

## LV Family Church held Marriage Blessing Ceremony / Special Grace Ceremony

Ken Doo  
August 19, 2016



On Friday, August 19, the Las Vegas Family Church held a Marriage Blessing Ceremony as well as a Special Grace Ceremony, followed by entertainment, raffles, and a delicious banquet dinner at the International Peace Education Center. The evening, focused primarily on the Blessing Ceremony, was offered as a gift to True Parents in commemoration of True Father's Fourth Seong Hwa Anniversary.

Through offering these three ceremonies back-to-back, we were able to highlight True Father's lifetime work to bring families back to God. There was a clear sense of continuity from one ceremony to the next because of their shared purpose to bring world peace by building God-centered families. The overall theme of the evening was "One Family Under God."

The evening's program began with a Purity Ceremony. After a brief explanation of the meaning of the ceremony and a special testimony given by Jonathan and Yuri Jesper, a young Blessed Couple, who stood on stage together with their baby boy, purity vows were shown on a raised screen and 33 young people, many of them in attendance with their parents, read the vows and strongly proclaimed their determination to lead pure and healthy lives until their own marriages. The parents whose children participated in the program were impressed by the friendly yet holy and moving ceremony.

The Holy Wine Ceremony followed. Initiated by True Mother, this ceremony represents an opportunity for all people to receive forgiveness through the Special Grace of True Parents. Most of the nearly 250 people who filled the ballroom had written letters of repentance and new resolution before taking the wine. For them, this ceremony represented a chance to repent for past mistakes and to make a new beginning.



The room became filled with a spirit of grace and forgiveness, and with open hearts, we began the Marriage Blessing Ceremony immediately after receiving the Holy Wine and the Special Grace. Seven couples rededicated their marriages to God exchanging rings and offering the Blessing Vow after being anointed with Holy Water. They were deeply moved, and grateful that they had decided to come and join in this special ceremony.

Below are reflections from some of the ceremony attendees:

*"I am very happy after the ceremony; everything was beautiful! I feel blessed by God."*

*"We've done a lot to come closer to each other in the past months and this ceremony solidified it."*

*"I lost my husband in the military service. We were together for over 32 years, so this was something special for me."*

*"It was an amazing, beautiful thing! Thank you to all who helped. We were happy to see others [receive this Blessing] and hope to be Blessed ourselves in the future."*

After the Blessing Ceremony ended, photos were taken and the banquet dinner began. An accordionist played background music both as the food was served and during the meal. Also, there were amazing performances by several vocalists -- some of the participants even took to the stage to sing!

Our very special evening ended after the raffle winners received their prizes and everyone slowly made their way out of the ballroom and down the stairs to their cars. Nobody wanted to leave!



#### **Testimonies:**

*"I think commemorating True Father's Seonghwa anniversary in the way we did at the International Peace Education Center was simply the best possibility. Promoting the essence of what True Parents fought for all their lives is the greatest tribute. Inheriting and multiplying the very things that will correct humanity's ills is the sign of responsible, filial children."*

*"The three themes of our event -- grace, purity, and blessing -- are three things all people need most. Our reality is that we need grace and are very fortunate when someone on behalf of our Heavenly Parent is inspired to give it to us. Purity of the next generations is the very thing that will secure a good future. And receiving the Blessing is the key that allows us to fulfill our ultimate purpose."*

*"Accompanied by nice food and lovely entertainment, there is no better way to spend a special day like this. My heart has the most peace when internal values are being fulfilled in this way."*

*"Also, I was lucky to have the opportunity to share the event with a couple who traveled 2500 miles to attend. Upon merely seeing the event info on the Las Vegas daily e-news, they felt with utmost sincerity that they couldn't lose this opportunity, and booked a travel package centered on this one night. There was some deep joy at our table due to these circumstances."*

*"Thanks to all who made it possible, starting with True Parents."*

– Steve Pierce

*"My wife and I were very inspired and uplifted by the Blessing ceremony held at the International Peace Education Center."*

*"I think one of the most moving parts of the ceremony, took place before the actual Blessing, when the youth and single participants made the pledge of purity. For them to make that pledge, in front of the entire community and with their parents standing by their side, demonstrated what our movement and the Blessing is all about. And then for Jonathan and his wife, Yuri, to share testimony, as a Blessed Couple"*

*with their child in their arms, that 10 years earlier they had made the same pledge of purity, and now they are receiving the fruits of that commitment, was incredibly powerful.*

*“I really believe that this entire ceremony -- the pledge of purity and the Blessing of the couples -- is the fruit of the love and truth of our True Parents that can inspire the world.*

*“Thank you, Rev. Doo!”*

– Andy Compton



*“I was very grateful that my family and Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) members could be a part of this Blessing ceremony on Fourth Anniversary of True Father’s Seonghwa. Definitely being able to hold it at the International Peace Education Center made it extremely special.*

*“First of all, as CARP, we had a goal to bring 21 people to make the purity pledge. Although not everyone who came was completely new to our movement, we had 33 young people participate in the ceremony, and almost everyone received a substantial introduction to the Divine Principle, the Blessing, and purity before attending the ceremony. I personally felt good because several new Unificationists came to the ceremony on the foundation of their one-day purity education.*

*“All of our new CARP members participated in a Blessing workshop and offered a cleansing confession prior to making the purity pledge, so they definitely had the Blessing in mind as they attended the purity pledge ceremony. Thus, they were deeply connected to the spiritual significance of the day, getting ready to make a new beginning themselves. Local second-generation Unificationists together with our CARP members had good experiences at the Blessing workshop. This time, I felt good that all of our guests received solid education and have also developed future plans for further education.*

*“Secondly, our CARP members’ parents -- six parents representing four families -- were extremely impressed by both the purity pledge and the Blessing ceremony. The event was very friendly and accessible, yet it was holy and moving. We felt very confident to showcase the idea of purity and Blessing to their parents.*

*“Third, it was very wonderful to feel that we could be proud of our event and wanted to invite people to attend. Our new CARP members felt very comfortable inviting their parents. Also a new member brought a friend who participated in the purity pledge, and someone even brought five people with her! In doing outreach and sharing our culture, it is crucial that we feel we want to bring our friends to our church, events, lectures, and social events -- that means, we feel proud of our values and movement, and that we are doing a great job marketing and presenting True Parents’ teachings in a manner that other people can feel good about, too.*

*“Thank you for all the volunteers who made the event possible.”*

– Makiko Watanabe