

This week in history, February 8-14

February 10, 2015

February 8, 1975

1,800 Couple Holy Marriage Blessing



True Parents bless 1800 couples in marriage

True Parents blessed 1,800 couples (technically, 1801) in what the Guinness Book of World Records then recorded as the largest mass wedding in history on February 8, 1975. The ceremony, conducted in Seoul's Jangchung Gymnasium, brought together couples from 25 nations, including 891 couples from Korea, 797 from Japan, 76 from the United States, 35 from European countries and two from the Republic of China. Over 10,000 guests witnessed the event, after which couples boarded ninety-four sightseeing buses for a parade through the streets of Seoul. True Parents blessed the 1,800 Couples 14 years after their Holy Marriage Blessing in 1960. It closed out the second 7-year or national-level course and opened the way to the Unification Church's international work. Some 300 members from the 1,800 Couples went out to 123 nations as foreign missionaries, pioneering the worldwide providence. True Father noted that 1,800 represents three times six, equaling eighteen or "the complete subjugation of the satanic number 6." The 1,800 Couples, he said, "represent all humankind." Upon their Blessing, he declared, "we enter the age to embrace the world." This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1,800 Couple Blessing.

February 12, 1965

True Father Arrives in America for the First Time



True Father established the first Holy Ground in the United States on Twin Peaks overlooking San Francisco

From its earliest days, the American Unification movement anticipated the imminent arrival of True

Father. Miss Young Oon Kim, the first church missionary to the United States, expected True Father's arrival with Mr. David Kim in September 1959 and out of her meager funds rented an apartment and purchased bedding and other items. The original Bay Area group anticipated his arrival in the spring of 1961 and purchased a camper. The same expectation was a focus of the American church in 1964. Members throughout the country began a "High Noon Prayer Vigil" in anticipation, and by November word came that "Time is growing short." True Father departed from Korea for his first world tour in January 1965. After spending two weeks in Japan, he and Mrs. Won Pok Choi left for America. Miss Kim, who accompanied them to Japan, departed ahead of them "to prepare Americans for his visit." In an article, "Hail to the Brightness," *New Age Frontiers*, the newsletter published by Miss Kim's group, chronicled True Father's San Francisco Bay Area arrival:

The Great Day dawned for us before the sun was up. At 5:30 a.m. on the still, cool morning of Friday, February 12, our Master set foot upon the continent of North America. Twenty-seven highly honored, greatly privileged and totally breathless members of the Unified Family in the United States were on hand to greet him and Mrs. Choi as they stepped off the Japan Airlines flight from Hawaii at the San Francisco International Airport. Among the fortunate few were the three missionaries from Korea whose love and single-minded devotion were responsible for the presence of Americans at the momentous occasion—Miss Young Oon Kim, Col. Bo Hi Pak and Mr. David Kim.

Three days later, True Father established the first Holy Ground in the United States on Twin Peaks overlooking San Francisco. In the next forty-four days, he traveled by car to all forty-eight contiguous states, setting up a total of fifty-five Holy Grounds. True Father's first visit to the United States lasted nearly five months, until July 1, 1965, when he departed for Europe.

February 13, 2000 First International Blessing of 400 Million Couples



400 million couples receive the Holy Marriage Blessing

Many Unificationists expected that the Holy Marriage Blessing of 360 Million Couples of 1999, which focused largely on previously married couples, would be the final Marriage Blessing in the sequence of international wedding ceremonies conducted on a global and mass scale. Unificationists, therefore, were surprised when True Father announced a 400 Million Couple Blessing to be conducted in conjunction with his 80th birthday, on February 13, 2000. They were more surprised to learn that the 400 million were to be "matched couples only." True Father envisioned that the 400 million "Youth Blessing," in conjunction with the 360 Million Couple Blessing of 1999, "will influence the entire human race." In America, Unificationists targeted school graduations, movie theaters, ball parks, beaches, fairs and other places where young people congregated, passing out "Pure Love Pledge Cards." The "Pure Love Pledge" called on young people to refrain from all sexual relationships before marriage; to respect and honor the ideal of purity in themselves and others; to learn how to practice pure love as a child, friend, spouse and parent; to dedicate themselves to absolute fidelity within marriage; and to encourage others to do the same. Legions of female Unificationists from Japan helped in the work. True Parents conducted Blessing 2000, as they had in 1999, before a packed Seoul Olympic Stadium. Representatives from ten world faith traditions pronounced blessings, and the event, coordinated with the 2000 World Culture and Sports Festival, was a spectacular success. However, it was apparent that "matched couples" still made up a minority of the Blessing participants. True Father, therefore, designated it "Phase One" of the 400 Million Couple Blessing. Successive phases followed over the course of the next decade.