

Happy Anniversary: 30,000 and 360,000 Couples Blessings - Testimonies

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August 25 marked the anniversary of hundreds of thousands of couples worldwide who participated in the 1992 and 1995 International Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremonies at the Seoul Olympic Stadium in South Korea. It's the 28th anniversary of the 30,000 Couples Blessing, and the 25th anniversary of the 360,000 Couples Blessing where global leaders, including presidents, took part in the historic ceremony.

The international Marriage Blessing movement has brought together people of all backgrounds from around the world to transcend national, racial, and ideological barriers. In 1992, two sisters from the Philippines, Rhia and Marina Clemente, were among those gathered in the crowded outdoor stadium eager to receive the Blessing with their partners from officiators Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founders of the Unification movement and affectionately known as True Parents.



"I remember telling God I would accept anyone; my heart was so open," said Rhia. "I felt nervous that day but excited and ready to let God work. It was incredible to participate in the Blessing with my sister, and looking back, the Blessing was really the biggest blessing I could receive in my life."

Rhia was blessed in marriage with Noel Nkulu, who was born and raised in Africa. But due to logistics, the couple lived separately for four years before eventually putting down roots in the U.S. "I was 25 and my husband was 21 at the time of the Blessing," said Rhia. "We were young and just starting our lives. He is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly known as Zaire, so it wasn't easy for us to be together right away but we remained determined."

Today, the happy couple lives in Arizona with their three young daughters, where Rhia works as a registered nurse and host of her own radio talk show promoting peace and healthy relationships.

Rev. and Dr. Moon often spoke of uniting people from different cultures to bring global peace through healthy couples and families. The Blessing bridges together all nations through the couples' commitment of love and marriage centered on God. "We must cross the hill that is the whole world," said Rev. Moon in a speech on August 30, 1995. "The fact that we conducted the

360,000 Couples Blessing within three years after the 30,000 Couples Blessing ... this was considered impossible."

Similarly, Marina also received the Blessing with a partner from another country. Jhon Acevedo was born in Colombia and raised in Canada. "Together we have taught in our community, and began our mission work in Colombia before coming to the U.S." said Marina. "We have done a lot of service work over the years and continue to work together as a team, letting God lead the way."



Marina was a professor in the Philippines when she met the Unification movement, and the couple bonded after the Blessing over their shared passion for learning and faith in God. Today, they co-pastor a Latino Ministry in Illinois, the Chicago Hispanic Community for Peace, and have one son and two grandchildren.

"We are so grateful to God and True Parents for educating and inspiring us with the Blessing," said Marina. "Our offering is the Chicago Hispanic Community for Peace camp that we started as a legacy to continue creating healthy couples, happy families, and peaceful communities."

"I would like to congratulate all the couples celebrating their 28th and 25th anniversaries," added Rhia. "God's love for us goes beyond everything, no matter where we are from, and He wants us to have that same heart and love for each other."

Both Blessings on August 25, 1992 and 1995 were the main events of the newly launched World Culture and Sports Festival (WCSF) by Rev. and Dr. Moon. The 30,000 Couples Blessing joined even more couples via 500 satellite locations in more than 160 nations, while participation in the 360,000

Couples Blessing was extended to previously married couples.