

Marriage Blessing Ceremony on Valentine's Day in Dallas City Hall

John Jackson
February 14, 2017



Dr. Karen Hollie-Thibodeaux, Senior Pastor of the Lifeway Church of Dallas and founder of Grace International Seminary, and her husband Bishop David Thibodeaux spearheaded the Marriage Blessing Ceremony that took place on Valentine's Day in Dallas City Hall's prestigious Flag Room.

The Thibodeauxs, a 172-couple, were inspired after presenting flowers to True Mother in New York during her December visit there. Later at the same ACLC Convocation, Dr. Thibodeaux proclaimed she would indeed hold a blessing on Valentine's Day in the Flag Room of Dallas City Hall to move the Blessing movement forward. When we all got back from New York, Dr. Thibodeaux told me she definitely would do it. I said, "Yes, it's a good idea," even knowing that I would be away in Korea for the two weeks leading up to February 14 and that also many of our Dallas-Fort Worth Family Church members would be hard pressed to help her because of the upcoming Valentine's holiday.



The Thibodeauxs are full of faith and truly want to bring about a Blessing revolution. They prepared all of the arrangements and planned for the date and location. The Flag Room isn't a room one can simply rent. It's a room reserved for use only by sitting City Council members. Yet the Thibodeauxs believed and it all worked out. During my time in Korea for the Cheon Il Guk Holy Days, I prayed often for the Lord to bless them and their efforts. I returned from Korea full of hope on February 11, with just enough time to make a call or two and to show up for the ceremony.

The morning of the 14th, a cold front with flooding rain and winds hit Dallas commuters but nothing could stop Heavenly Parent's blessing from pouring down. Nineteen couples in all attended the Blessing ceremony, surrounded by a few onlookers and City Hall staff workers. Among the couples who participated, two had been married over 50 years.



As pastor of the Dallas-Fort Worth Family Church and district pastor of District 9, I gave the invocation. Monica R. Alonzo, the Mayor ProTem, delivered an uplifting, family-centered keynote.

She shared about her family and the importance of fidelity in marriage, and how marriage is the building block of society.

Two of our Ambassadors for Peace, Dr. Tricia Harris, along with radio and TV host Dr. Ester Davis from the Ester Davis Show, offered remarks and inspired readings from our True Father and True Mother on marriage and family. Ambassadors for Peace Imam Shakoor of the Dallas Al Islam community representing Islam, Dr. Linda Holliday of God's Millennial Women Ministries representing Christianity, and Dr. Harbans Lal, a highly regarded Sikh scholar, offered inspirational remarks and prayers over the participants.



Rev. Mark Hernandez of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) emphasized the “macro-significance” of the Blessing and the white shawls that all the couples donned, after which, each couple lined up to receive the Blessing and turned to face each other to rededicate themselves to God and to each other. My wife Fusae and I guided the Holy Wine Ceremony. It was so beautiful. The Thibodeauxs sealed the Blessing with a prayer over all the couples.



Two beautiful cakes and a wonderful fruit punch were served to all. No one wanted to leave the place because the spirit of True Parents filled the room. I am so proud of the Thibodeauxs. In spite of the reality they would receive little help from our members of our movement to realize this event, they followed the Lord's lead. Truly, Heavenly Parent is guiding them to advance the charge for a Blessing movement as directed by our True Parents.

Thank you, Heavenly Parent and True Parents for the victory! We claim it in Your Holy Names! Aju!