

Upbeat Crowds in the USA Celebrate Foundation Day with Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

Ariana Moon
February 22, 2013



A total of 194 nations tuned into the historical Foundation Day celebration at the Cheong Shim Peace World Center in Gapyeong, Korea at 10:00 a.m. on February 22, 2013 (Korea's time). Approximately 50,000 Unificationists and non-Unificationists attended the ceremony in Korea, and a total of three million are estimated to have participated via live broadcast, according church officials in South Korea.

The Foundation Day event was supervised by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who officially proclaimed the start of "Cheon Il Guk," a new era of history guided by God's Providence, and included a congratulatory message from the Hon. Dennis Hastert, the former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. On this day, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) pledged to become a "life religion" through opening a new phase of Unificationist social engagement, including communicating closely with society according to the vision of the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and the vision of his widow, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the "True Parents."

Each of the 12 Districts in the United States provided a location where local members could view the broadcast as a community, as well as attendants to distribute holy water during the Foundation Day Blessing Ceremony. The following are reports from Districts 1, 2, 3 and 12 about their respective Foundation Day celebrations.

Foundation Day in the Washington, D.C. Metro Area

Unificationists in District 1 celebrated Foundation Day near Washington, D.C., at the Baldensburg High School auditorium in Bladensburg, Maryland – once a site for the local Sunday Service. Co-District Pastor Loretta Schauffler facilitated the event as the MC, and the pre-broadcast entertainment included songs from the Generations Band, which is composed of Unificationists Dan Fefferman, Frank Grow, David Moffitt and Jeffrey Wentworth. All 700 attendees received a gift bag of Korean cake, water and a laminated card featuring a photo of True Parents and the Family Pledge.

"Our team worked hard to build a beautiful atmosphere with lovely decorations," reported Pastor Schauffler to Unificationnews.com. "Many second-generation volunteered to help in so many ways, adding the spark of youth to the preparations. There was little for me to do as the MC; the program moved seamlessly and before long, True Mother was coming down the aisle in her robes and crown. Having True Father's robe and crown already placed ceremoniously on his chair was very moving.

"People remained for quite a while after the closing of the celebration. There was an atmosphere of real community and gratitude for what had been received. The grace of the Blessing seemed to be in abundance in the hearts of our brothers and sisters.

"We thank our American District Pastors, our headquarters staff, and all who traveled to Korea for this celebration of Foundation Day. We also thank President Hyung Jin Moon and Rev. Yeon Ah Moon, who spent these last six months with us and helped us deepen our spiritual lives during a challenging time for our movement. Finally and most importantly, we cannot put into words our gratitude to True Mother for how she is giving everything, body and soul, together with True Father in the spirit world, to complete the work of True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind by the year 2020. Our deepest desire is to help in

this work and bring about the victory with a nation for our Heavenly Parent, and humanity becoming one family under our Heavenly Parent.”

“We saw many members who we rarely see at church,” said Douglas Burton, a resident of Bowie, Maryland. He continued: “We even saw brothers and sisters from the Global Peace Festival organization.”

Dr. Antonio Betancourt, the director of the Office of Peace and Security Affairs of the Universal Peace Federation International, said, “It was perfect – the prayer of True Mother, the wedding, the program – everything.”

Foundation Day in New York and New Jersey

More than 1,000 Unificationists from District 1 convened at the Double Tree Hotel in Tarrytown, New York to participate Foundation Day festivities. As did those for all locations of Eastern Standard Time, the program began at 7:00 p.m. and concluded at around 10:00 p.m. Rev. Jesse Edwards led the audience in praise and worship songs.

“It went a lot better than expected,” said Pastor Andrew Love, who hosts Sunday Services at the Learning Center on 43rd Street in New York City. “The spirit was good, everybody lingered afterwards, and I saw nothing but smiles on people’s faces. There was a lot of hugging going on. I was running around a lot and stressed out a bit, but I noticed that people came prepared to celebrate. Sometimes, big events like these can be a bit sedate, but this one was very upbeat and warm. I absolutely saw a lot of people I usually don’t; these past couple weeks in general, more people have been coming to church at 43rd Street, especially to partake in the Holy Wine Ceremony.”

At the same time, in Teaneck, New Jersey, the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe transformed into a gathering place for more than 1,200 Unificationists.

Jana Iparraguirre, the communications director of District 3, reported: “It went so smoothly. There were a couple of concerns about the video feed during the program, but everyone was patient. There was so much love and respect from people during the event, and it was great to have the New Jersey community come together and pack the ballroom. Dave Hunter did an amazing job as the MC, Oliver Noll, our creative team director, invested so much into managing behind the scenes, and Rev. Carol Pobanz, our wellness director, gave a simple yet beautiful introduction about the meaning of Foundation Day. I saw so many people I didn’t know. Before the broadcast cast, photographer Graeme Carmichael took family portraits for people who wanted them. After the broadcast ended, a lot of people went out to different diners and restaurants to continue to spend time with each other.”

Rev. Pobanz said the following as part of her pre-program message: “Today, Foundation Day, is a very blessed day. It is the day when God’s Foundation has been completed by our True Parents. It is the day when the cornerstone has been laid with the Blessing of our victorious True Parents, and it is the day when the first stones are placed on that foundation with our own Blessing as the children of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind and of our Heavenly Parent, God. I pray that we will become victors as part of this historic and providential revolution. May the Heavenly fortune that flows through the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind be with us all.”

Foundation Day in District Los Angeles, California

Approximately 800 Unificationists in District 12 celebrated Foundation Day at the Hilton Hotel in Pasadena, Los Angeles, where the program started at around 5:00 p.m. and concluded at around 8:00 p.m. Second-generation Unificationist Renee Shaw, who assisted in coordinating the event, saw the following:

“I was surprised by how happy everyone was. After the conclusion of the broadcast, everyone was congratulating each other, mingling and enjoying the cake that was being passed out. A bunch of couples were getting their wedding pictures taken as well. Some of the couples had been Blessed more than 20 years ago and hadn’t seen each other since their Blessing, so this was actually the first time they were able to see each other in their wedding gowns and suits. Usually, about 300-400 people come to church on Sundays, but for this event, we saw many people we’ve never seen before, and we had around 20 guests come in as well! The event was nice and simple, and although there were technical glitches during the broadcast here and there, people laughed it off. The whole environment was happy and celebratory. I saw a lot of people who were very moved, knowing that we’ve made it to Foundation Day and that we were all preparing our hearts to move forward. Because the program ended fairly early in the evening, many friends and families gathered to catch a bite to eat together afterwards. It was actually my birthday the day before Foundation Day, and so a bunch of friends and I went out for dinner.”

“The Foundation Day ceremony had a much more powerful impact spiritually and emotionally than I expected,” said Robert Spitz of the celebration in Los Angeles. “When something is built up as much as this was, you tend to anticipate a letdown when it happens.

“While there was a lot of ceremony, pomp and circumstance, I was left with the feeling that it was all very suitable to the occasion. Even the robes, the crowns, the scepter and the seals all seemed befitting this glorious occasion in the Providence of God. This ceremony represents the start of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. This is the fulfillment of the Biblical and Divine Principle prophecy. The occasion deserves all that was present.

“The expression on True Mother's face as she entered the stadium spoke volumes to me. Her face showed the incredible suffering from the days leading up to this event. She carried the weight of many tears and heartaches with her, as she walked slowly to the podium. In the past year she has endured such disappointment and sorrow, and she must lead the movement out of its challenge of faith. It is no wonder that True Mother could not smile during what should have been a most joyful event. Nonetheless, she carried herself with great dignity and the authority of God. She reflected all of the virtues of the True Parents.

“Only time will reveal the degree to which this event has opened the doors of the spiritual world to assist in the liberation of the hearts and minds of mankind. As they say, it is darkest just before dawn. We can only hope that this is the dawning of that new day the Creation has longed to see.”