

Bay Area Family Church celebrates 42nd anniversary of 1,800 Couples Blessing

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February 18, 2017



To celebrate their 42nd anniversary, members of the 1,800 Couples Blessing who attend the Bay Area Family Church in Northern California held their annual reunion at the home of one couple on February 18, 2017. In addition to seven couples from the 1,800 Couples Blessing, there were two couples from earlier Blessings who do not have local groups to meet with.

The theme of the reunion was “sharing.” One by one, each person recalled some of the significant events of their life as a single or half of a couple. Most of the members had been foreign missionaries and/or national or center leaders during their Unification career, and this led to a huge resource for content.

There were many reminiscences, memories, victories, challenges and stories to relate. Some involved medical challenges or indirectly witnessing to relatives by sacrificially taking care of aging parents. Many testimonies included personal encounters with True Father, True Mother or both. Some testimonies discussed unusual and sometimes painful circumstances surrounding the matching and Blessing -- or re-matching and re-Blessing. The retelling prompted many unexpected tears from the person telling his or her experiences.

One of the celebrants shared the following about the event:

“Even though many of us see each other frequently at church, we discovered that we don’t fully know each other. An opportunity such as this allows us to reveal many previously unknown details about each other and thereby grow closer. This is so important to give strength to our community.

“We began our meeting in the late afternoon, and almost four hours passed before everyone had made their verbal offering. We could have continued longer; we hardly noticed that we hadn’t eaten.

“Rev. Kevin Thompson, the district pastor of District 11, polled all of us and found that, just among the couples present, we have 14 grandchildren and counting. He told us that he considered us to be the saints and backbone of our American movement and that our testimonies should be given not only to each other. He strongly encouraged us to write down our memoirs for our children and grandchildren and for posterity in general to appreciate in years to come.

“Rev. Thompson had recently returned from Korea, where he had participated in conferences and other events with True Parents. Because this visit to Korea occurred at the same time of year as our 1975 Blessing -- early February -- when the weather there is freezing cold, he identified with what we experienced when we had had to stand outside the stadium for three hours while waiting for the Blessing ceremony to begin!”