

This week in history: October 12-18

October 14, 2014

October 14, 1950

True Father Released from Hungnam Labor Camp



The work and storage room at the Hungnam Labor Camp

True Father's ministry in Pyongyang ended on February 22, 1948, when he was arrested for a second time by North Korean officials. He was tried on April 7 and sentenced to five years of hard labor. On May 20, True Father was transferred from prison in Pyongyang to a labor camp in Hungnam, an industrial city on the east coast of North Korea. There he endured a hellish existence until liberated by advancing UN forces on October 14, 1950.



Men working at the Hungnam Labor Camp

True Father's liberation by UN forces was by no means assured. As bombing of the Hungnam industrial complex became more intense, guards began executing prisoners, calling out their numbers starting with those having the longest sentences. In his autobiography, True Father notes, "The night before my scheduled execution the bombs fell like rain in the monsoon season ... so intense that it seemed all of Hungnam had been turned into a sea of fire. The high walls around the prison began to fall and the guards ran for their lives. Finally, the gate of the prison that had kept us in that place opened. At around two o'clock in the morning of the next day, I walked calmly out of Hungnam Prison with dignity."

October 14, 1982

6,000-Couple Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony



True Parents sprinkle holy water over the couples at the 6000-couple Holy Marriage Blessing

True Parents blessed 6,000 couples in Chamshil Gymnasium in Seoul on October 14, 1982.

October 14, 2009

Cosmic Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony

The first “Cosmic Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony” was held magnificently at the open space in front of the main building of Sun Moon University in Asan in Korea’s Chungnam province, with True Parents as the officiators on October 14, 2009. Read more here.

October 15, 1981

True Father Indicted in America

In 1976, Senator Robert Dole (R-Kansas) wrote a letter to the Internal Revenue Service commissioner requesting an audit of the Unification Church. Within days, the IRS began what journalist Carlton Sherwood, in his book *Inquisition: The Persecution and Prosecution of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon* (Regnery Gateway, 1991), termed “the most intensive and expensive criminal tax investigation of any religious figure in U.S. history.” A squad of IRS agents took up permanent offices in the Unification Church’s New York headquarters, while a team of field agents began round-the-clock surveillance of selected church members and their telephones. In 1978, after two years of investigations, the IRS was unable to find anything that compromised the church’s tax exempt status but turned over to the New York District Attorney’s Office “certain anomalies” in Rev. Moon’s tax returns for the years 1973-75.

The Office of the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York pursued the matter aggressively despite the unanimous recommendation in writing from attorneys in the Criminal Section of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Tax Division that prosecution was not advisable. Two grand juries refused to indict True Father. It was highly unusual that a prosecuting attorney would convene a second grand jury once an initial grand jury had determined there was no case. However, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York took the almost unprecedented step of convening a third grand jury to get the necessary indictment on October 15, 1981. True Father was in Korea when the indictment was handed down. There was no extradition treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States, so as long as he was in Korea, he would never have to appear in a U.S. courtroom. Some suggested that prosecutors intentionally announced the indictment when True Father was away, hoping he would not return. Yet, as soon as he heard of the indictment, True Father booked a flight back to America to face the charges and his accusers.

October 15, 2000

True Parents Visit the Marshall Islands

True Parents visited the Marshall Islands at the invitation of the Honorable Kessai H. Note, president of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, beginning on October 15, 2000. The president accorded True Parents a state-level welcome. President Note and his wife previously had attended several conferences and events held by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). In fact, President Note, alone among the Marshall Island candidates for the presidency, attended an International Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., at the very time elections were being held. He found out he had been elected during the conference. Those who had declined the Washington invitation all lost! During their visit, True Father discussed his vision for establishing a school to educate youth from throughout Oceania. True Parents also spent a day fishing with the president. Their visit was a stepping stone toward what later would be declared as the Ocean Providence.

October 16, 2000

The Million Family March

Based on mutual contacts, Unificationists in Chicago had been interacting on a cordial basis with the Nation of Islam (NOI) since 1995. That year Minister Louis Farrakhan attended a FFWPU-sponsored True Family Values Ministry awards banquet. Unificationists reciprocated by attending several NOI events. In 1997, Minister Farrakhan attended “Blessing ’97” at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., where he offered congratulatory remarks and a prayer of blessing on behalf of the Muslim world. In 1998, Minister Farrakhan visited Korea, where he met True Parents and toured church-owned facilities. Later that year, he announced his intention to hold a Million Family March on October 16, 2000, five years to the day after the 1995 Million Man March. Significantly, he asked his directors “to work together with the leadership of the Family Federation.” This met resistance among some within NOI and FFWPU. However, three months prior to the march, True Father invited Minister Farrakhan to his residence, advising him that the event should be non-political, interreligious and interracial. A month prior to the march, True Father expressed hope that it would be “a turning point for racial reconciliation in America.”

The march went off smoothly. Thousands of families crowded the U.S. Capitol plaza and the National Mall, and there were no incidents. Minister Farrakhan preached family, ecumenism and brotherhood, at one point proclaiming, “I am a Christian. I am a Jew. I am a Muslim.” In his keynote address he offered “special recognition and thanks” to True Parents and conducted a Unification-inspired “Blessing” for several dozen international, intercultural and interracial couples immediately afterward. Dr. Chang Shik Yang, FFWPU continental director at the time, reported that FFWPU “mobilized about 2,000 members of the American Clergy Leadership Conference for this event,” including “a number of mainline denominational leaders.”