

This Week in History, September 14-20

September 16, 2014

September 14, 1995

True Mother Tours Japan with President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush



Former U.S. President and First Lady George and Barbara Bush attend a WFWP conference.

On September 14, 1995, fifty thousand representatives from 53 countries gathered in the Tokyo Dome for a rally to celebrate the third anniversary of the founding of the Women's Federation for World Peace. True Mother spoke, as did former U.S. President George H.W. Bush. The president, along with former first lady Barbara Bush, accompanied True Mother on a historic five-city tour which focused on building bridges of friendship between the Japanese and American people. The Bushes were inspired to do so as a result of their participation in the WFWP-sponsored "Sisterhood Ceremonies" which brought together women from Japan and the United States on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II.

September 14, 1999

A New Prayer Tradition



The press conference announcing the World Festival of Culture.

On September 14, 1999, True Father opened the era in which blessed families were no longer to pray in the name of True Parents or any mediator but in their own names as blessed couples who have inherited True Parents' realm of victory. True Father explained that this was meant to mark the era of "personal responsibility." He said that couples should "report their work" and that it was no longer "a time to pray to receive blessings." This guidance was consistent with True Father's view that humankind had entered the Completed Testament Age.

September 15, 2012
True Father's Seonghwa Ceremony



True Father ascended to the spirit world on September 3, 2012 and his seonghwa ceremony was held on September 15 in Korea.

True Father's "Universal Seonghwa Ceremony" took place at Cheongshim World Peace Center on September 15, 2012, twelve days after his ascension on September 3. From September 6 to 14, an estimated 157,000 people had come to pay their respects to True Father, many waiting for hours to sign an electronic register and offer a rose or lily before True Father's portrait. Most had been able to offer a final bow to True Father, who lay in state at the Cheon Jeong Gung peace palace. On the day of the Seonghwa True Father's body was carried reverently to a waiting vehicle and a flower-bedecked procession wound its way slowly down the mountainside to the stadium where tens of thousands of mourners waited. The casket was met at the main entrance by an honor guard of pallbearers and began a dignified processional entry through the center of the arena up to the main stage, which had been transformed into a garden of roses, lilies and chrysanthemums. True Father's family accompanied the procession, and True Mother took her seat next to True Father for the last time. Following the representative prayer, Seonghwa address and eulogies, True Father began his final journey, with the procession winding its way back up the narrow mountain road lined with flag-waving supporters to the burial site on the grounds of the Cheon Jeong Gung peace palace. There, close family members and leaders gathered to hear final words from True Father's teachings. Each offered flowers and sprinkled soil onto the casket as it was lowered into the waiting earth.

September 17, 1988
Seoul Olympics



True Father welcomes the representatives of 120 nations to his home in Korea for the Seoul Olympics.

The Games of the XXIV Olympiad took place from September 17 to October 2, 1988, in Seoul. The “Seoul Olympics” were significant not only for Korea as the second Asian nation to host the Olympic Games but also for the world, as the games brought together athletes from the communist and free-world nations for the first time since 1976. These also were the last Olympic Games for the Soviet Union and East Germany, both of which would cease to exist by the time of the next Olympic Games in 1992. True Father recognized this and made a special effort to welcome Eastern Bloc and Soviet athletes, providing them with generous gifts and invitations to cultural events. Although Coca-Cola was the official soft drink of the Games, athletes, friends and officials of many nations accepted more than 40,000 cans of McCol and bottles of Ginseng-Up. Following completion of the games, True Father proposed the holding of a World Festival of Culture (later designated as the World Culture and Sports Festival) as an “internal” complement to the Olympic Games.

September 18, 1974
True Father Speaks at Madison Square Garden

True Father’s Madison Square Garden speech, delivered on September 18, 1974, in New York City, was the culmination of his “Day of Hope” speaking tours which had begun nearly two years earlier. Building on all that had gone before, “MSG” launched a triumphant 8-City Tour through many of the same cities that had been visited in the 7-City tour of 1972. Filling Madison Square Garden was the Unification Church of America’s most ambitious undertaking to date, and the arrival of seven hundred IOWC members in mid-August greatly augmented campaign preparations in New York City. Ten 70-member IOWC teams followed rigorous street canvassing schedules. Representatives from each of the forty nations where the Unification Church maintained missions and the remaining American church members -- in all, about 2,000 -- converged on New York City for a final week-long blitz prior to September 18. Members “wallpapered” Manhattan with eighty thousand two-by-three-foot posters with a portrait of True Father advertising that “September 18 Could Be Your Re-Birthday.” The New York Times reported, “His face is everywhere, it seems.”

The turnout at Madison Square Garden was astounding. At a kick-off banquet held in the Waldorf Astoria hotel on the previous evening approximately 1,600 prominent New Yorkers had a chance to see and hear True Parents. The following night, Madison Square Garden was filled to capacity, with an estimated 10,000 to 35,000 ticket-holders turned away. True Father spoke on “The New Future of Christianity.” He proclaimed that Jesus had not come to die on the cross, that the crucifixion was the “secondary,” not the “original” mission of Christ, that the Lord would return “as the Son of Man in the flesh,” and that “that

day is at hand.” With nearly two hundred journalists in attendance, widespread publicity helped ensure success in other cities. The pattern of overflow crowds and continued publicity was repeated throughout the tour.



True Father speaks at Madison Square Garden on September 18, 1974.

September 18, 1976
Washington Monument Rally



Crowds gather at the Washington Monument when True Father speaks in 1976.

True Father spoke before 300,000 people at the Washington Monument rally, which was the second of two major rallies held in 1976 to celebrate the United States' bicentennial. The first had been the Yankee Stadium rally on June 1 in New York City. They were both part of the "Bicentennial God Bless America Festival," which True Father stated was unique among the bicentennial observances because they were convened in the name of God and included international participants. At Washington Monument, True Father spoke on "America and God's Will." He stated, "The United States of America, transcending race and nationality, is already a model of the unified world." He also said that Judaism, Christianity and the Unification Church are sibling faiths and that Israel, the United States and Korea as sibling nations had "a common destiny representing God's side" and needed "to restore the United Nations to its original purpose and function." He called upon the three religions and nations to "join hands in a unified effort," contributing "internally to the unification of world religions and externally to the unification of the world itself."

After the Washington Monument Rally, True Father confessed:

I feel light as a feather. I feel like I can fly. I have borne a tremendous burden of responsibility, but with the victory at Washington Monument, I feel like I have been liberated from the weight. I can now walk as a free man. I can hold my head up before heaven and earth.

Washington Monument was a watershed event in the history of the Unification Church in America. It concluded the initial proclamation phase of Rev. Moon's ministry and opened the way for new initiatives in the fields of evangelism, education, interfaith relations, business, media and public life.