

This week in history, June 11-17:

Michael Mickler
June 12, 2017

June 11, 2001 UTS Chapel Cross Struck by Lightning

As described by UTS President Tyler Hendricks: "On the evening of June 11, there was a thunderstorm in the mid-Hudson Valley. A bolt of lightning struck the five-foot-high stone cross that has stood at the top of our seminary for its 70 years of existence. The cross is not grounded, so the energy had no place to go but out horizontally. This snapped the cross at its base, separating it from the building, and blew off both arms. One arm fell with the pillar of the cross backwards onto the roof. The other careened forward, with pieces falling upon building parapets and to the ground as far as 60 feet away. No one was hurt, but one car suffered damage." Dr. Hendricks continued: "As a symbol of Christ's suffering and salvific love for all humankind, the cross is heroic and magnificent. But as a symbol of humankind's malice toward God expressed by crucifying His son, the cross induces pain and sorrowful grief to God. While a symbol of God's victory, it is also a symbol of human sin. In 1974, Father Moon directed that the cross remain atop our seminary. Upon hearing of its demise this June, he said that it is now time for all crosses to come down." True Father's direction became manifest in 2003 when he called upon Christian clergy to take down the cross as a condition for reconciliation among the sons of Abraham. True Father's call became the foundation for the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) and Peace Pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

June 12, 2002 Sun Moon Peace Cup Inaugural Ceremony



The Sun Moon Peace Cup Inaugural Ceremony took place at 3 p.m. on June 12, 2002, at the Little Angels Arts Center in Seoul. More than 500 domestic and foreign attendees showed their interest as True Father spoke on seeking "the path to realize world peace through sports." He said that the best soccer club teams in the world would participate in the Sun Moon Peace Cup and that it would "become a festival which hopes for all humankind to become one big family."

June 13, 1998 The 360 Million Couples Marriage Blessing Ceremony

True Parents conducted the Marriage Blessing Ceremony in 1998 as the first-stage blessing of 360 million couples worldwide. The main venue was Madison Square Garden in New York City, with satellite feeds to 195 countries. More than 500 buses transported participants, including more than 120 ministers—with 14 buses from Chicago alone. The arena rapidly filled with an estimated 20,000 people. Inside the hall, a 2,000-voice ecumenical choir electrified participants with its performance of "Amazing Grace" and the "Hallelujah Chorus." At the main Blessing ceremony, there were 2,824 matched couples, including 65 Unificationist-born couples. Blessing 1998 was distinctive in that it included spirit world blessings. Four Korean women elders were blessed as wives on earth to four major saints of the spirit world. True Parents also extended the "pre-Blessing" to 16 billion spirit world couples. A special group of 34 spirit world couples included some of the greatest saints and worst criminals of history.



June 13, 2006

Building the Capitol for a Nation of Peace

True Parents presided over the Opening Ceremony for the Cheon Jeong Gung Museum on Cheonseong Mountain near Chung Pyung Lake. Approximately 5,000 people participated in the main ceremony, and another 25,000 people watched the event through screens set up in different areas throughout the Chung Pyung Heaven and Earth Training Center. Prior to the ceremony, thousands of Unificationists from 147 countries participated in week-long festivities from June 6 to 12.

Unificationists throughout the world contributed funds for the Cheon Jeong Gung's construction. The building itself is a massive structure, its dome some 80 meters high, with 30-ton, 48-meter white granite columns, built into the side of Cheonseong Mountain. Situated midway between Seoul, South Korea, and Pyongyang, North Korea, it was to be the "capitol building" of Cheon Il Guk. True Father delivered a message on the occasion, "[Cheon Il Guk Is the Ideal Heavenly Kingdom of Eternal Peace](#)," in which he outlined the "fundamental duties and mission that every citizen of Cheon Il Guk should understand and live by as they walk the way of Heaven."

The Cheon Jeong Gung is home to a museum housing artwork and objects that hold historical importance or express Unification Thought and the ideals of peace. It is seen as a holy place, and many have made pilgrimages there because of its spiritual significance.

June 14, 1976

True Father on the cover of Newsweek International



True Father being interviewed for the Newsweek magazine article



True Father posing for the cover of Newsweek magazine's June 14, 1976, international edition

True Father granted an interview to Newsweek International's executive and general editors. Excerpts from their [three-hour conversation](#) were published as part of a cover story on the Unification Church.

In the interview, True Father explained the origins of the Unification Church and its mission, saying: "My new revelation has made the Will of God crystal clear. And what is that Will? It is to save the world. So the Unification Church is not another denomination—it's a movement to save the world, and through the teaching of the word of God, each individual in our movement becomes absolutely clear about the concept of the God-centered individual, the God-centered family, the God-centered nation and the God-centered world."

June 14, 1999

Special Award to True Mother

True Father presented True Mother with a special award following completion of her World Speaking Tour in which she promoted true family values globally in 80 locations, including 24 speeches in the United States. True Mother spoke on "[The Path of Life for All Humankind](#)."

The award was also presented on the foundation of True Mother's absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience in being "victorious over a suffering course of restoration through indemnity known only to Heaven" and for having "fulfilled the mission of a true child in front of Heaven, a true wife in front of her husband, and the mission of a true parent in front of her children."

June 15, 1958

Mission to Japan Begins

Mr. Sang ik (Bong-choon) Choi, known to Japanese members as Mr. Nishikawa, departed Korea to begin the mission to Japan. Because Korea and Japan had not yet established diplomatic relations, he was forced to smuggle into the country as a stowaway aboard a ship.

He was arrested but avoided deportation by fasting to induce illness. He escaped after being transferred from prison to a medical clinic and successfully planted the Unification Church in Japan. In 1964, he was again arrested and this time deported. He then began mission work in the San Francisco Bay Area.

June 15, 2015

Austrian Government Grants Unification Church Legal Status

After more than 40 years of being an "underground" movement, the Austrian branch of the Unification Church was officially recognized by the Austrian government on June 15, 2015. The federal government's Office for Religious Affairs officially registered the Austrian Unification Church and recognized it as a "confessional community." This was a significant step, as it meant the Unification Church had received "state recognition without privileges" from the federal government.

The church became the eighth confessional community to be officially registered in Austria.



The Unification Church was first established in Austria in 1965 with the arrival of missionary Paul Werner. However, in 1974 the church's legal status as a religious association, which had been granted in 1966, was suspended by the Security Agency of Vienna. For decades, Unificationists in Austria fought the stigma placed on them by anti-cult advocates, who branded the association a "threat to public security and order." The Austrian federal government's decision rebutted those prejudicial claims, something that Unificationists in other parts of the world are still fighting for. This recognition came a month after True Mother joined 2,500 Unificationists from all over Europe in Vienna to celebrate 50 years of the Unification movement in Europe.

June 17, 1971
Building the Chung Pyung Training Center



Construction work to build the Chung Pyung Training Center in Song-san Hamlet, Seorak Village, Gapyeong County, Gyeonggi Province, began with True Father's first dig at the riverside using a pickax on June 17, 1971. The 30 or so members who were attending a workshop at Sutaek-ri Training Center in the city of Guri to become pastors were all mobilized to help with the construction work. Today, forty-five years after it was erected on land that used to be a mulberry field, Chung Pyung Training Center has become a global holy ground which Unificationists from different nations enjoy visiting. (Materials provided by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) History Compilation Committee)