

Waterloo Courier Reports Marriage Blessing of Iowa Couples

Alan Jessen
April 23, 2012



Alan and Margaret Jessen, state pastors of Iowa

Due to the efforts of Rev. Alan Jessen, the Unification Church state pastor of Iowa, an article titled *Unification Church Arranged Marriages Surprisingly Strong* appeared in the *Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier*, a daily newspaper, on April 20, 2012.

Jessen says the media-outreach campaign of the News Team of church headquarters prior to the March 23rd Blessing Ceremony in several U.S. cities inspired him to contact Karris Golden, who covers “Faith and Values” in *The Courier*.

“I sent her an email with an invitation to sit down for a cup of coffee and get an “update” on Unification Church,” he said. “We spent most of the 40 minutes talking about local issues and getting to know her job and background. I then gave her a copy of *As A Peace Loving Global Citizen* and *Snapshot*, telling her about Rev. In Jin Moon and the new expression of our movement through the Lovin Life Ministry.

“She was very pleased. We talked about my 30th year blessing anniversary, and I showed her the ‘World Peace through Ideal Families’ picture we all received. She lit up and asked me to scan and send her a copy. Our conversation then went on to the comparison of arranged marriages to so-called ‘love-marriages’, 2nd generation marriages, then the matching process.

“I also brought copies of the articles Ariana Moon wrote about the press conference on arranged marriages and the Blessing that included comments by Dr. Epstein, testimonies of participants and pictures of the stadium. She seemed inspired. She said that she had been aware of our movement, but because she didn’t have any direct or new information she never wrote about us.”



In the article, Golden writes:

“This year marks the 30th anniversary of the 1982 marriage blessing over which the Rev. Sun Myung Moon officiated.

“The ceremony took place at Madison Square Garden in New York City, where 2,075 couples married hours after being matched by Moon, founder and leader of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity.

“The first blessing took place in 1961 in Seoul, Korea. The 1982 ceremony was Moon’s first mass wedding outside Korea.

“Alan and Margaret Jessen are among several Cedar Valley couples who met and married at the 1982 event.

“‘It’s been an amazing course,’ says Jessen.

“Since then, thousands worldwide have taken part in Unification Church marriage blessings. In 1992, the UC opened the blessing to people of all faiths. At that time, people from many nations and religions began taking part.

“Moon believes cross-cultural, international marriages are a path to peace.

“‘Things that would take seemingly forever can be accomplished like miracles through these types of marriages in just two or three generations,’ Moon writes in his autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*. ‘People should marry across national and cultural boundaries with people from countries they consider to be their enemies so that the world of peace can come that much more quickly.’

“Arranged marriage and matchmaking is an age-old tradition in many cultures. Moon has matched couples in person and by looking at their photos.

“Last month, psychologist Robert Epstein, delivered a report on the success of arranged marriages at the ‘Why Arranged Marriages Work’ event in New York City.

“‘My research, which I’ve been conducting since 2003, suggests that arranged marriage in the Unification Church works as well as arranged marriages in other cultures and certainly far better on average than mainstream marriages in the United States,’ Epstein said at the event.

“The UC reports that its divorce rate is [25] percent --- significantly lower than divorce rates in the United States and Europe.

“Epstein studies looked at 10 different cultures and explored how love arises in arranged marriages. Couples in his studies knew each for an average of 14.3 months before marrying, though some met a only few hours prior to marrying.

“Arranged marriages, said Epstein, are a model for marriages in which ‘two committed people work together over time to create stronger bonds ... (and) build a love that gets deeper over the years.’

“The Jessens believe their successful marriage can serve as an example.

“‘We have a unique perspective, and ... we live to serve and strengthen families and expand God’s love,’ says Alan Jessen. ‘We believe God is working through all religions and perspectives, with the goal of a unified world in heart and spirit.’

“Today, the Unification Movement continues to promote its marriage and family values. Moon’s daughter, the Rev. In Jin Moon, is senior pastor of the American UC.

“On March 23, the church hosted simultaneous marriage blessings in New York City and Korea. Moon, now 93, presided at the Korea ceremony.”

Golden’s article can be found at The Courier’s website: wfcourier.com/lifestyles/faith-and-values/religion/unification-church-arranged-marriages-surprisingly-strong/article_0fdcf26-8a3a-11e1-b72c-001a4bcf887a.html



Unification Church arranged marriages surprisingly strong

Karris Golden
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For more information on the UC, go to LovinLifeMinistries.org.