

Rev. Moon's Matches Going Strong after Thirty Years - Joshua Cotter

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July 2, 2012



Rev. Joshua Cotter, the keynote speaker, said that he "enjoyed every second of [the past 30 years with his wife] and would not trade it for anything."

More than 400 of the 8,000 couples who were Blessed in marriage by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon in 1982 celebrated their 30th Anniversary with their families at the Hammerstein Ballroom of the Manhattan Center on July 1, 2012. Broadcast live by satellite across the nation, the event opened with footage of the Blessings for 2,075 couples in Madison Square Garden and for 6,000 couples in Korea, as well as video testimonies from Unificationists who had attended either ceremony.

At noon earlier that day, couples were invited to gather in front of Madison Square Garden for a commemorative picture, together with their families. Many couples enthusiastically posed for the cameras in a "dip-kiss" pose as a public display of affection that has lasted thirty years. BBC featured a short documentary featuring one of the 1982 couples that can be viewed here (include link). Other newspapers that featured stories about the couples include *Newsday* and the *Daily News*.

At the gala, Master of Ceremonies and National Youth Pastor for Lovin' Life Ministries Jaga Gavin thanked these couples, saying, "You [1982 couples] never gave up on our True Parents. Our True Parents are here because of your faith. For us, the second-generation and young Unificationists, everything that we could inherit from you is incredible. So thank you so much for your commitment to God, True Parents, each other and us, and we hope that you could be at our 30th anniversary one day."



Pastor Jaga Gavin holds the commemorative picture that couples had taken in front of Madison Square Garden.

Gavin then introduced Rev. Joshua Cotter, vice president of the Unification Church USA and also a 1982 couple, as the keynote speaker for the event, whose remarks are included below. 1982 couple Tyndol and Imgard Ganes symbolically presented a gift to True Parents, and Pastor Gavin retook the podium to read congratulatory letters from Dr. Chang Shik Yang, continental director for the Unification Church and Dr. Joseph Lowery. Robert Sayer, a board member of the Blessed Families Association and also a 1982 couple, explained about the "2,075 Blessing Memories Project," which is an effort to collect photos and testimonies from the 1982 couples publish a book to present to Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon on Foundation Day. Pastor Gavin explained the work of the BlessedLIFE Ministry, which is "focused to be able to support people in marriage preparation, Blessing preparation, as well as supporting and enhancing existing marriages through education and empowerment," and welcomed the attendees to partake in a dinner of traditional Korean foods.

Entertainment included Laurel Nakai, daughter of Sayer, who performed an original song. "I am so proud to be able to share in this anniversary and to know that your Blessing is part of my lineage," she said.

“My husband also comes from the 1982 Blessing, so our family, our children, is all because of the commitment you made and True parents. Thank you and happy anniversary.”

Jana Iparraguirre and Kester Wilkening, second-generation Unificationists whose parents had attended the Blessing in 1982, performed a Waltz, which was followed by two more ballroom-dance exhibitions performed by the Blessed Teens Academy and graduates of Generation Peace Academy. *Sonic Cult* performed several numbers, and afterwards, the floor was opened for a night of ballroom dancing between fathers and daughters and mothers and sons.



Approximately 1,000 people gathered in the Hammerstein Ballroom for the 30th anniversary gala.

Remarks from Rev. Cotter

“Congratulations to all of you, but most especially, congratulations to Heavenly Father and True Parents on this glorious, historic occasion,” said Rev. Cotter. “Thank you, True Parents. Our True Parents are with us once again in Las Vegas. My beloved wife, who hasn’t aged a day, is with them and they celebrated our anniversary this morning in Las Vegas. As our True Parents think about the 30 years of our Blessing, the fact that we’re here, the fact that we have followed them faithfully, I’m sure that they are moved.”

Rev. Cotter read a letter addressed to True Parents from 1982-Blessing attendee Betsy Orman, who wrote the following: “Words cannot express the depth of gratitude that we have for the incredible Blessing we were given by you 30 years ago. You raised us up, removed our Original Sin and saved our lives, you gave us spouses that indeed became the catalyst for not only our own perfection, but our earthly and eternal happiness. The result of your sacrifice, all of our beautiful and gifted children, we owe and dedicate to you for the fulfillment of God’s will. Only as we now seek to Bless them can we begin to realize the tremendous sacrifices you have both made for all of us. On this anniversary, we hope that in some small way, we can show you how much we love you, how much we want to thank you. Know that we are still here, still standing and still faithful to you in the ideals you set before us. On this 30th anniversary, we want to rededicate ourselves to the fulfillment of God’s will.”

In the spirit of reliving his wedding day, Rev. Cotter shared about his first meeting with his wife. “When True Parents Blessed me with my wife – I really was stubbornly insistent upon a Korean wife – I had no idea if she spoke any English,” he said. “But the first thing she said to me, in a British accent, was ‘Don’t worry, I speak perfect English.’ I was blown away. It was perfect and it was English! *English* English. She had come from London, where she was raised and had joined the church. I was just thrilled.



Sonic Cult performed several songs towards the conclusion of the event to get young and young at heart up on their feet.

“We are so grateful for these last 30 years. I enjoyed every second of it and would not trade it for anything. Now as we continue to grow to perfection with each other, our children and our grandchildren, here on this earth, this is just the beginning. Let’s have a great next 30 years, amen? Perhaps we’ll gather

here for our 60th anniversary for the year 2042! Let us appreciate our children who are with us and made this event possible – let’s thank our children. So from our senior pastor and from all of us here from Lovin’ Life Ministries, have a fantastic celebration, happy 30th anniversary, God bless you and see you soon.”



Fathers paired with daughters and sons paired with mothers for an evening of ballroom dancing.

Letters from Dr. Yang and Dr. Lowery

“Beloved Brothers and Sisters of the 2,075 and 6,000 Couples' Blessings, I want to sincerely congratulate you on this occasion, the thirtieth anniversary of your holy weddings. I regret that I cannot be with you in person but duty has me attending our True Parents.

“Our True Parents are in the best of health and we have many of the True Grandchildren with us! Even though the temperature in Las Vegas is 108 degrees Fahrenheit, True Father goes out to Lake Mead as soon as Hoon Dok Hwe is over, to offer his devotion to God through fishing. Even at the age of 93, he never tires as he shows us the example of devotion and gives us providential teachings.

“Recently, True Parents are emphasizing Tribal Messiahship activities and preparation for having our names entered into the Holy Family Register. There are 265 days left until Foundation Day. True Parents are counting down the days one by one and living each day as though it were a thousand years.

“The 8,000 couples received the mission of standing at the forefront of paying indemnity for the 6,000 years’ history of God’s Providence of Restoration. In America, the main people in charge of the national ministry, district ministries and each organization are 8,000 couples.

“It’s not just the case in America. There are many brothers and sisters of the 8,000 couples with very important missions in Korea, Japan and other nations. Moreover, the 2,075 couples of America are a faith group of the Completed Testament Age that have a similar mission to that of the Puritans.

“I pray that at this 30th anniversary of your Blessing, you will pledge to contribute even more to Heaven’s Providence throughout the rest of your lives. I pray that you will become victors who leave a legacy of faith that you can be proud of in front of your beloved spouses and children.



Graduates of the Generation Peace Academy performed a Foxtrot routine choreographed by Ariana Moon.

“I am grateful to our dear In Jin Nim for preparing this precious opportunity to commemorate the 8,000 couples’ Blessing. May God and True Parents’ blessings will be with you and your families.”

Dr. Lowery’s letter read: “I am pleased to send a message of congratulations to the thousands of couples who are celebrating their wedding anniversary on this great occasion! We are grateful for your example of family love and stability. In times like these, the world needs such an example. We serve a mighty and

loving God who watches over all His children with tender care and powerful affection. Oh, how the world needs the example of loving and stable families.

“May you enjoy many more years of blessed and reverent lives together. The world is so much blessed by the example of families that pray and therefore, stay together. We shall keep you in our prayers constantly and fervently.”



Mr. Yoshi and Mrs. Fran Ichijo shared a humorous testimony about their relationship.

Testimony from the Ichijos

First-generation couple Yoshi and Fran Ichijo, who were matched in 1978 in Korea, offered a humorous and touching testimony about their martial relationship.

Fran Ichijo said, “When I called my mother from Korea, I said, ‘Mom, I’m engaged.’ She said, ‘Who is it?’ I said, ‘He’s Japanese.’ She said, ‘They are the enemy!’ My mother said that! She was from that generation. I said, ‘Mom it’s ok, he’s great.’ She said, ‘What’s his name?’ I said, ‘Yoshihiro Ichijo.’ She said, ‘I can’t even say it.’ But now my mother loves her three grandchildren, and we have a grandchild so now she loves her great-grandchild, her first one, more than anything in the world, and she loves all of our family, so she had a big turnaround from all of those days. This is a testimony to our True Parents. We thank our True Parents for everything because they gave us the vision to make it work, make it happen and make the best family we could possibly make.”

Yoshi Ichijo: “We Japanese are not trained to express our love. So, many nights – no, few times – [laughter] I think there was a misunderstanding. I didn’t know what love meant. I didn’t know how to convey my love for her. I’m from the eastern culture and she’s from the west. But father matched us and he said, ‘When the two extremes are united, anybody, anything in between will be totally united.’ Because of the vision and the principles our True Parents gave us, the struggle wasn’t easy but easier because we shared the same vision to build an ideal family. We dealt with any situation. We learned how to improve our relationship. One thing I learned was that men have a stronger ego than women, but I learned that we need to be humble to accept the truth, which means, if we are wrong, we accept it.”



Parents and children tried out the dance skills they had learned earlier in the day at Lovin' Life ballroom class.

Prayer from Dr. and Mrs. Luonne Rouse

Dr. and Mrs. Luonne Rouse, a minister from the United Methodist Church, who was Blessed by Rev. and Mrs. Moon in October 2010, offered a prayer as dinner was made available to the participants: “Greetings beautiful people of God. The spirit of God is truly in this place. And we come before you to tell you that the thrill of marriage was sacred when it was Blessed by the wonderful spirit of God that comes through the ministry that you are a part of, and we thank God for you, for Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Mrs. Moon, their family, their commitment to God.

“Almighty God, you have seen fit in this good creation to pour out your spirit on Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, who without shame and in sincere commitment and in unity with his spouse to bring forth the truth of families for the world, as you realize the authority you have given to him to bless the union of those who are representative of your intention of families today. Pour out your blessings on those you have join us, pour out your blessings upon their dance, pour out your blessings upon your entertainment, upon their marriage continuously, on their dining, that the food that is received will continue tot nourish their bodies, they will be physically, spiritually, emotionally sound. And walking continuously in the spirit of your love by the grace given through our Lord. Amen.