

## Banquet for American donors to the International Peace Education Center (IPEC)

Michael Balcomb  
May 29, 2015



The banquet for American donors to the International Peace Education Center (IPEC) took place on the evening of Friday, May 29, 2015. The event has been three years in the making, and the room filled with cheerful, excited chatter, as attendants, who made great offerings of heart, gathered to celebrate the sanctification and opening of the education center.

In her welcoming introduction, Mrs. Alexa Ward, Vice President of Family Federation For World Peace and Unification, thanked the attendants and expressed her hope that the evening would be a warm, celebratory, fun evening.

The evening began with a video of the Las Vegas providence, where True Father chose to spend the last five years of his life. The video outlined True Parents' vision to turn the "sin city" into the "shining city," and some of the projects that were begun in Las Vegas by True Father and True Mother.



Mrs. Ward introduced Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chairman of North America, who gave the welcoming address. She told the audience that Dr. Kim has a single-minded focus on attending True Parents, and representing them here in the United States. He does so with great heart, she said, and often with tears.

Dr. Kim addressed the attendants warmly, and thanked them for their generous, heartfelt support. He also took a moment to thank the 40,000 Japanese church members who contributed to the building of the IPEC. He expressed how touched he was by their support. "We have each other, we are united for the



sake of True Parents.” Dr. Kim encouraged the audience to work together, to “build the American family church to be strong.” True Father may not be here physically, he said, “but we have True Mother here, so let’s unite and build up America again, through True Parents.”



Rev. Levi Daugherty gave the invocation for the dinner, and then the donors enjoyed good food and good company. As the desert was served, there were several musical offerings from donors. The program was followed by three couples, who shared about the circumstances that allowed them to contribute to the IPEC fund.

Pasquale and Aiko Santoro from Los Angeles spoke about tithing and studying the Word. Pasquale shared about his family’s consistent Hoon Dok Hae condition that they have been consistently practicing since 1997. In 2007, Pasquale said that he was hit by a car, and was waiting on a stretcher in the hospital, and his main concern was that it was nearing 5am and he wouldn’t be able to do Hoon Dok Hae! “When I do Hoon Dok Hae,” he said, “I feel God’s presence every day. We were very clear about wanting to give to the IPEC effort. I really feel we can build God’s kingdom together.”



Otmar and Marie Wienmann also gave a testimony, about tribal messiahship. Marie Wienmann shared

about how she felt that the money that allowed her family to put a down payment on their new home, and allowed them to give generously to the IPEC effort, was a direct result of God's guidance and love, and the couple's investment in the relationships with their family. "Why IPEC? Because it is a place where we can learn and pass on the wisdom and principles of True Parents, and it's right here in America. I learned to trust, and to always be grateful. Just say yes, say thank you. We didn't work for the money, but we were so happy that it was able to go to the highest purpose," she said.



Reverend Jeddie King and Reverend Alma King shared the final testimony. Something had come up that caused them to sell their house. When the money was in the bank account, Reverend Alma said,

"I went to my husband and told him that I promised God that if he gave us that kind of money, we would donate it to the Peace Center. And he said, 'Well, if that's what you told God, I guess we'd better do it.' I understand now why God wants us to be owners. Because owners take care of things."

Alexa invited Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of Family Federation in America, to give the final remarks. She called him "a man of deep faith, and a broad, caring heart."

In his final remarks, Dr. Balcomb said, "Two days ago, Dr. Kim really moved us. He said, 'Do you know what True Mother is doing now? She's out shopping for new shoes and clothes for True Father for the Peace Center.' Because she really feel like it's his home. Yesterday, she was very sad, because she knew that he wanted to live in the Peace Palace during his lifetime. So it was kind of a bittersweet dedication for her.

"But I really feel like True Father is there.

"This house is God's house. When we go there, I hope you feel the spirit of True Parents there. And I hope that when you go there, you don't feel like guests, you'll feel like hosts. I hope you feel the privilege of being the co-owner of the house of God."