

## ACLC Ministers taking a stand for marriage and family

Tom Cutts  
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American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) pastors across the United States recently participated in Foundation Day celebrations and, inspired by their experience, they are now taking a stand for marriage and family. From New York to Los Angeles and around the world, there is a growing awareness of the importance of a united family, in response to which ministers are holding educational events, sharing wisdom with their congregants, and making exciting plans for the future.



At the beginning of this year in the Philippines, the exciting Interfaith Peace Family Blessing Festival was held in the Ynares Center, a stadium in Antipolo City, a suburb of Manila, where approximately 10,000 people crowded into the stadium to rededicate their marriage. On the occasion of the inauguration of the Asian Clergy Leadership Conference, this event gained incredible popularity and was filled to capacity, leaving an overflow crowd of four thousand participating outside the stadium. This was exciting news for ACLC, which was represented by national chairman Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr. and national co-president Pastor Mark Abernathy.



A subsequent interfaith conference in the Philippines featured several educational seminars, including that of Dr. Robert Kittel, Director of Education of UPF-Asia, who has been working in a multi-faith milieu for more than thirty years and has learned to express the teachings of the Divine Principle in a way that is accessible to Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists alike. The ACLC leaders were so impressed by his presentations that Archbishop Stallings invited him to speak at ACLC functions in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Long Island. In New York, Dr. Kittel shared True Parents' teaching on the family to accompany his encouraging report about the marriage and family movement in the Philippines. Another pastor who attended was pleased with the event, which inspired him to hold an ACLC Prayer Breakfast at his church in Harlem on Saturday, March 8.



This wave of educational events on family values is an indication that the theme of marriage and family is gaining ground across the United States and the world. ACLC educational functions—including seminars in Seattle, Houston, Bridgeport, Miami, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, New Jersey, Brooklyn, and the Bronx—received positive feedback that, summed up, expressed how united families are the cornerstone for a peaceful society. Unlike churches, which hold marriage solely as a sacrament, family values education provides guidance for couples after the wedding and is currently the only hope for saving the family. One pastor in Houston has been teaching the Divine Principle to members of his church, and people are joining the church because of his emphasis upon marriage and family.

Outside of America, ministers are rallying around the cause as well. On Wednesday, February 19, Archbishop Angelo Rosario and Bishop Nancy Rosario flew to Puerto Rico to help Rev. Derry Kingsbury, the ACLC executive director of Puerto Rico, and 15 interfaith pastors inaugurate the Puerto Rico Clergy Leadership Conference.

From the earliest days of the Unification Church, True Father and True Mother placed great emphasis upon outreach to Christian ministers. Generation after generation, Christian pastors have been bringing the Word and Spirit of God to their congregations. For ACLC pastors to rally around True Parents' vision of marriage and family is an exciting development. There are even more exciting things to come in the near future, as Los Angeles and Detroit ACLC Steering Committees plan True Family Values banquets for Foundation Day 2015.

The work of ACLC is not simply about encouraging marriage but also about saving the soul of America. At a time where broken families are a societal norm, the very survival of the nation is in question. Quoting a Ghanaian saying, Archbishop Stallings often warns, "The ruin of a nation begins in the homes of its people." Turning the saying around, he concludes with hope, "The restoration of a nation begins in the homes of its people."

If you would like to become involved in minister outreach, please contact your local ACLC executive director, your local Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) pastor or Rev. Tom Cutts, the National Executive Director of the ACLC.