

This week in history, August 20-26:

Michael Mickler
August 21, 2017

August 20, 1985

True Father Released from Halfway House, Welcomed at “God and Freedom” Banquet



True Father’s “Danbury Course” consisted of his indictment, trial, appeal and imprisonment on tax evasion charges. It was his sixth imprisonment and one of the most unjust. True Father was incarcerated at the Danbury Federal Correctional Institution in Connecticut from July 20, 1984, to July 4, 1985, and then from July 4, 1985, to August 20, 1985, at Phoenix House Foundation Inc., a halfway house in the New York City borough of Brooklyn.



On the evening of his release, 1,600 clergy and prominent laypersons gathered at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., to welcome True Father back at a “God and Freedom” Banquet. Earlier that day, twenty prominent clergy, including Rev. Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority, and Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), usually at opposite ends of the religious-political spectrum, held a news conference at which they decried government encroachment upon religion and called upon President Ronald Reagan to pardon True Father.

In his [speech](#) at the God and Freedom Banquet True Father expressed his appreciation to those who had supported him through the court battles, amicus briefs and rallies, and expressed his determination “to relieve the great and long suffering of God.” He called upon all present to “transcend denominationalism” and “to consider seriously the mission of Christianity to lead a supra-denominational, cultural revolution on a worldwide scale.”

August 20, 2003

True Parents Call for the Founding of the Fourth Israel

In May 2003, Christian clergy responded to True Parents’ call and went to Israel, where they repented together with Jewish and Muslim leaders for not having understood one another as brothers. On the foundation of the penitent heart demonstrated by representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths, True

Parents called for the founding of the “Fourth Israel”—a new body of “chosen people” who were anointed by God. True Father offered Holy Wine on this special August 20 celebration, and all who partook of this covenant not only were engrafted into the lineage of heaven and the True Olive Tree but also became the “Fourth Israel,” a new “chosen people of all races, religious faiths, and peoples.”

August 20, 2004

Coronation of True Parents as the King and Queen of Peace



On August 20, 2004, the Cheon Il Guk Registration Blessing Ceremony of the Revolution of True Heart in the Era of True Liberation and Complete Freedom was held at the National Assembly Library in Seoul. In attendance were around 600 leaders, including Stanislav Shushkevich, a former president of Belarus, Nagajima Mamoru, a former minister of the Office of Science and Technology in Japan, and Father Hatoum, the provost of the Church of Saint George, Nazareth, Israel. On this day participating leaders from the different countries crowned True Parents as the King and Queen of Peace in acknowledgment of their interreligious and international peace endeavors. (Materials provided by the FFWPU History Compilation Committee.)

August 23, 2013

First Anniversary of True Father’s Universal Seonghwa (Ascension)



Some 25,000 Unificationists, national-level leaders, academics and clergy from 60 countries attended the first anniversary of True Father’s Universal Seonghwa at the Cheongshim World Peace Center in Gapyeong, Korea on August 23, 2013. Those who could not physically attend the event participated via live Internet broadcast, which was sent out to 193 nations. Numerous events and exhibitions commemorating the life and achievements of True Father preceded the occasion, including a Keepsake Exhibition that included 120 personal items such as True Parents’ wedding clothes from 1960 and the suit True Father wore during his meeting with North Korean Premier Kim Il Sung. The Memorial Ceremony included remarks by visiting dignitaries. The Hon. Jose de Venecia, former Speaker of the House in the Philippines said he “couldn’t imagine” Rev. Moon passing away given his “endless enthusiasm” and “superhuman energy.” At the same time, he noted, “I never met Father Moon when Mother Moon was not by his side. They were inseparable ... We are blessed that Mother Moon, who knows Father Moon better than anyone else does, is herself standing strong in carrying on the great work that Father Moon began.” A highlight of the second part of the memorial was a musical gala performance, “Crown of Glory,” which

depicted True Parents' life course. Songs that True Father loved were sung and True Mother stated, "It feels as if True Father might stride forward with a bright smile and ask, 'How have you been?'"



August 24-30, 1980

True Father Hosts World Tuna Tournament in Gloucester, Massachusetts

True Father considered the ocean to be a solution to world hunger and a key to future human survival. He also wished to revitalize American seaports and spoke of the need for youth, especially inner-city youth, to be exposed to the challenges and excitement of sea-going life. An early effort to stimulate interest and excitement in the ocean was the "World Tuna Tournament," which the Unification Church sponsored in Gloucester, Massachusetts, from August 24 to 30, 1980. Total prize money was \$100,000: \$70,000 for first prize, \$20,000 for second, and \$10,000 for third, the largest cash prizes ever awarded in a tuna-fishing tournament. The tournament was controversial, given the negativity toward the Unification Church in the United States at that time, and many Gloucester fishermen boycotted the event. Nevertheless, 88 boats entered, 15 of which were part of the churches' fleet. In the end, True Father's New Hope boat won first prize, which was donated to charity. The World Tuna Tournament was a stepping stone toward the establishment of "Ocean Church" later in the year.

August 24, 1992

True Father's Declaration of Messiahship



In early July 1992, True Parents spoke in five cities around Korea at rallies sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP). In his [speech](#), "The Reappearance of True Parents and the Ideal Family,"

True Father stated, "God chose me to be the Messiah." True Father intended this as a declaration to the Korean nation and had the speech reprinted in newspapers. On August 24, 1992, he made the same declaration, this time at a banquet at the Little Angels Performing Arts School for dignitaries attending the first World Culture and Sports Festival. In his speech, titled "Becoming the Leaders in Building a World of Peace," True Father stated, "my wife, WFWP President Hak Ja Han Moon, and I are the True Parents of all humanity ... we are the Savior, the Lord of the Second Advent, the Messiah." True Father intended this to be a declaration on the world stage. It laid the foundation for his subsequent declaration of the Completed Testament Age and the globalization of the Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony during the 1990s.

August 25, 1992

International Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony of 30,000 Couples

True Parents conducted the International Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony of 30,000 Couples in the Seoul Olympic Stadium on August 25, 1992. It was the centerpiece of the first World Culture and Sports Festival (WCSF), held from August 19 to 30, and the largest Blessing ceremony yet conducted by True Parents. True Father stated that it marked the beginning of the worldwide Marriage Blessing era through which anyone, regardless of religion, could be blessed. He also noted that it occurred in the year that True Mother stepped forth as a public figure. Afterward, True Father announced that True Parents would conduct a Marriage Blessing for 360,000 couples.

August 25, 1995

International Holy Marriage Blessing of 360,000 Couples



True Parents took a major step forward in the August 25, 1995 International Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony of 360,000 Couples, which was the central event of the second World Culture and Sports Festival, held August 20 to 27. The main site was at Seoul Olympic Stadium where 36,000 couples and additional onlookers gathered. Even more couples were linked simultaneously to the main ceremony at over 500 satellite locations in 160 nations. True Parents extended an invitation to people of all religious persuasions to participate in the Blessing. As pointed out by Dr. Tyler Hendricks, president of the Unification Church in the United States at the time, “The Blessing isn’t about changing your religion but about changing your character.” For many thousands of previously married couples who participated in the International Holy Marriage Blessing of 360,000 Couples, the Blessing was both a blessing of their existing marriage and a public expression of their commitment to God, humanity and each other.