

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: 60 Years Since 124 Couples Holy Blessing

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124 couples of 1963 - the first mass wedding held publicly

24th July is a historical day for the [Family Federation](#), and for the brides and grooms who 60 years ago took part in the 124 couples [Marriage Blessing](#) Ceremony on that date in 1963, at the Seoul Citizens' Hall.

This was the first time such a ceremony was held publicly. Up until then, these [mass weddings](#) had taken place at the then [Unification Church](#) headquarters building at the Cheongpa area in Seoul. The early 1960's was a time the rapidly growing movement Father Moon had [founded](#) just few years earlier, went through fierce persecution. And there had been attempts to have the [mass weddings](#) stopped, and even have [Sun Myung Moon](#) jailed for holding them.



The Marriage Blessing of 124 couples 24th July 1963

But he and the movement continued unabated. In a big publicity stunt, and to demonstrate that these ceremonies had grown - from [Father](#) and [Mother Moon's own wedding](#) and the first 3 couples in 1960, to 33 couples the year after, and 72 in 1962 - the newlywed 124 couples in 1963 drove in a motorcade of 150 taxis through downtown Seoul, attracting a lot of attention on the busy streets of the capital.

[Father Moon](#) said afterwards that the 36 (3 + 33) and 72 couples took place within the [Unification Church](#) and secured what he called "the internal foundation centering on our [church](#)" (Chambumo Gyeong (True Parents' Scripture), a 1647 page record, in [Father](#) and [Mother Moon's](#) own words, of their life course and the history of the activities they have initiated, published 2015, p. 336).



Seoul Citizens' Hall

Through the 124 couples, he said, "we were expanding to set a worldwide foundation" (Chambumo Gyeong, p. 335). Those couples represented the nations of the world.

[Father Moon](#) explained, "establishing the 124 Couples set the condition for [God](#) to be able to work in an unprecedented way on the world level. When the number of United Nations member nations topped 120, we entered the Last Days." (Chambumo Gyeong, p. 336)



Marriage Blessing ceremony 24th July 1963

In more than one sense the 1963 ceremony represented something new. He pointed this out, "When I blessed the 124 Couples, I included four husbands who were ex-convicts. It was absolutely necessary for me to include such people in the group. The work of heaven is not the work of condemning people, but rather of saving everyone. [God](#) seeks to redeem all people, not only religious believers, but conscientious people who are non-believers as well as those who have sinned and those who are in prison." (Chambumo Gyeong, p. 336)

At the same time, this was the last such event to include only Koreans. Five years later, at the next large [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony, for 430 couples on 22nd February 1968, one Japanese couple - Osami Kuboki (1931-1998) and his wife Tetsuko took part. The year after, 43 couples from 10 nations were [blessed](#) during [Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#)'s second world tour, first 13 couples in Washington DC, USA on 28th February, then 8 couples in Essen, West-Germany on 28th March, and finally 22 couples in Tokyo, Japan on 1st May 1969.

Featured image above: From the motorcade of 150 taxis, lined up in front of Seoul Citizens' Hall, before they started driving through the streets of Seoul 24th July 1963

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The Founding

Unification Church – the founding as Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity

The founding of the Unification Church took place as the situation in Seoul began to stabilize, after the armistice agreement ending the [Korean War](#) was signed on 23rd July 1953, people began to move back to the capital. Seoul is located near the 38th parallel and had fallen several times during the war between North and South Korea.

Several members and their families also moved to Seoul. [Sun Myung Moon](#) himself went there on 17th September 1953 and began building a foundation. In the spring of 1954, a place to hold meetings was established, the so-called "House with Three Doors" (391 Bukhak-dong, Seongdong-gu). With this location as its address, the [Unification Church](#) was officially registered as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity [HSA-UWC] on 1st May 1954.



The house with 3 doors



Two days later, a sign with this ambitious name, in Chinese characters and in English, was hung beside the entrance of the *House with Three Doors*, which looked poor and consisted of two rooms and a small kitchen.

The [Unification Church](#) was for a long time an unofficial name, but was later used in several countries as our official name instead of the long HSA-UWC.

[Father Moon](#) hoped that this new movement would manage to unite all the different Christian denominations, and not become a separate denomination. The intention was never to create a new religion, but to create the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on earth by first getting Christians from all possible denominations, and then believers from the various world religions, to join forces.



Hyo-won Eu

Chang-hwan Lee, who had joined only a few months earlier, was appointed the first president of HSA-UWC. He was replaced by the more experienced Hyo-won Eu (1914-70) in August of the same year, when the movement was restructured.

[More about the \[Unification Church\]\(#\)](#)

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Large Wedding Ceremonies

Large wedding ceremonies since 1960 – door to true marital love



For more than 60 years, [Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#) have organized large wedding ceremonies in order to realize [God's](#) family ideal. People from all races, cultures, religions and nationalities participate. After [Sun Myung Moon's](#) death in 2012, his wife [Hak Ja Han](#) has officiated at the major international ceremonies.

Since 1960, millions of couples have been blessed in such large wedding ceremonies as a way to realize their desire to achieve the eternal ideal that true conjugal love represents, and at the same time raise their children with an absolute and unconditional parental love.

Among the many who have had their marriages blessed by [Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#), there are thousands who asked [Father Moon](#) to choose a spouse for them. He had received from [God](#) the ability to see the individual's spiritual character and inherited qualities. This enabled him to suggest with whom a person was best suited, and what kind of partner one would need for his or her spiritual growth. That tradition came to an end some years before [Sun Myung Moon](#) left this world in 2012.



"While marriage counselors and parish priests are wringing their hands over the breakdown of family life, the [Unification Church](#) is doing something about it. The [God](#)-centered family is not merely a nice slogan or a spiritual ideal suggested by the church leaders. It is the essential core of community among the faithful of the church. It is also a deeply motivated system for restoring marital fidelity and family stability to modern society."

(*Marriage, Family and Sun Myung Moon*, article by [Father Joseph H. Fichter](#) (1908-1994), Jesuit and sociologist of religion, published in the Jesuit magazine *America* 27th Oct. 1979.)

Couples who are already married within the framework of their own religion also participate in these ceremonies. They do not need to change their religion, but on the contrary find that such an experience gives them the opportunity to deepen their marriage and sacrifice it to [God](#), as they renew and strengthen their faith. At the same time, they also decide to realize [God's](#) ideal in their family.





There are many who have come to positive conclusions after closely studying the life of families of believers who base their marriage on [Father Moon's](#) teachings and tradition. In the above mentioned article, Jesuit sociologist Father [Joseph H. Fichter](#) (1908-1994) writes about the impressions he got when he studied the couples who have chosen this path. He says that a pragmatic sociologist might very well have concluded that the [Family Federation](#):

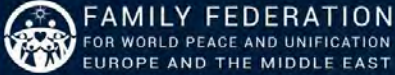
"has discovered an effective family plan. [...] one has to recognize its systematic program for the restoration of 'old-fashioned' morality, its emphasis on chastity before marriage, prayerful preparation for marriage, a readiness to accept guidance in the choice of a partner, marital love reflective of love of [God](#), transmission of spiritual perfection to children." (Fichter)

The New York Times writes that the [Family Federation's](#)

"teaching on marriage does not exalt the romantic, personal side of a marriage. Marriage, according to Mr. [Moon](#), is more than a man and a woman seeking the blessing of their church on their decision to live together. With as much fervor as other world religions stress celibacy as a means to a godly life, Mr. [Moon](#) writes that marriage is necessary to complete one's godly duty of seeking perfection in individual and communal life." ("Marriage Seen As Godly Duty", article by Charles Austin, The New York Times 2nd July 1982, section B, page 1.)

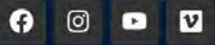
We hold seminars on the meaning of the marriage blessing. You do not have to be a member of the [Family Federation](#) to participate.

"Large Wedding Ceremonies" – text: Knut Holdhus



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