

Ki Hoon Kim consecrates new District Pastors Jeffrey and Toyoko Schmidt; Chris and Christine Hempowicz

Michael Balcomb
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Chris and Christine Hempowicz consecration as District Pastor couple for New England

This month, Rev. Jeffrey and Mrs. Toyoko Schmidt in District 7, which includes Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, were consecrated as new District Pastors in a January 17th service in Chicago; and Rev. Chris and Dr. Christine Hempowicz, District Pastor couple for New England, in a January 10th service in Worcester, Massachusetts. FFWPU USA President Dr. Michael Balcomb, along with FFWPU North America Continental Chairman, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, in Chicago, welcomed the new pastors and wished them well in their new roles.

“Each of the past two Sundays, it’s been my pleasure and privilege to lead the installation ceremonies for two of our new District Pastor couples,” said Dr. Balcomb. “Dr. Kim and I wish both couples all the best in this new ministry.”

Each ministerial installation ceremony has three main goals. The first is to call on and make real the presence of God and True Parents. We do this through a ‘laying on of hands’ prayer ceremony that involves the current pastoral team and the entire congregation offering their sincere petition to God that He will guide the new pastor. It is always a deeply moving and spiritual moment.

It also signifies a turning point in the community’s relationship with the new pastor. Prior to the installment, most communities will have been actively involved in a “pastor search,” advertising the position, interviewing candidates and making practical decisions, using the guidelines provided by our National Headquarters. In some ways this is similar to a secular job hiring process.

However, once consecrated, the pastor stands as the central figure and representative of True Parents in the community. He or she will continue to work cooperatively with the council to serve community, and must also make the vertical, spiritual connection to the National Ministry team and church president, who represent True Parents to the nation.

The second goal of the installation ceremony is to bring all the local pastors and ministers together, including those from neighboring states. This will be the team that the new District Pastor or senior pastor will work with, and it’s important that they have an opportunity to welcome their new colleague and share briefings and other information.

“Thirdly, we ask each new pastor to make a public commitment to the ‘Unification Pastor’s Affirmation,’ a one-page document that includes basic statements of faith in God, True Parents, the Holy Marriage Blessing, and the Divine Principle,” said Dr. Balcomb. “Pastors also make a solemn pledge to follow the strict personal guidance first delivered by True Parents on the occasion of the Coronation of God’s

Kingship back in 2001; namely to refrain from the misuse of public money and property; to remain faithful to one's spouse and refrain from all improper behavior; and to deal fairly and equitably with all people and avoid as far as possible the 'hurting of hearts.'"



The consecration of District Pastor Jeff Schmidt

On Sunday, January 17, 2016, members of District 7 welcomed their new District Pastor, Rev. Jeff Schmidt during the Chicago Family Church worship service. Rev. Schmidt was joined by his wife, Toyoko, their son, youngest daughter and other members of their family during a special installation ceremony.

The Sunday service was overflowing with local families plus pastors and members visiting from throughout the district. The sermon entitled, "Be the Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World" was delivered by Interim Pastor Johnny Porter. Afterward, Dr. Balcomb called all the visiting pastors to join him on the stage in introducing Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt to the large gathering. He then led the couple in reciting the "Pastor's Pledge". Dr. Kim shared words of encouragement and insightful guidance on the importance of trust in building healthy relationships in serving God's Providence.

Rev. Schmidt joined the Unification Church in 1979 in Milwaukee, WI. He was blessed in marriage with Toyoko in 1982. They are proud parents of three daughters and one son. Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt worked together in the fish industry for six years and later settled in his hometown of Sheboygan, WI in 1999. He worked with the leadership team in the MEPI initiative in Israel from 2003 to 2006 and has actively served in many church roles as local pastor, assistant state leader, local and district council member and most recently, national council member. He also operates several businesses.

"I feel honored to be entrusted with this important responsibility and look forward to fulfilling Vision 2020 and supporting True Parents in any way that I can as District Pastor," Rev. Schmidt shared after the installation ceremony. He is scheduled to deliver the sermon next Sunday at the Chicago Family Church.

A special feature of the installation ceremony was the closing congregational prayer. Rev. and Mrs. Schmidt and the District 7 pastors moved to the center of the congregational seating area and all rose for prayer. Dr. Kim, Dr. Balcomb and the pastors placed their hands on the Schmidt couple and members of the congregation reached out their hands to touch one another to complete the connection. "It was a very unifying to experience the laying on of hands of all the pastors and congregation as we prayed," expressed one of the pastors. "It deeply brought us together and I hope that we can maintain this frame of mind and heart to stay united!"

The installation service ended with an additional surprise as a small cake and gift was presented to Dr. Ki Hoon Kim for his birthday! Everyone is excited to begin this new year with a renewed spirit of unity.