

1800 Couples Celebrate 40 Years of Love

Michael Balcomb
February 8, 1975



“February 8, 1975, was my most unforgettable day,” said True Father at the first anniversary of the 1,800 Couples’ Holy Marriage Blessing. This year, on the East Coast, 25 couples gathered at East Garden to commemorate their 40th anniversary, a cause for great celebration for couples around the world.

Being surrounded by the legacy of True Parents at East Garden and by all the dedicated couples made for an inspiring and uplifting day, as they took the time to reflect on the Marriage Blessing, spend quality time together, celebrate and share stories of these past four decades together. The day began with the opportunity to take a tour of the grounds, including the Holy Ground at East Garden and many of the places where True Parents worked during their mission in America. The couples were reminded of True Parents’ legacy and True Mother’s current determination to fulfill it, and had wonderful moments of prayer and reflection before beginning their banquet celebration.



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chair of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) North America and a participant of the 1,800 Couples' Marriage Blessing himself, sent a congratulatory video message from Hawaii, thanking the couples for their continued dedication and sharing True Mother's message of gratitude to the 1800 couples for their support and worldwide missionary work. Then, Alexa Ward, Vice President of FFWPU USA and one of the organizers of this event, gave welcoming remarks and introduced the day's program.

Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of FFWPU USA, read the speech that True Father gave on the first anniversary in 1976, which expressed the deep significance of this group and their marriages. "True Father stayed up all night matching couples because, according to him, 'Marriage is very important in a person's life and cannot be a game,'" said Dr. Balcomb. He paraphrased, "This Marriage Blessing was particularly important because you, as international couples, opened the way to intercultural, interracial and international marriage. Your faithfulness kept that door open so that today it's commonplace. You have been the gatekeepers of international marriage."



For the couples, looking back on that special day, 40 years ago, when they made their commitment to each other before God yielded profound memories. Several couples shared anecdotes and expressed their vision for a future generation that practices the Divine Principle. Grace Davin spoke of her gratitude toward God and True Parents for answering her prayers in marriage, while John and Nanette Doroski said they felt they had been brought together by God and commented on the deeply educational process overcoming their differences.

Many couples had vivid memories of the very day they received the Marriage Blessing. Paul Yasutake from Bridgeport, Connecticut, said, "It was a grand occasion. Can you imagine 1,800 couples in procession? We had to wait outside, in zero degree weather, for about an hour. When we finally got in, it was so hot inside; but that was just the physical temperature. Spiritually, it was very uplifting and I have only good thoughts about it. These 40 years it has continued to bring back good memories."

Paul's wife, Gertrud, remembered, "Behind us was a Korean couple, and as True Father prayed, the Korean brother behind us was just sobbing in prayer. I couldn't understand anything because it was not my language, but because he was very moved, this also moved something in me. During True Father's prayer, I felt the message that, 'You are a Moon now.' It was like I had become part of True Father's family."

"I was very grateful to True Parents, and when True Father brought us together, I felt an explosion of love," said Kathleen Sato from New Jersey, describing the moment when True Father suggested her husband for her. "We walked forward and I felt this was a precious gift from Heaven,"

Gratitude was a major theme of the day, as the couples recorded and sent their best wishes to True Mother and thanked True Parents for the gift of the Marriage Blessing they received years ago as young adults. Upon looking back, many couples reflected on the profoundness of the foundation of their marriage.

The Yasutakes commented, “Because there’s a commitment, we’re able to work out any challenges that come up. For people in our society today, 40 years seems like a lot. And we’re looking forward to the 50th year.”

“Society has to be able to survive and thrive,” they said, “and it’s very clear that that has to be through marriage. A marriage that holds together, is solid and doesn’t play around with thoughts of ever separating—a marriage that is committed to work things out—combined with a philosophy or spiritual rootedness in God and a very clear goal to create a new society, is a very solid entity.”

The couples also took a moment to pass on words of wisdom to the younger generations of blessed couples.

“Don’t hesitate to ask for help—we are in this together,” said Gertrud. “God lets you meet people, angels in your life, that will help you along if you are willing.”

Sumiyo and Yasuko Kono from New Jersey had a heartfelt message:

“Marriage is so interesting. Because of True Parents, whenever something comes up in life, we are so lucky to know of a way to come back to understanding what our hearts really want to do, which is to love. Everything that happens in life is something God guiding or teaching us, so always trust in God and have faith in your spouse. We are so grateful we learned that way of life.”

It seems that as every year goes by, couples gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the meaning of the Marriage Blessing and see that bear fruit in their lives. With True Parents setting the example and raising and nurturing thousands of couples in the course of their lifetime, the 1800 couples, now dispersed around the globe, are grateful for the opportunity to be the ones True Parents trusted to be exemplary international couples to the world.

The love of the 1,800 couples has become one of the deepest forms of perseverance, trust and commitment to True Parents’ legacy the world has seen. Congratulations again to all the 1,800 couples around the world!