

BCSF XI Kicks Off

K. Allen
August 5, 2015



The eleventh year of Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF) kicked off with high spirits and high energy on the evening of Wednesday, August 5, 2015. One hundred fifty people attended the opening ceremony to welcome God, and each other, to the festival.



"We're expecting just as many, if not more, attendants as last year," said Karlsun Allen, who is in charge of general affairs this year. Over 700 people attended BCSF last year.

Chigo, the emcee, opened the kickoff evening. "I first heard about BCSF when I was living in Europe, and thought that it was so cool that young Unificationists could come together and play sports. Everyone in Europe has heard of this festival, and dreams about joining, about teaching you all how to play 'soccer!' We have a great thing here, and I'm so happy to be a part of it."



The Soul Monsters, a band of young Unificationists from Ohio, performed a few songs to a highly upbeat audience. Then a slideshow showing highlights of the past ten years of BCSF played.



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chair of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) North America, gave the welcoming speech.

"With this kind of energy, we can lead this country of America, and the world," he said. "I really hope that this spirit of our American family can lead this country and our church, our businesses, our

organizations, and everything we do around the world. The coming generation is our greatest hope. Without your support, without your feedback for the sake of our community, who can lead our community tomorrow and next year? I'm so grateful to see you. I'm so glad to see you every year. You are still striving to do something better—to make BCSF better each year. So let us feel, this weekend, that we are all brothers and sisters, with one Parent, centering on our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.”



Dr. Kim also shared about True Mother's hopes and plans for the young generation. He shared about exciting initiatives that are available to this age group present at BCSF. “True Mother is really investing in the coming generations for better education,” he said. “She wants us to be better in our professions and in every area of life: sports, culture, and so on. Starting August 7, we have the Top Gun Workshop in Korea.” Several BCSF participants plan to participate in the Top Gun workshop after this weekend.



The program continued with a few testimonies from participants about why they keep coming back every year. Max from Ohio said, “Through the years, I've seen BCSF become better and better. It's my favorite event to come to every year. First, for the competition. We may not be the best, but the intensity and the competitive environment is well beyond our skill level, because we are representing our districts and our states, our families, and the people we grew up with. I feel the motivation and determination to play well.

And I think it's really beautiful when you're able to push yourself for more than something beyond your own personal gain. Second, the sportsmanship is the cornerstone of what makes this sports festival beautiful. When we can go from really competing against each other to hugging and laughing with each other, I think that says a lot about the culture of our church. Another thing that is amazing is that each year it gets more and more competitive. But above everything, I think what makes BCSF amazing is our community, everybody here. More than any church event, BCSF gives me a sense of having a national identity. We can be so isolated around the country, in our communities, that we sometimes forget how many of us there are. When I see everybody here, I realize how big my family is, I realize how much support I have around the country, and I'm able to go home feeling inspired and reenergized."



Michael Lamson, a community leader who is accompanying the very large group of young people from Ohio, gave a prayer. "As we renew old friendships and build a lot of new ones this week, we want to invite You to experience everything with us each day," he prayed. "This is a time when we can create a new culture that is full of so much love and so much joy and so much hope. I pray that as we play hard, as we laugh a lot, and build memories to share, that we can also understand how connected we are to each other, and how whatever we do influences all those around us. During this week, I pray that as we walk together with You, we can take care of each other, and we can help each other become the very best that we can become."

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