

Is this our most important activity?

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Next week, arguably the most meaningful event in the Unification Movement will take place. It is probably the centerpiece of our whole movement's efforts to establish a world of peace. From a marketing point of view, it could be described as our brand-defining unique selling point. Those people participating will be experiencing all kinds of feelings: Nervousness. Anxiety. Excitement. Pride. Hope. Gratitude. I am, of course, referring to the Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony.



Matching candidates? It's not quite the same thing as matching socks...

My wife and I have recently had the privilege of conducting interviews with some matching candidates. All of them were second generation Unificationists who had already been "matched" – a colloquialism denoting someone betrothed in marriage through a process of seeking a suitable match as their fiancé(e) – and were preparing to go to Korea for the blessing event next week. We've been fortunate in that all the interviews so far have been incredibly uplifting experiences, both for the candidates and for us as interviewers. For myself it was a chance to put myself back into the shoes that I used to wear as a single young man and remember how I felt just prior to getting blessed in marriage nearly ten years ago. Comparing myself now to who I was

then was an interesting experience. I was able to appreciate just how important it was that I did what I did, maintaining my sexual purity and cultivating a character of love in preparation for marriage. The interviews also reminded me of the importance of the blessing ceremony in our Unificationist tradition. I would liken it to a baptismal rite, the sacrament through which one's identity is refashioned as centered on Christ and one's value is fulfilled as half of the whole that resembles the image of God.

There's a beautifully succinct description of the significance of the Unification blessing on the DPLife.org website [www.dplife.info/blog/view/love-is-a-blessing#.UvniVWJdXYh], where the Unificationist marriage is described as having a "higher purpose that goes beyond the couple. Unificationists think of their marriages as a piece of the larger puzzle to creating a better world. We believe that the family is the channel of God's love. In order to build a peaceful world, we must first build peaceful families, and that begins with the harmonious union of husband and wife." Please click on the link even just to see unique footage of Father Moon speaking in his inimitable fashion 32 years ago.



And I can't resist plugging the Channel 4 documentary, *Married to the Moonies*, which is an entertaining documentary which followed some of my friends as they participated in the blessing ceremony.

Next Wednesday, please take a moment to pray for those couples who will be beginning their married lives. Matched couples of all generations – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. – and previously married couples who will be renewing their marriage vows, will all receive the sacramental grace of changing their lineage, rejecting the false identity inherited from humanity's fallen roots, and affirming their divine identity by joining a global family united in the love of God, transcending differences of ethnicity, nationality, culture and religion. I hope that all of those couples will enjoy the ecstatic highs of marriage, and when they meet the challenging lows that inevitably accompany those highs, I hope that they will be surrounded by a helpful extended family and good communities who will support them as they endeavor to create ideal families.

I'd be bold enough to assert that this is the whole point of our movement.

For those of us who are already married and have memories of our own, or for those of us who are preparing for marriage and can only imagine about the day when it will be my partner and me starting a new adventure together, let's celebrate next Wednesday in the excitement of these (mostly) young couples who will be beginning their new lives together with God at the center of their unions.