

Our Matching and Blessing Ceremony

James and Elona Powell
August 2, 2015



Our Journey Going From Two Singles To One Couple

On Wednesday the 14th of October 2009 we had our quaint traditional wedding ceremony en-masse in Seoul, South Korea, together with approximately 20,000 other couples from around the world and with tens of thousands more participating worldwide via live internet broadcast. Wow! Can you imagine what the after-party was like? We'd only met one month earlier and yet we had flown from Europe to Asia for our wedding and made many new friends in the process.



- In order to be participate in the matching process we had to submit completed matching application forms to our local Blessed Families Departments in our own countries. After the BFD representatives receive appliactions they pray and collaborate to find suitable candidates for the applicants. We were matched as result of this process. However, at this stage we were still only potential candidates for the Blessing and had the opportunity to meet each other in person before making any decision to go ahead, or not, with our match.



- I flew to Albania where Elona and I met and, over the course of four days in a supervised meeting, we had the opportunity to chat and get to know each other a little better before making any decision. Elona didn't even see my matching profile before the meeting so she didn't know she'd be meeting specifically me, and I told the representative of my local Blessed Family Department in Wales that I accept whoever my match will be before I was even given Elona's profile to look at and pray about. Once I was given Elona's profile, I looked only briefly out of courtesy of being asked to do so and then again said 'I accept'. True Parents teach that true love is unconditional and cannot be bound by false barriers such as culture, nationality, race and religion. Elona and I both wanted to start our Blessed life, with whoever would be our future spouse, in the best way we could and we feel that we've done that by following True Parents' example.

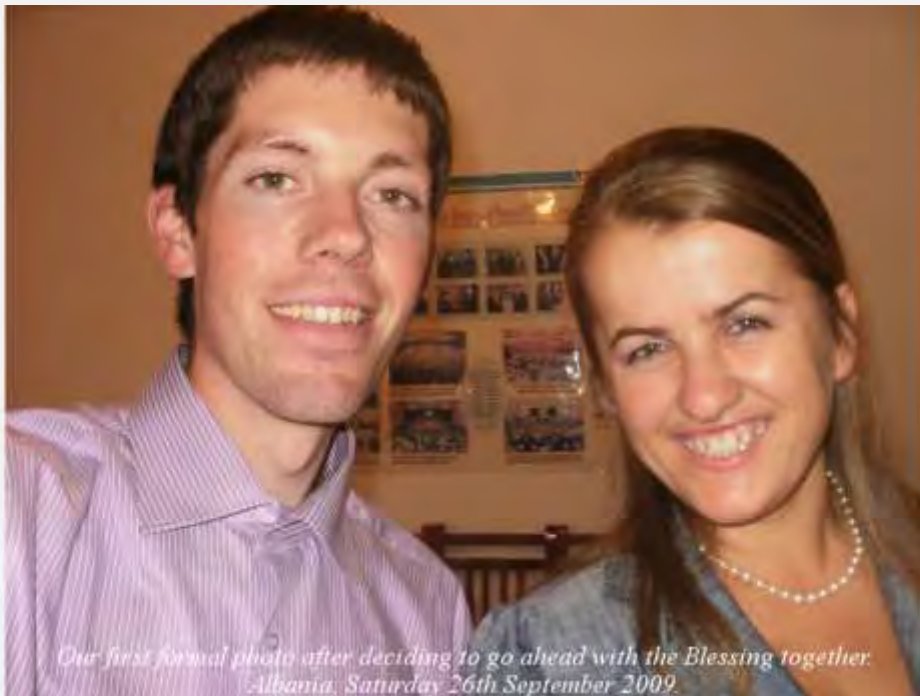


- Apart from not recognizing Elona on the first day of our meeting, I feel we got off to a good start. I wanted to impress her with my charms and hopefully sway her into liking me, so I gave Elona a beautiful necklace. But it actually meant more than just that. The necklace was very humbly given to me as a gift, from a Blessed Family in Wales, for my future wife and I was very grateful to offer it to Elona and Elona was very happy to receive it for this reason also.



*Elona congratulating James for completing his 7-Day Fast for their Blessing.
Vlore City, Albania, Saturday 26th September 2009.*

- It's not compulsory, but many people who go through the matching process decide to offer a seven day fast as a spiritual condition to Heavenly Parent as a way of saying that their Blessing is not for themselves but for Heavenly Parent, for future descendants and for all eternity even into the spirit world. It's a total no-food fast which means the only consumables are water and air. But of course, as with the matching, the fast is voluntary and can be stopped at any time by the person doing it. A seven day fast requires serious preparation and is not a joke. I've done it once and probably won't do it again, but Elona has done six seven-day fasts for different reasons and will share her experiences of fasting in another article.



*Our first formal photo after deciding to go ahead with the Blessing together.
Albania, Saturday 26th September 2009.*

- So... we both decided that we would like to continue with our match, and that meant that the next step in our relationship would be to attend the Blessing Ceremony. The period during which we were matched was kind of like an engagement period, and the Blessing would be our wedding. We didn't get legally married until one year after the Blessing, but we'll write about that in another article. We flew to Seoul in Korea where the Blessing was going to be held. We stayed in a hotel which was full with so many other couples from all around the world, which was very exciting and a lot of fun! There were several brothers in the room I stayed in and could assume the other rooms were also that full. Brothers and sisters slept in separate rooms.



- The day before the Blessing Ceremony was the Holy Wine Ceremony, which is the ceremony through which the original sin is removed not only spiritually but also physically. If a person has had the original sin removed spiritually through believing in the resurrected Jesus, well then this ceremony removes it physically also and hence opens up a whole new level in one's journey to God. On our way to the Holy Wine Ceremony I spontaneously asked Elona: "How would you like front row seats?" and when we got into the hall we were approached by one of the stewards and asked if we would be the representative couple. We said "Yes" immediately and were then shown to our front row seats :)



- Being representative couple meant that we would go up on the stage as one of five couples representing all European participants, and that was very special. We were then asked to be the Central Couple, which meant that we would be the only couple directly participating with the Officiators giving the prayer for the Holy Wine Ceremony to the European group. Elona and I are so moved that God would ask us to participate so closely in such an important ceremony as this. What made it even more moving is that the Blessing Ceremony the following day, of which this Holy Wine Ceremony was a part, was the realization of a prophetic spiritual vision I had when I was a boy of seven years of age in school and had been looking forward to it since then.



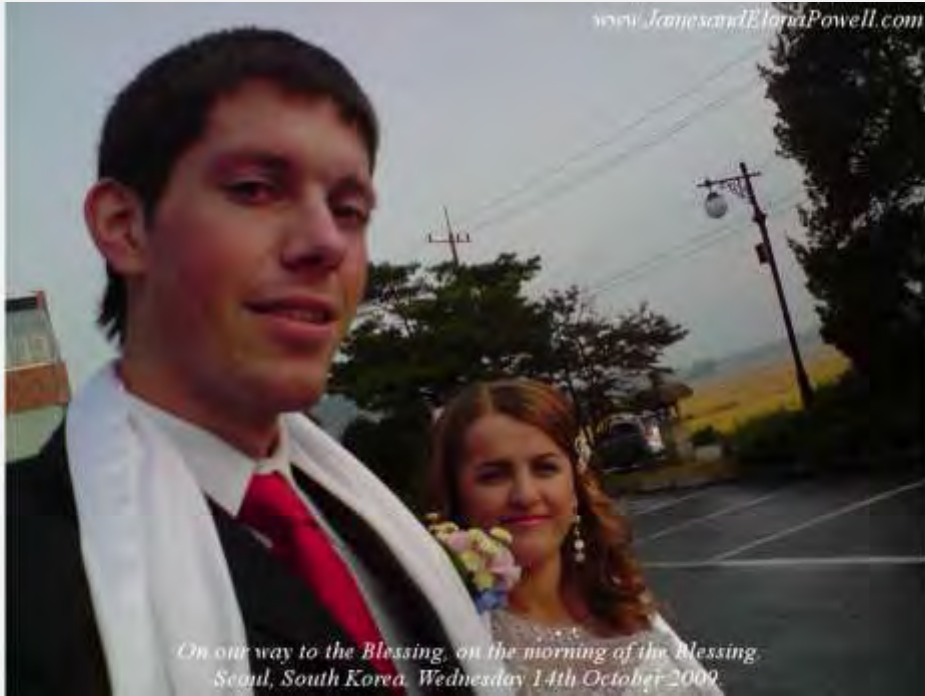
- As part of our preparation to receive the Blessing, we were asked to read a speech forty times before the ceremony. It was content we both agreed with and would not have read it at all if it was not. We found reading the speech forty times challenging because we didn't start until shortly before going to Korea. But we did it! We finished the fortieth reading literally moments before the Blessing Ceremony began and that was both very satisfying for having completed it, and a relief for doing it in time.



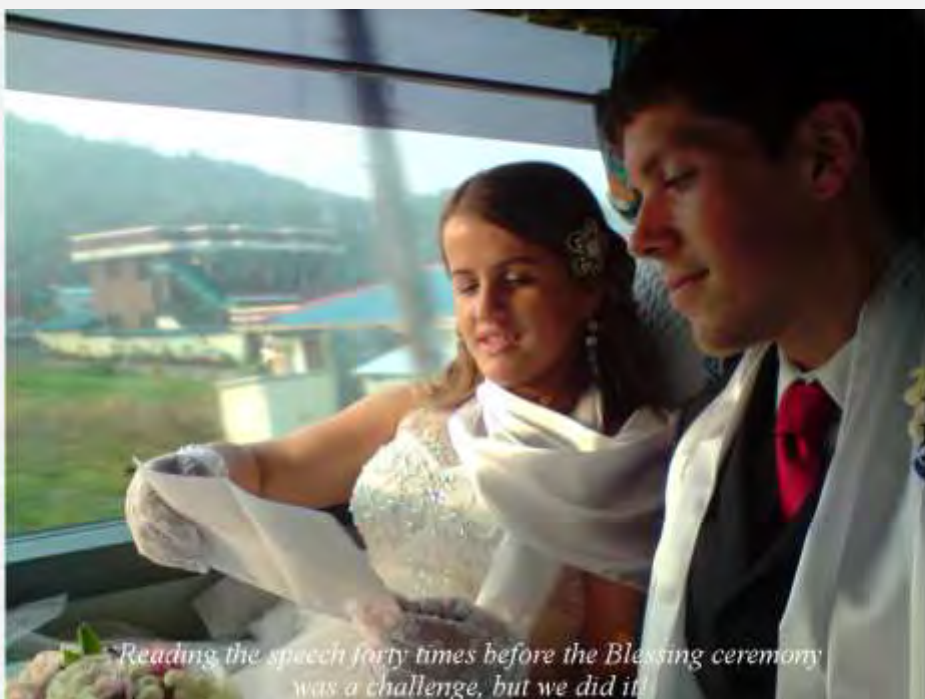
- It was such an exciting time staying in a hotel full of brothers and sisters from all around the world and for the same purpose. The atmosphere was electric! Tens of thousands of people from every continent deciding to dedicate their lives as couples and families to Heavenly Parent for all eternity. The vision of such a commitment is greater than anything else I've ever heard of... being not only for life in this world but also for life in the next dimensional world to which we go after shedding our physical bodies and leaving them behind following a natural death.



*In the hotel after the Holy Wine Ceremony and the night before the Blessing.
Seoul, South Korea. Tuesday 13th October 2009.*



*On our way to the Blessing, on the morning of the Blessing.
Seoul, South Korea. Wednesday 14th October 2009.*



*Reading the speech forty times before the Blessing ceremony
was a challenge, but we did it!*



*A lovely lady helping with Elona's hair.
Wednesday 14th October 2009*



*At our intimate internationally-broadcast Blessing Ceremony at Sun Moon University
with 20,000 other couples! Seoul, South Korea Wednesday 14th October 2009*



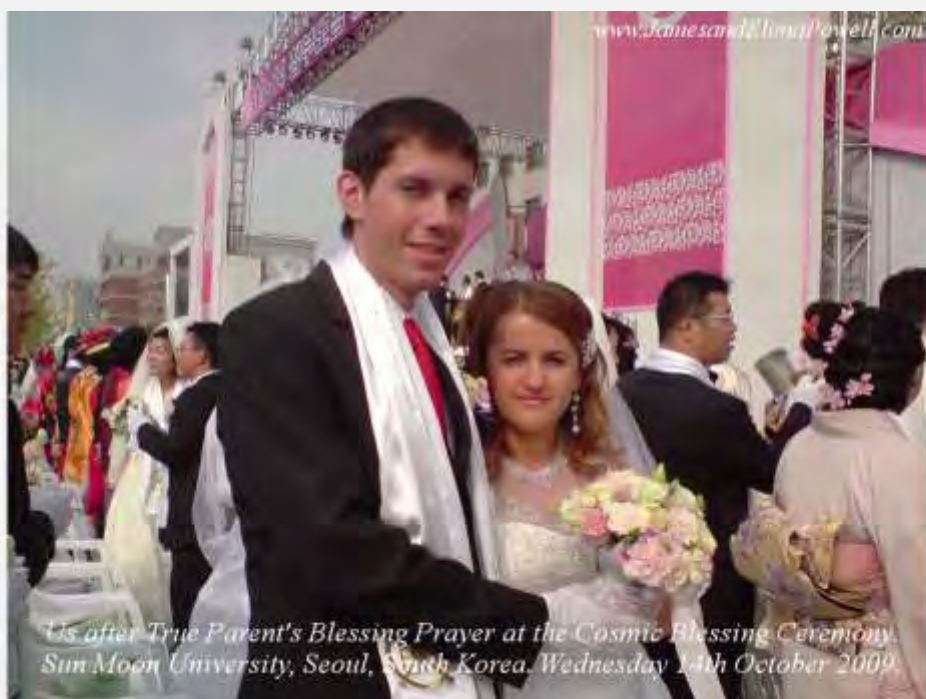
*The True Parents giving the Blessing to all partners worldwide, as included,
at the first Cosmic Blessing Ceremony Seoul, South Korea on
Wednesday 14th October 2009, fulfilling a prophetic vision James had as a child.*



*The True Parents at the first Cosmic Blessing Ceremony.
Sun Moon University, Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday 14th October 2009.*



*My photo of True Parents on stage, Celebrations after the Blessing was given!
Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday 14th October 2009.*



*Us after True Parent's Blessing Prayer at the Cosmic Blessing Ceremony.
Sun Moon University, Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday 14th October 2009.*

- This was a beautiful day and one I'd been anticipating since I was six years of age. It was the culmination of a lifetime of waiting and searching, and finally finding my one true bride whom God has prepared. I feel totally Blessed and fortunate. I'll speak more about my childhood vision in an upcoming

video.



- Elona's still a bit like 'Who's this guy?' ...hehe! We'd only got together one month earlier :P



- I was amazed at how beautiful Elona is, and still am



- Getting used to these couple shots.



- My photographic wife is very artistic and knows a good opportunity when she sees one, and she makes one if there's not one :)



- Myself and a few other brothers were asked to attend a celebratory luncheon with True Parents at the Original Palace... a deeply spiritual place. This was the day after the Blessing Ceremony, and the low cloud coverage made for a really ethereal feel. It was amazing.



- My main concern in having a wife was to be able to feel nature through her. I really love nature and needed a wife who also loves nature and really resonates with it in her heart. Having grown up in the mountains, raising sheep, goats, chickens and riding a donkey to collect wood from the forest, and many other natural ways of living, Elona is full of love for nature and that just makes me so happy and at ease when I'm with her. I only told Heavenly Parent about this desire to have such a wife and I can say it has been completely fulfilled. Thank You Heavenly Parent!

See more at: <http://www.jamesandelonapowell.com/gallery/2009/our-matching-and-blessing#sthash.C7aVbfXx.dpuf>