

The Spirit of the Blessing: My parents were even more excited than I was - Part 1

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My name is Matthias Wiesner, I'm a missionary to South Africa and came for the Holy Wedding in Madison Square Garden in New York two weeks ago. Rev. Moon and Mrs. Moon married 2075 couples there on July 1st. I was blessed with Claudy Leduc, a French sister.

For this special occasion my parents came to New York. They had waited ever since my engagement in September 1978. They were waiting for the wedding ceremony and started saving up money for an air ticket to anywhere in the world. I took it almost for granted that my parents had a strong desire to attend my wedding ceremony, never mind in which part of the world it might be.

Right from the beginning when I joined the Unification Church in June 1974, my parents were not happy at all that I had joined a religious movement as a fulltime missionary, since I was in the middle of my school education. My mother became very worried about my involvement after she was contacted by a minister who was heading a parents' organization whose aim was to get their children out of the Unification Church by all means, even by using violence, kidnapping and "deprogramming." My mother felt that she had to join this parents' association in order to help all those misled children to go back to their

families, including me. Personally I never had a chance to witness to her or try to explain my basic attitude towards the Unification Church. But, in spite of being far away from my parents, I made an effort to write to them regularly, sharing about my life and church activities.

In 1975 I left Germany to become a foreign missionary in the Sudan. Before I left, my parents and my older sister, who is a nun, came to visit me at our training center to say goodbye. At that moment I felt that despite our differences my parents still loved me and really wanted to keep a good relationship with me. My mother always considered herself a very religious person, but when she was confronted with the idea to study more about the Divine Principle she always rejected that. She didn't need to study a new religion: that was her usual answer.

Yet at the beginning of this year (1982) a big change came into my mother's life, as she attended a 7-day workshop. She started to discover the deep meaning of the Divine Principle. She personally felt that God was calling her and asking for her whole-hearted support. My father had always kept more distant towards religious matters, but through my mother's influence he came to know more about our church and its teachings.

The greatest testimony to my parents was the change in my personal life style. This was because although they had really tried by all means to make a good person out of me, all their attempts failed, sometimes making things worse. Suddenly I changed and became a person of good character, hardworking, with dedication and a goal in life, the kind of person they had always wanted me to be.

In 1978 when I was engaged in London my parents also came, but they couldn't really understand so much about the way marriage is viewed in the Unification Church. When my parents met my fiancée, they liked her immediately and felt that she was the right person for me. They could not understand why we did not want to live together to learn to know each other better; instead, after a couple of days, we separated for an unpredictable time period. They did not understand, but somehow respected and admired our dedication and faith in God and in our church and in each other.

From that time on my parents became more interested in our church activities. They constantly asked when the wedding ceremony would be, where it would be, and would they be able to attend it? They

started saving for an air ticket. Personally I was surprised that my parents took so much interest in my future marriage. I felt that they were more serious about my marriage than I was.

When finally it was clear that July 1, 1982 would be the date of a big wedding at Madison Square Garden Stadium, they said they would meet me on that date in New York. But at that time it was not yet clear that I would be a candidate for this Blessing Ceremony, so when they heard this they were (at first) quite disappointed; I also started to feel anxious and went every day to our downtown center to check the Telex Machine, to see, if my name would appear on the list for the blessing candidates. One week before July 1 I found out that my name had appeared on the list. My parents were even more excited than I was.

On the day before the Blessing Ceremony I met my parents in New York. I didn't know what hotel they were staying in. Somehow I got hold of their hotel telephone number but when I phoned that number I couldn't get through to my parents. I was told they were waiting for me downstairs. My mother was so anxious seeing me that she has been standing several hours on the street in front of her hotel entrance in order to welcome me. I didn't understand how she could do this; even without being sure I was on the way, she was just standing there, just expecting me to come. It may be difficult to understand, but somehow that was the heart of a mother. These things do not depend on logical decisions.

I hurried and met her standing outside the hotel entrance, embracing me without many words, because she knew I was coming. My father was tired from the long wait, but jumped up from his bed immediately when he heard that I had arrived and we embraced each other, it looked like we always had a deep relationship, but the opposite is true.

For the wedding ceremony my parents arrived together with a group of German parents, two hours before the actual ceremony was supposed to start. They were seated in a very good place to watch the whole ceremony from a place near by the main stage. The real impact of our wedding ceremony towards other people was difficult for me to understand at that time, because for us church members it was a tradition to have big weddings and for me it felt normal to be married in this way.

We were among the first couples who came out into the Main Hall, and after coming down the steps and being sprinkled with Holy Water by Rev. and Mrs. Moon, we faced the big crowd of visitors. An incredible number of media people were there. The constant click of the cameras, the sound of the television cameras, the many flash bulbs...it was all unbelievable. Suddenly I realized, that here, something had happened that the world had never seen, and suddenly the attention of the world was focused on us; this wedding event in Madison Square Garden. Even then it was not so obvious how big an impression this event would have on the world and especially on America.

After the wedding ceremony, my wife and I decided to go together with my parents back to their hotel. On the way we were stopped by a lady. She wanted to know if we belonged to those 2075 couples who had been married that morning. She had heard about it on the radio. She wanted to know how long we had known each other, because some couples only came to know each other one week before that event. All along the way we met people who wanted to know whether we belonged to those 2075 couples. Everybody looked very excited and we were congratulated very warm-heartedly. No one expressed negative feelings, and even without saying anything, everyone who saw us put on a bright face.

My parents didn't say much; they were still thinking about the impressive wedding ceremony. In the hotel room we switched on the television. On the 5 o'clock news there was already a report about our wedding. They also mentioned that some parents had kidnapped their daughter outside Madison Square Garden in order to prevent her from getting married. My mother was very upset when she heard this and said, "How can those parents take responsibility for what they are doing; they will destroy their relationship with their daughter for eternity."

"How can there be such little understanding by parents toward their children?" was my Mother's constant comment. It was difficult for her to grasp. Actually it was not too long ago that she had also been quite suspicious about my involvement in the Unification Church. But somehow she never tried to ignore me as her son. My father had been very frustrated that I gave up my school education and it made him bitter. But it was my mother's desire to understand me and what I was doing: my mother met members of our church and came to visit our center and attend parents' meetings, and finally a seminar about Divine Principle. Now she even tries to educate me and tells me what a true 'Moonie' is supposed to be. A true 'Moonie' will take care of people in his environment. He is able to forgive others, be punctual, loyal and humble etc.

Through our church and the Divine Principle, my mother understood that she cannot go to the Kingdom of Heaven if she cannot solve the problems she has while she is on earth. Now, after the Blessing, she looks a bit enviously at my special Blessing ring. She told my father she also wanted a ring like mine. At first I didn't understand, but then I realized my mother also wanted their marriage to be blessed by Rev. and Mrs. Moon.