, “Go across the 38th Parallel! Find the people of God who are in the North.” He immediately responded and arrived in Pyongyang on June 6. He began evangelical work but was arrested by communist police on August 11 and accused of being a spy from the South. He was brutally tortured and finally released on November 21. After recovering, he resumed evangelical work, and within a year his congregation had become quite large. Some 80 ministers of established churches whose members had begun attending the new congregation’s services wrote letters of complaint, and True Father was arrested a second time by communist authorities on February 22, 1948. This time, in addition to accusations of espionage, he was charged with “disturbing public order.” True Father again was severely tortured, tried on April 7, convicted, sentenced to 5 years’ labor, and transported to Hungnam Prison on May 20, 1948.

February 22, 1968

Holy Blessing of 430 Couples



True Parents gave the Holy Marriage Blessing to 430 couples (436 technically) on February 22, 1968. True Father noted that 1967 marked 4,300 years of Korean history (the Dangun era). He stated that the 430 Couples corresponded to the 4,300 years of Korean history and that the Holy Marriage Blessing connected Korea to the Unification Church. True Father also noted that it took the Israelites 430 years to return to Canaan from Egypt and that “we too have set out to restore the world, which is our Canaan.” The following year, True Parents conducted their second world tour and blessed 43 couples worldwide, which connected to the 430 Couple Holy Blessing internationally. The 430 Couple Holy Blessing included the first non-Korean couple, Osami and Tetsuko Kuboki from Japan. Their Blessing connected Korea and Japan. True Father later stated, “The Blessing ... is not just for Koreans. The fact that I connected the 430 Couples to the 43 Couples on the foundation of the family on the world level signifies the birth of a new race transcending ethnicity and nationality. That is how I see it.”

February 22, 1982

***Unification News* Begins Publication**

Volume 1, Number 1 of *Unification News* was published on February 22, 1982. The lead story was “New Day for Civil Rights,” which covered True Father’s support for the Minority Alliance International (MAI) and its first awards banquet. For nearly 30 years, until December 2011, *Unification News* was the monthly voice of American Unificationism. For most of that time, “The Newspaper of the Unification Community” was edited by Richard Lewis. In a 2010 interview, he noted that it was established at the same time as *The Washington Times*. He recalled that True Father spent two hours on a cold Sunday morning at Belvedere in February talking “about the fall of communism and how important *The Washington Times* was going to be.” Then, right at the end, almost as an afterthought, he said, “Oh, Dr. Pak. I want you to create a second newspaper at the same time so that we’re never tempted to use *The Washington Times* as our church newspaper.” He then “held up two dummies, one of the *Unification News* and one of *The Washington Times*.” As the newspaper of record for the American Unification community, it covered True Parents’ momentous work over the course of three decades, regional and local Unification news, and commentary. Its mission is now carried on by the Family Federation for World Peace through its online website and newsletter.

February 22, 2007
Cross-Cultural Marriage Blessing Ceremony



On February 22, 2007, the “Cross-Cultural Marriage Blessing Ceremony in the Sacred Reign of Peace for the Realization of a Peaceful World” took place at the Chung Pyung Heaven and Earth Training Center in Gapyeong, Korea, with True Parents as the officiators. Many children of UPF Ambassadors for Peace received the Blessing on this day, with 521 new couples born in the midst of much love and blessings. The brides and grooms also participated in the “True Parents’ Birthday and Commemorative Celebration for True Father’s 88th Birthday,” held the next day.

February 22, 2013
Foundation Day



True Father proclaimed *Cheonju Pyeonghwa Tongil Guk* (“the Nation of Cosmic Peace and Unity”), abbreviated as *Cheon Il Guk* (CIG), on November 15, 2001. It is the Unification equivalent to the Kingdom of Heaven and represents an extension in the order of salvation from the individual and family to the creation of a heavenly nation. The *Cheon Il Guk* era refers to the time period during which the foundation of *Cheon Il Guk* was to be established. According to True Father, the movement was on a “tight schedule” of twelve years, extending until Foundation Day (the thirteenth day of the first month by the Heavenly Calendar), when the necessary conditions for the start of *Cheon Il Guk* would be fulfilled.

The most important of these was the “marriage” of the “God of Night” (the eternal Godhead, transcendent of time and space, the creator God) and the “God of Day” (perfected Adam and Eve, the “Parents of Heaven Earth and Humankind”). “God’s Holy Wedding” was consummated on Foundation Day, and on that basis Unificationists worldwide renewed their Marriage Blessings. The Cheon *Il Guk* Coronation Ceremony of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind, also conducted on Foundation Day, marked the first year of *Cheon Il Guk* and expressed the church’s commitment to “peace and harmony for humanity.”

February 23, 1977

Year One of the Kingdom of God

The Year 1976 was decisive in True Parents’ global ministry. It was a year of extremes. On the one hand, it was remembered as the year in which opposition to the movement reached its peak. The kidnapping and deprogramming of members continued, negative parent groups in the U.S. coalesced and were able to gain a public hearing before a powerful senator and numerous federal officials, and by the end of the year mainstream Jewish, Protestant and Catholic bodies turned on the Unification Movement. On the other hand, in spite of these obstacles, the movement carried out rallies on a huge scale at Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument. On January 1, 1977, True Father stated that the church had laid an “invincible foundation” for “horizontal expansion throughout the world.” At True Parents’ Birthday, celebrated in the New Yorker hotel in New York City on February 23, 1977, True Father pointed out that according to the lunar calendar, 1976 ended on February 20. As he put it, “The year of victory is gone, now the year of joy has started.” He concluded his talk, “Today in the Light of Dispensational History, [<http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon77/770223.htm>]” by saying, “This is the new beginning of the history of God. Therefore, this is the original first year of the Kingdom of God. This is the Year One.”

February 24, 2014

Ilhwa Ginseng Products Receive Kosher Certification



On February 24, 2014, Tongil Group’s subsidiary company Ilhwa received the kosher certification. The two products that received this certification were the hydrolysis concentrate and the ginseng concentrate.

Kosher certification is the legal certification of foods that conform to Jewish law. Whether a food product is kosher or not depends mainly on its raw ingredients and the production process. If a product’s raw ingredients and production process coincide with kosher laws, then that product is eligible to receive kosher certification. The passion and dedication of Ilhwa are demonstrated through the company’s efforts to protect the health of customers around the world by creating reliable

products that accommodate various religions and cultures.

February 25, 2001

“We Will Stand in Oneness” Speaking Tour Begins



In May 2000, True Father invited 120 clergy from seventeen denominations to Seoul, Korea, for the inaugural American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC). The clergy had deep experiences at the 38th Parallel, where they released doves of peace, and at the Chung Pyung Heaven and Earth Training Center, where several of them experienced healings. At the end of the year True Father asked ACLC’s Executive Committee to organize a 50-state revival tour. The tour, titled “We Will Stand in Oneness,” featured True Father as keynote speaker and covered 52 American cities (in all 50 states) in 52 days between February 25 and April 17, 2001. ACLC clergy and Unificationists

nationwide supported the tour.

True Father’s informal remarks preceded each speech and often ran for an hour or more. He emphasized the sanctity of marriage, particularly marital fidelity, stating that husband and wife were “owners” of one

another's "love organs" and each possessed "only one key." He typically elicited laughter with his exclamation, "No spare keys!" True Father's keynote address, "The Path for America and Humanity in the New Millennium," highlighted God's suffering, the Last Days, True Parents, the significance of the Korean Peninsula, the Holy Blessing ceremony, and America's providential role. The tour helped transform ACLC into an organization with a national network. An unexpected result was that a number of clergy requested True Parents' blessing on their marriages. This led to an Interfaith Marriage Blessing on May 27, 2001, which included the participation of Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, among others.