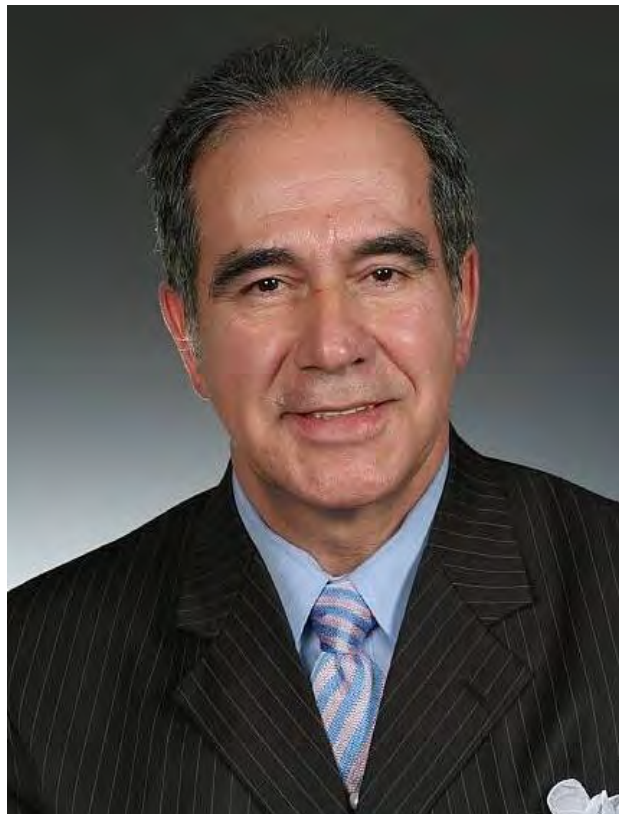


## FFWPU USA Blessing and Family Ministry: In Memory of Antonio Betancourt

Yun-A Johnson  
October 7, 2022



### Antonio Betancourt

Spouse: Kyoko Kagawa Betancourt

Children: Kiantar, Annika, Kybo, Isaac

Birthdate: January 9, 1944

Blessing: July 1, 1982

Ascension: October 3, 2022

Seonghwa Ceremony: October 8, 2022

Antonio Betancourt was born January 9, 1944 in Belén, Colombia to a wealthy family, the ninth of 12 children. When Antonio was six, the family was forced to abandon all their landholdings overnight and flee for their lives due to the 1948-1958 civil war. They became destitute refugees within their own country. Antonio grew up knowing extreme poverty and daily hunger. In fact, he had to abandon his education after sixth grade, at age 14, in order to support his family.

Despite this, because of his deft people skills, mental acuity, and leadership ability, he was able to secure a series of jobs in Colombia and, eventually, New York City. In all of them, he quickly rose to positions of responsibility.



He lived in the New York City area for seven years. Then, in 1974, he had a powerful vision of Jesus, who beckoned him compellingly to follow him. The very next month, his spiritual mother, Misako (Horikawa) Connery, came to his brother Michael's apartment in Flushing, Queens and gave Antonio, who was visiting Michael, a copy of True Father's Madison Square Garden Rally speech. After reading

True Father's words about Jesus' life and mission, Antonio believed True Parents and their God-given revelation held the key to God's Truth and His Kingdom on Earth. As the years passed, all of Antonio's brothers and sisters and almost all of his large extended family also joined the Unification Movement.

In 1975, Antonio's singing talent was recognized and he was chosen as a tenor for the New Hope Singers International choir. The choir performed at events across America, including at the God Bless America Festival, a rally of 300,000 people in the nation's capital on September 18, 1976.

Antonio served as the Executive Director of several important organizations: the Association for the Unity of Latin America (AULA), the Summit Council for World Peace, the International Security Council, UPF International's Office of Peace and Security Affairs; and as a Member of the Executive Board of the Kirov Academy of Ballet, a world-renowned ballet academy.

Additionally, he served as Secretary-General of the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI), which brought over 20,000 Ambassadors for Peace from around the world for interfaith peace building in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. He worked extensively in the fields of international affairs, inter-religious dialogue, and international conflict resolution in six continents. He served as Executive Vice President of the International Security Council, a defense and foreign policy think tank, and was Executive Editor of Global Affairs, its quarterly journal.



In these capacities, Antonio met a long list of current and former world leaders, including President George H. W. Bush, President Gerald R. Ford, and President Bill Clinton (U.S.); President Mikhail Gorbachev (USSR); Pope John Paul II; President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il (North Korea); President Kim Dae Jung (South Korea); Chairman Yasser Arafat (Palestinian Authority); Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Yitzhak Shamir (Israel); Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath (United Kingdom); Governor General Edward R. Schreyer (Canada); and numerous others.

Because of his international humanitarian and peace work, Antonio received honorary degrees from the Catholic University in Argentina and the University of San Andres in Chile. He also received numerous commendations, including the Grand Medal of Peace from the DPRK (North Korea); Academy Award from the Mexican Academy of International Law; Honorary Citizenship of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; and most significantly, he was appointed "Special Envoy of True Parents" by Father and Mother Moon.

His crowning achievement, however, is his family. His marriage to Kyoko Kagawa, in 1982, officiated by Rev. and Mrs. Moon at Madison Square Garden, is his great pride. The loves of his life are his wife and their four children: Kiantar, Annika, Kybo, and Isaac, and many, many precious family members.



NO. 2022-67  
2075 Couples Blessing

祝祖國光復必勝奉其代表者

9.8 by the Heavenly Calendar in the 10<sup>th</sup> Year of Cheon Il Guk  
(October 3, 2022) at 8:55 PM

Antonio Betancourt

文鶴的 紀念

#### Seonghwa Ceremony

Date: Saturday, October 8, 2022 at 11:00 AM EDT (Visitation starts at 10:00 AM)

Location: The Washington Times Arbor Ballroom (3600 New York Ave. NE Washington, DC 20002)

The ceremony will be followed by a luncheon reception.

Online by Zoom at: [us02web.zoom.us/j/618147675](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/618147675) (Use Passcode: 2027)

OR streamed live at: [live.capitalhphc.org](https://live.capitalhphc.org)

#### Cards and flowers can be sent to the Betancourt family:

6305 Queens Chapel Road,

University Park, MD 20782