

## 30,000- and 360,000-Couples Anniversaries Remembered at Manhattan Center

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August 27, 2012



*Representatives for the 1992- and 1995 Blessings ceremoniously snuffed out a cake candle after Lovin' Life Ministries Sunday Service.*

An intimate gathering of approximately 50 families celebrated the 20th anniversary of the 30,000-couples Blessing in 1992 and the 17th anniversary of the 360,000-couples Blessing in 1995 in the Hammerstein Ballroom of the Manhattan Center on August 26, 2012.

Both of the historic Blessing ceremonies had been officiated by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, founders of the Unification Church and had taken place in the Olympic Stadium in Seoul, South Korea.

The doors for the event opened at 11:45 a.m. after which attendees were handed boxed lunches of Japanese and Korean cuisine that had been assembled by Kodan (a lay ministry of Japanese Unificationists) in New Jersey.

At around noon, Victoria Roomet, president of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), recognized the start of the event with introductory remarks.

Rev. Bismark Bamfo, the state coordinator for the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) in Massachusetts, followed with an invocation, after which attendees were allowed to mingle and enjoy their lunches.



*Teresa Ferrete and Neal Ichinohe, co-instructors for LLM's Ballroom Dance Ministry, perform the Waltz.*

A six-minute video of the 30,000-couples Blessing of 1992 was featured. Pennsylvania State Pastor Shota Iwasaki, a representative of all the couples Blessed in 1992 and 1995, briefly greeted the audience.

“First of all I'd like to express my gratitude for True Parents, Heavenly Father, and our Senior Pastor Rev. In Jin Moon,” he said. “We are all representing the 30,000 couples and 360,000 couples together, and we would truly like to share our heart of gratitude.

“In our tradition, sometimes you don't know your spouse until two weeks before you get married, sometimes two days before. In my case, I knew I was matched to Miyuki, my wife, and I was allowed to speak to her. I remember thinking that she had a wonderful voice and a wonderful name, but I didn't see her until two days before the marriage. You'd probably agree that this is such a unique tradition that we

have. Because of our True Parents, we were able to have an event like this. I went to Korea three days before the wedding and waited in line to receive a photo of my wife for two hours, praying. When I received her photo, she was a bit slimmer than I thought she would be, and I was kind of worried, wondering whether she can bear children. She looked somewhat plain as well, and I began to get worried.

“So many brothers and sisters were looking for their spouses based on the photo they had, but the photo and the actual person can be so different. I was trying to see my wife from God’s perspective, and I was praying. Then I heard my name announced, and when I went towards the entrance, I saw her. She was nothing like the photo, and I tore the photo to pieces. She was so beautiful and radiant with light and was wearing a beautiful dress. I was so grateful to True Parents. Without True Parents, I could have never have had this kind of person. And thank you, Rev. In Jin Moon, for allowing us to have anniversary celebrations like this to remind us how we felt at the beginning of our marriage.”

Roomet introduced Rev. Joshua Cotter, vice president of the Unification Church USA and the keynote speaker for the event, who said the following:



*Keynote Speaker Rev. Joshua Cotter said, "Without our True Parents, we would not have our beloved spouse given to us by God, and we would certainly not have these incredible children. Therefore, we're eternally grateful for our True Parents."*

“As we know, our senior pastor has been traveling around the nation, and she makes the point wherever she goes that without our True Parents, we would not have anyone of this – we would not have our beloved spouse given to us by God, and we would certainly not have these incredible children that we see now growing into various levels of maturity. Therefore, we’re eternally grateful for our True Parents, especially during this difficult time. Today we sang Saranghe, ‘I love you,’ to our True Parents, because we want them to know that this is their anniversary, that they’re the ones who made the Blessing possible, and that we’ll be eternally grateful.



*Before the floor was opened for ballroom dancing, couples and their families gathered for a festive photo.*

“The 30,000-couples Blessing in 1992 was so significant because it was the first world Blessing where father opened up the Blessing to all races, to all of humanity. In fact, he said that after this Blessing, there really doesn’t need to be that many more Blessings. The 30,000-couples Blessing is based on the number three, which signifies the formation-, growth- and completion stages, as well as the Old Testament-, New Testament- and Completed Testament ages. Father was so hopeful for the 30,000-couple Blessing that he said that 20 years from then, which is today actually, the whole world would have experienced the Blessing. Therefore, we asked the couples today to rededicate themselves and pledge to bring three

families to the Blessing as True Parents have asked us to do, by Foundation Day.

“The 360,000-couples Blessing, three years later, is based on the number 36, which signifies the 36 Blessed Couples who are the ancestors of humanity, but multiplied on several levels. Father came up with the 360,000-couples Blessing, which is also a cosmic, world-shaking event. These couples can be so proud to have been part of these eternal Blessings together with our True Parents. It was a beautiful celebration today, with ballroom dancing, singing, toasting, sharing together as families, and we just want our True Parents to know and feel again the depth of our love and our gratitude to them.”

Two Unificationist-born youth, Nithidon Catalan and Marilyn Marin, whose parents were celebrating their anniversaries that day, presented an honorary bouquet of flowers and a gift to Rev. Cotter, who placed the items on two chairs representing the presence of Rev. and Mrs. Moon.

At around 1:00 p.m., all families gathered in front of the stage of the Hammerstein Ballroom and took a group picture. A photo booth was provided for those who wished to memorialize the afternoon and a donation box was made available for those who wanted to offer a monetary gift to Rev. and Mrs. Moon.

“The video reminded me of all the good times 20 years ago, which seems like forever ago!” said Annie McMahon, participant of the 1992 Blessing. “I remember the whole significance of the Blessing and what it means, and now I’m looking at my kids, three kids, and I’m still married, just like all these couples together, and getting ready for another 20 years! Now I’m looking forward to becoming a grandma!”

E.J. Rapada, who was a participant of the 1995 Blessing, said, “It’s wonderful because I have my family with me and my wife and my kids and my parents also. It’s the first time we had a big gathering for the 360,000-couple Blessing, which is already 17 years ago, and we are just hoping for more years of celebrating together as one family under God, as we are doing now.”

Entertainment included a ballroom-dance exhibition by young Unificationists Neal Ichinohe and Teresa Ferrete, who performed a Waltz, and Michael Roman and Miyeong Mendonca, who danced a Chacha. Ichinohe and Ferrete, new instructors for LLM’s Ballroom Dance Ministry, invited couples onto the floor and brushed up on the basics of the Waltz for approximately 15 minutes, followed by all participants taking the floor for an afternoon of ballroom dancing.

“Seeing all the friends and their children grown up is so beautiful,” said Guylaine Kinney, who was married in the 1992 Blessing. “And now we can dance with our spouse instead of standing in a stadium! It’s really fantastic to be here; it’s so relaxed and we feel like a big family.”