

The USA holds a National Memorial Service to commemorate the second anniversary of Sun Myung Moon's ascension

Ki Hoon Kim

September 20, 2014

Hammerstein Ballroom of the Manhattan Center in New York City



Yeon Ah Lee Choi Moon, WFWP international president, reading True Mother's address

The God's Hope for America Holy Ground Pilgrimage, a fifty-five-day tour of the U.S. along the course that Father took as he created holy grounds throughout the nation formed a basis for this anniversary event. During the pilgrimage, members reminisced, drawing out memories, recalling direct experiences from the years that they were fortunate enough to have True Parents physically present in their nation. In this way, they invited True Father's spirit among them.

On the day True Parents had arrived from Korea (via Canada) to live in the United States, they disembarked from their flight in Washington DC. That evening, two hundred miles away, the Little Angels would perform in Carnegie Hall, which some would call the country's premier performing arts auditorium, indicating that long before they began their many years' sojourn in the U.S., our church had a foundation there and the nation was already feeling True Parents' benevolent influence.

True Parents' direct presence in the nation, beginning on December 18, 1971, was a deep blessing for the nation and for the members that closely interacted with them.

True Parents' direct presence in the



The National Memorial Service took place in the 12,000-square-foot Hammerstein Ballroom.

On September 20, more than three thousand people came together for their National Memorial Service to sing to the heavens and to celebrate the legacy of True Parents' years in America and True Father's years on earth. Michael Balcomb, president of the church in United States, introduced the event by saying, "Today we have gathered here to celebrate the life of Dr. Sun Myung Moon, our True Father. And what a life it was! For many, perhaps most of those in the audience, we know him as our True Father, our spiritual guide, the one who showed us the way back to God."



A ceremony symbolic of harmony between religions took place

As a testimony to True Father's efforts to bring harmony to religious people, the memorial included a small ceremony symbolic of peace between faiths. Rev. Marilyn Kotulek, the co-chair of the American Clergy Leadership Council in the state of Oklahoma represented female religious leaders, though the representative of Unificationism, Minister Nandi Bengu (who also later added her beautiful voice to gospel songs), and the representative of Judaism, Chaya Eliya Kranz, are also female. Guru Dileepji, represented Hinduism. Imam Shamsi Ali, who represented Islam, was greeted with warm applause when he said, "I am thrilled and highly honored to be among my family, this morning, under God." The third man in the group, Rev. Robert Waterman represented Christianity.



The National Memorial Service concluded with cheers of eog-mansei

Bishop Cecil G. Riley, a Brooklyn New York-based pastor of the Freedom Hall Church of God, was the emcee for the ceremony. He is also the regional chairman of the American Clergy Leadership Conference and as he proudly announced, he is one of ACLC's founding members. Bishop Riley concluded the ceremony by say, "This is a wonderful demonstration to the world that we are indeed one family under

God."



North American Regional President Ki Hoon Kim

The regional president for North America, Rev. Ki Hoon Kim thanked the audience for coming to the event "which honored the life and legacy of our True Father." Rev. Kim told the audience that a month earlier thirty thousand people had attended the commemoration of True Father's ascension in Chung Pyung. He added, "It was truly a universal celebration, representing all the people of not only this world, but even the spirit world. We were greatly encouraged by Mother Moon who is moving forward confidently at the center of God's providence. As you know Father and Mother Moon spent much of their lives working right here, in the United States. They came here to build up the proud, Christian tradition of America and to put into practice their motto by living for the sake of others. With True Mother, Hak Ja Han

Moon, we recommit ourselves to the clear goal of Vision 2020."

Overcoming Adversity

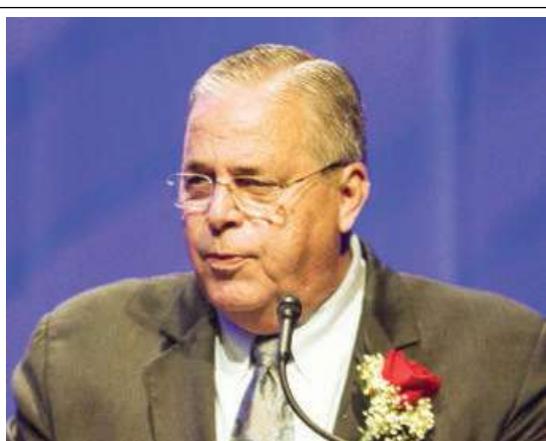


Mr. Dan Burton, a congressman, expressed regret over Father's incarceration in the United States

Another key speaker at the National Memorial Service in New York was Dan Burton, a retired congressman that had served fifteen-terms representing the state of Indiana. He began by complimenting Prof. Yeon Ah Choi Moon, Hyo Jin nim's widow, who is the president of WFWP International: "The founders' address that was so beautifully presented here today by Mother Moon's daughter-in law points out that religious leaders play a central role in achieving peace, because real peace must be rooted in God. I know that the life of Rev. Moon was by no means an easy one. He encountered opposition and persecution throughout his life...." As he had done at the memorial service held in Korea on August 12, Mr. Burton spoke about Father's imprisonment in the United States not being "the will of righteous American people -- but a tragic case of

religious persecution and bigotry."

In his remarks, Mr. Burton alluded to hearings overseen by Senator Orrin Hatch on religious freedom in America. Father testified at those Senate hearings. To glean something of True Father's experience in America, we can still read his recorded testimony: The survival of the entire world depends on America fulfilling her responsibility.



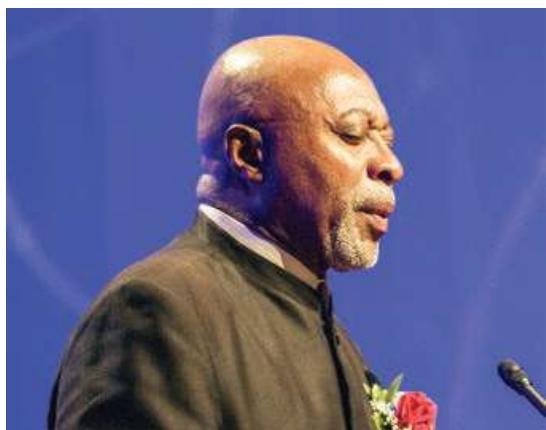
President Neil Salonen of Bridgeport University

America is the last bastion of freedom. For the last twelve years, I have given my heart and soul and every drop of sweat and tears for the sake of this nation. In the process of fulfilling this mission, I have become controversial, and in some quarters, unpopular. I have been persecuted. However, I am by no means the first religious leader to have experienced persecution.

Many of the major religious figures in the Judeo-Christian tradition have taken this path of suffering through persecution. Today, I am honored to follow the same tradition.... I have done everything I could for America. I have had just one goal in mind: to strengthen the moral fiber of America and enlarge her capacity to fulfill God's will.

Neil Salonen, proclaimed the commemoration of True Father's legacy in the United States, "A momentous day!" and said, "It was my honor and privilege to be at the second anniversary commemoration in Korea. However, there is an additional level of meaning to be celebrating here today in the very room where True Father spoke to us so many times." Before asking the audience members to rise to their feet and join him in three cheers of *eog mansei*, Rev. Yang Chang Shik, chairman of UPF,

spoke a few words about True Parents, saying, "Throughout their lives, Father and Mother Moon, our True Parents, had a beautiful tradition of honoring God, our Heavenly Parent, first. We learned from them to encourage each other by loudly and boldly proclaiming -- first, our confidence in God's love and mercy -- second, the victory of True Parents -- and third, our determination to build God's kingdom on earth."



Archbishop George Stallings, founder, Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation, prayed

Following the memorial event was a banquet at which prominent figures were honored and various people expressed their determination to take the American movement forward.

Lena Yasutake, a member of WFWP's board of directors, introduced the Sunhak Peace Prize, which we covered in our September issue in some detail, to the assembled leaders. Following the banquet, younger people, close to sixty next-generation leaders who come from a variety of Unificationist church experiences, met. Thus, in the first part of the commemorative event, the U.S. church recalled Father's legacy, investment and vision, and in the second, they focused on implementation.