

## **This Week in History: May 11–17**

May 13, 2014

**May 15, 1961**

### **36 Couples' Holy Marriage Blessing**

May 15, 2014, marks the 53rd anniversary of the 36 Couples' Blessing. On that day in 1961, True Father blessed 36 couples, some of whom he had newly matched and others of whom were previously married. True Father called these couples the "ancestors" of all the blessed couples to come after them, meaning that their role was to exemplify marriages that have been dedicated to God and saved from Satan's influence. In True Father's words, these 36 couples were "the representatives of all types of people on earth" and needed to "pave the way to the Kingdom of Heaven and act as guides for others."

**May 12, 2003**

### **First Pilgrimage of the Middle East Peace Initiative**



*U.S. clergy and Israeli rabbis sign the Jerusalem Declaration*



*Dr. Chang Shik Yang presents the Jerusalem Declaration to True Parents upon his return from the first MEPI pilgrimage*

The Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) had its first pilgrimage from May 12 to 19, 2003. The first group went to both Rome and Israel, with the purpose of fostering reconciliation among the major religions of the region. True Father believed that Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders should take initiative in resolving their differences and restoring peace. He stated that the “deep-rooted conflict between major religious traditions” was the foundation for “violent wars all over the world.” Most of the MEPI pilgrimages have been based in Israel, the center of inter-religious significance as well as strife. This peace initiative has enjoyed repeated success over the years, and initially consisted of 131 U.S. clergy and staff from the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC).

### **May 13, 1993**

#### **Declaring the Completed Testament Age**

On May 13, 1993, True Father set out on a 12-city speaking tour of the United States, declaring the Completed Testament Age in which all people would live under a new example and vision for families and communities united under God.