

## The American Clergy Reflect on True Parents' Birthday Celebrations in Korea

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The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA observed the 100th birthday of FFWPU co-founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, affectionately known as True Parents, in the five American regions; [Northeast](#), [Southeast](#), [Midwest](#), [Southwest](#) and [West](#), with a concurrent celebration of the 53rd True Heavenly Parent's Day on January 25. Clergy were also invited to [Korea](#) from February 2 to 9 for a week filled with peace conferences and festivities.

Here are some reflections from clergy who joined the celebrations:

### Reflections from Korea



*From left to right: Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, Jr., Rev. V.J. Smith and Pastor William Milligan*

**Rev. V.J. Smith – Shiloh Temple International Ministries, Inc.**

*Rev. V.J. Smith, ACLC Minnesota convener and key pastor, has a passion to help young people on the wrong path turn their lives around. Since the 1980s, he has offered a listening ear and caring support to communities throughout Minneapolis, concentrating on building civic bonds with the help of concerned parents. As the National President and Minneapolis President of Men Against Destruction, Defending Against Drugs and Social disorder (MAD DADS), an organization formed to mobilize strong, drug-free men of faith, Rev. Smith has ushered over 100,000 MAD DADS volunteer hours to bring positive and proactive advice and involvement for the youth. Rev. Smith is also a minister at Shiloh Temple International Ministries in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

"It has been an absolutely amazing and emotional journey through ACLC, the Unification movement and Peace Starts With Me. I am honored and invested in the Unification movement and the people involved. It seems like every time I came upon challenges in my life, there was an opportunity for me to be around Mother Moon. When I'm around her, I see how my challenges don't even compare to the difficulties she has to bear. It's truly been a blessing for me to go to Korea.

First of all, I was excited to be selected to attend the UPF World Summit 2020. It was an amazing opportunity for me and Pastor William Milligan [of the House of Restoration in Minneapolis], who had never been exposed to this level of celebration and had never been a far distance from home. I was able to minister to him with plenty of love and hope for our future and our community.

The workshops and the speakers at the World Summit were truly mind-blowing! We had the opportunity to connect, build relationships, and learn about all the new things going on with the media and academia around the world! We talked about prosperity, hope, opportunity, innovation and economic exchange. We dove into discussions about the economic movement in North and South Korea, and the involvement of Japan, Russia, China and the Korean peninsula investing in building a tunnel from Japan to Korea. We have the political power through ACLC and UPF to make an impact! I'm ready for a decade of action, unity, faith-building, transformation and change!

The ballet performance and the Little Angels really inspired me, especially because I won an award from the Little Angels in December 2016 in New York City. At the Inauguration of the Mother Foundation and Launch of Mother's Autobiography Banquet I was inspired by all that Mother Moon has done, and all that she continues to do.

My goal is to move forward and make financial and spiritual investments to make an impact in our communities and the world.

Happy 100 years to the man and woman who decided to give their lives for the sake of others! Thank you, Mother Moon. God bless you."

**Prof. Grace Apiafi – CARP, Pasadena City College**

*Professor Grace Apiafi works as a Health Science professor at the Pasadena City College in Pasadena, California and acts as the advisor for the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) Pasadena City College chapter.*

"My experience at the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) World Summit 2020 in Korea was amazing. When we arrived early in the morning on February 2, we were greeted with a warm welcome and given the schedule of events for the following day. At the World Summit, there were many great speakers from around the world who all spoke about Mother Moon's efforts and the foundation for which peace can be made a reachable reality everywhere. I was so impressed to hear that these leaders were willing to foster peace in different countries.

The next day, Mother Moon gave a powerful and moving speech, after which we held discussion sessions on different topics, such as economic development. It was interesting to hear presenters from various countries excited to share their ideas on how to bring about world peace. It was so wonderful to hear the world speak about economic development and business opportunities in their different countries.

My most memorable moment was the birthday celebration for Father and Mother Moon and the Marriage Blessing Ceremony. It was a 'WOW' moment for me. I experienced a wonderful performance that was close to perfection, and seeing all the people who received the Marriage Blessing was mind blowing. I commend Father and Mother Moon for their hard work and being able to bring thousands of people from various nations together to work with a focus on world peace. Peace begins with me and if we are all willing to make the sacrifice, we will accomplish the goals and vision of this foundation."

**Pastor T. L. Barrett – Life Center Church of God in Christ, Chicago, IL**

*Pastor T.L. Barrett, national executive committee member of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC), graciously hosted the Midwest regional celebration and prayer breakfast at his church the Life Center Church of God in Christ in Chicago, Illinois. Pastor Barrett joined the Unification movement before ACLC was established in 2000, and is one of the most famous and influential pastors in Chicago. He has opened his church doors to the Unification movement many times for different events.*

"The prayer breakfast we held at the Life Center Church of God in Christ was spectacular. The mind is a powerful factor of man, and because our mindset was focused on the celebration of their debut on earth, we invoked the presence of True Parents, God, Jesus and each other. This is what we call a GOG, a gathering of God, and the most powerful of them all. To make the GOG a reality, we have to recognize the equality in the divinity of each other's identities. We cannot fail to recognize the same qualities in each other as we do in God. I recognize the potency of God in everyone."

**Rev. Dr. Willie L. Weston – Pastor of Holy Trinity Pentecostal Church, Chicago, IL**

*ACLC Senior Member Rev. Dr. Willie L. Weston of the Holy Trinity Pentecostal Church in Chicago, Illinois joined ACLC in 2001, and was one of the twelve clergy who extended their stay in Korea after the 172 Clergy Tour in 2011 to join a week-long boat trip with True Father. For years Rev. Weston has been teaching the Divine Principle to clergy every Tuesday afternoon.*

"This celebration, which I facilitated, was a very special one. It focused on celebrating the life of our founders, Rev. and Dr. Moon. I enjoyed every bit of it: the music, the heart, and the message. As a facilitator, I remarked on True Father's ['God's Hope for America'](#) speech in Washington, D.C. in 1973. This brought back many good memories and developed a renewed interest in that particular message within me. I feel God is truly calling us to reflect on what True Father has said in the past, and we need to draw from that. We need to do this to represent Jesus and to benefit ourselves. I express my love and appreciation for True Mother and pray that God keeps her strong emotionally, physically and spiritually so we can work together to bring what God wants, peace."

**Rev. Helen R. Cooper – Pastor of Westside Center of Truth, Chicago, IL**

*Rev. Helen R. Cooper of the Westside Center of Truth in Chicago, Illinois joined the Unification movement in the 1980s, and has supported the Confederation of the Associations for the Unification of the Societies of the Americas (CAUSA). Rev. Cooper has traveled a great deal to give Divine Principle lectures, and is a supporter of ACLC.*

"I want to wish a big congratulations to the staff of ACLC for a wonderful celebration for Father and Mother Moon's birthday. The prayer breakfast was well organized and showed the value of us coming together as different denominations recognizing that we are all one, serving one God who is the Father of us all. It also gave us the opportunity to fellowship together as a unified body."