

The Spirit of the Blessing: My parents were even more excited than I was - Part 2

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Matthias and Claudy Wiesner were blessed 35 years ago in Madison Square Garden

Several other stories I witnessed after the Blessing of 2075 couples, showed a complete change in the general attitude about our church, that had existed until then.

Not very long ago, one German family that had come together with the group of German parents to the blessing tried to force their daughter out of our church center. The daughter was kidnapped by her own physical brother from our church center. She was brought to a special house and there locked up, isolated from the outside world. Somehow she managed to escape through the bathroom window. She quickly ran away and returned to the church center. In order to avoid further confrontation with her parents, she went to a neighboring country to work in another church center. Her parents were very confused and could not understand what was going on. They accused our church of separating their family, taking their daughter away. This family actually lives in the same town as my parents.

When my mother heard from this sister and about the problems she had with her parents, she immediately tried to contact that parents and made an appointment to see them. They sat down together and talked everything over. In that way those parents came to understand a little bit more about our church and our members' strong commitment. My mother helped to arrange some communication between this sister and her parents, and from then on their relationship developed. When the Blessing came near these parents needed one last push and then they were ready to come to New York to participate in this important ceremony and show their love to their daughter. The mother of this sister is a very strong personality. She used to have her own business and always was aware about the importance of money. Therefore, her main worry of course was about the financial future of her daughter and her daughter's husband. Before the marriage ceremony she still had a lot of things to grumble about, but after the beautiful event was over she was quite different.

When I spoke with that mother about the wedding ceremony, she said she had been really moved and confirmed that it was good that she had come, otherwise they really would have missed something. She was quite excited about her son-in-law, who made a very good impression on her. A couple of days after the Blessing, she accompanied her son-in-law on his daily route to deliver the News World newspaper to different newsstands throughout the city. At one newsstand she was introduced to an Austrian couple who had settled down some time ago in America. Since they got on well with each other, she stayed with them a while so that they could talk more together. She asked her son-in-law to pick her up again when he finished his route. While being at the newsstand she had an opportunity to help the couple sell newspapers and at one point, when they had to run an errand, she was left to run the newsstand by herself! Coming home she told everybody about her experience and nothing of her grumbling nature remained.

Her husband had quite a different character. Less outspoken, trying to harmonize with his wife, he conveyed to us that he actually knew from the beginning that what his daughter was doing was the right thing. Returning home, they will be wonderful ambassadors to other parents, their own friends and

relatives and definitely will help to change the general attitude toward our church in that small circle. He himself expressed it very clearly when he said after the Blessing Ceremony, "This movement will be impossible to stop."

Aftermath

The general atmosphere in New York toward our church and all its members was very much different after the July 1, 1982. The amazingly good articles in the New York Times newspaper and the wide coverage in all major newspapers, radio and television about this historic wedding all helped to show a new aspect of our church that people were not very much aware of at that time. Just walking down the street with my bride (still dressed in our wedding clothes), together with our parents, we saw how the faces of the people we met became bright and friendly. Everywhere, people came up to us and gave us their congratulations, blessings and a happy marriage. Not even one was negative. Everybody expressed their joy and amazement about the huge wedding. They still couldn't believe it, but everywhere they saw happy, beautiful couples walking around and deep inside themselves they must have felt that they also had the same desire of being happily married to a good person.

A couple of days later I went fundraising and I had similar experiences while fundraising at a stop light, selling roses. Everybody in New York knows anyway that those young people who are selling flowers at stop lights naturally must be "Moonies" because they are the only ones doing this.

From the passing cars many people asked, "Hey, did you also participate in that Marriage?"

"Yes", I replied.

"I must congratulate you," they responded. Nobody called me names. They were happy to see somebody who had actually participated at this historic Marriage Blessing. Only one person, I remember, after finding out I'd been married at Madison Square Garden, told me, "I'm sorry for you; you should not be here, but home with your parents; that's where you belong." Because he had already driven off, I did not have enough time to tell him that my parents were actually with me in New York.

The day before that incident I was at the Bronx Church center in order to prepare my flowers for fundraising. We had just finished our breakfast when the telephone rang. Sister Monika went to answer it. When she returned to the breakfast table she had a very special expression on her face, as if something unbelievable had happened. Monika was herself very surprised. In fact a woman had called and asked whether we knew when Rev. Moon would hold the next Blessing Ceremony. She told Monika that she had watched the whole ceremony on TV and that she was very impressed by all the wonderful happy couples. Her desire was also to be married by Rev. Moon at the next wedding, and she really wanted to find out what the conditions were to participate.

Well Monika answered that, actually, all of the couples are members of our church and serve a certain period of time in a public mission before the Marriage Blessing, but if she wanted to know more about our church she would be more than welcome to visit our center and find out more on her own. Monika had given her our center's address and made an appointment to meet.

For all of us hearing this story, it still sounded very strange and unbelievable. What Rev. Moon had told us some time before had actually come to pass: he had said that in the future many people would come and request him to choose their eternal life partners. Parents also will come and ask Rev. Moon to look for a partner for their children. Once it becomes clear that marriage in the Unification Church is more successful than anywhere else, then of course everybody will want to follow this way, even without knowing much about God or religion: because it is a very basic desire in every person to find the ideal partner with whom he or she can live in eternal happiness.