

My Matching Ceremony - Providential Partners

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Matching ceremony, like many other important Unification Church ceremonies, has its own unique and exciting theme. Qualified members from all over the world will gather at an appointed time and assigned place to be matched by Reverend Moon, himself! Being matched by Reverend Moon, to me, was the greatest blessing to receive from God, second only to the marriage blessing. In the United States, most large ceremonies were held at the New Yorker Hotel ballroom. My matching ceremony was held at the New Yorker Hotel. In the ballroom, a stage is set where Reverend Moon usually starts his ceremonies with deep tearful prayers, followed with very moving and inspiring speeches. In front of the stage, about 100 chairs are set for the Reverend Moon and family, church officials, and special guests, and the rest of the room is cleared out, with members seated straight on freshly cleaned carpeting. In most ceremonies, male and female members will sit separately; all brothers on one side and all sisters on the other side, separated by a thin walkway in the center of the ballroom. Members are seated on the floor so as to make room for maximum capacity.

In matching ceremonies, the format is standard; the only difference is that in the middle of the room is a wider 20-foot walkway, stretching from the stage to the end of the ballroom for Reverend Moon to walk up and down, often accompanied by his translator and a couple of his closest disciples. My matching came toward the end of my seven-year formula course, which was completed during my 40-day workshop with Reverend Ahn and coincided with our Church's significant providential period: the Pentecost. In the late '70s and early '80s, matching and blessing weren't done frequently -- only once every two or three years. I missed one matching session in the summer of 1982 because I wasn't eligible. However, approximately five and a half years later, on March 27, 1987, I was sent to New York for the matching!

My matching day was so special and spiritually meaningful, filled with excitement, fear, challenges, and a test of faith! Whenever Reverend Moon scheduled to speak or conduct a special ceremony, members would start gathering in front of the main ballroom on the evening before the event so that they could get a good seat in front of the stage, closer to Reverend Moon. To get a glimpse of Reverend Moon's eye or a hand touch is like a touch from God that a member will treasure for life! Reverend Moon loves to interact with members; he laughs and jokes and makes funny faces and touches members who are close to the stage and even hits them lightly on their heads. It is a most joyful moment for members to feel so close to Reverend Moon. At times, it is very painful when he is serious. To see him express his anger when talking about God's heart or about our lack of faith was like the anger of God. I am one of those members who love to be close to Reverend Moon, and I gathered outside the ballroom door the evening before. Whenever I had the opportunity to see Reverend Moon, I wouldn't miss it for the world!

On the evening before the matching day, I was among a small group of people who gathered at the door as early as 8:00 P.M. Members were coming for the matching worldwide. The New Yorker Hotel was

overbooked; even small conference rooms became bedrooms! There were more than 3,000 candidates. By 5:00 P.M. of the previous day, the hotel lobby was jam-packed with people, and the atmosphere was indescribable! There was so much excitement and joyful and happy smiling faces everywhere you turned. People were embracing and excitingly happy to see each other again on this joyful occasion. Knowing how huge the crowd would be for the matching, I quickly went up to my room, refreshed myself, put on my best suit, came down and joined the waiting crowd gathered at the main ballroom entrance, which was scheduled to open at 4:00A.M. Already at 1:00 A.M. there were a lot of people praying and spiritually preparing themselves for the matching. Church officials came and led the waiting crowd with holy songs and prayers.

Finally, the exciting time everyone had been waiting for came! The doors to the ballroom opened! I found myself being carried by the force of the rushing crowd into the ballroom and found myself in the middle of the room in the sixth or seventh row from the stage -- not in front, but close enough. I was sitting right on the dividing edge of the walkway that separated brothers and sisters. As the ballroom was filled to maximum capacity, the official preparation began. Church leaders led people with holy songs and prayers and meditation in unison. A few minutes before Father Moon came into the room, a wave of spirit and emotion took over. I was praying and crying uncontrollably with tears running down my cheeks, pledging to God that I would accept any sister with whom Father Moon would match me. I was interrupted by a loud announcement that ordered everybody to stand up and ready themselves to welcome the True Parents, Reverend and Mrs. Moon, and family. I can't describe the overwhelming spiritual atmosphere and the excitement that filled the ballroom! It was so powerful one could almost fly with joy! At the height of the tension, Reverend Moon and Mrs. Moon walked in, and the crowd broke into the loudest cheer, clapping, whistling, and loudly welcoming Father and Mother Moon. It is difficult to describe in words the amount of joy and the spiritual atmosphere of that moment.

After the very loud enthusiastic welcoming of the True Parents, Reverend Moon came on the stage and offered a very deep and tearful prayer, after which he gave a two-hour speech -- which is considered very short! Reverend Moon's average speeches were five to seven hours. The longest speech that I once attended was 14 hours! Beside his charming, stern and charismatic nature, Reverend Moon is not only an enthusiastic preacher, but he is really a great teacher. On the stage where he speaks, there is always a large blackboard set where he illustrates his speeches. He captivates his audience with his deep messages, all of them about God's love and heart for humanity. He interacts with the people in the audience with jokes and pretends to hit them.

Reverend Moon is like a good father; he is happy when he sees his children growing the way he wants them to grow, but he gets angry and chastises his members when he feels they aren't following his teaching. Listening to him scolding us is like sitting on a pile of fire and melting us into repentance! After the speech, Father and Mother Moon left the room to officiate at a small ceremony, held in another room. They returned in an hour to start the matching. We were told to spend this time in prayer and meditation. After the welcoming of our True Parents the second time, the matching ceremony began. We were ordered to clear the pathway that separated brothers and sisters and widen it, as it stretched from the stage to the end of the ballroom. Reverend and Mrs. Moon came up on the stage; Reverend Moon offered a deep prayer, holding his wife's right hand with his left hand and stretching the other hand straight as Reverend Moon was praying.

As everyone sat down getting ready for the exciting yet fearful moment, for some unknown reason, I looked over from where I was sitting to the sisters' side, and my eyes caught this particular sister; she was humongous! She was an Asian sister who looked like an Eskimo or Hawaiian, big and tall with a huge round face with plump cheeks, perhaps with health problems. While I was trying to deny what my eyes had just seen, a voice inside me said to me, "Even this one?" This was like a response to my pledge to

God that I would accept any sister that True Father chose for me. I quickly replied, "Yes, even to this one!"

Now the real moment came. Father Moon, accompanied by his translator and a couple of other close disciples, started walking up and down the pathway. Occasionally Father Moon stopped here and there and talked to candidates, asking them their ages, level of education, and where they came from. Reverend Moon started matching interracial couples first -- black and white; Asians and Americans. Meanwhile, my eyes somehow were pin-pointed on this big sister with a tinge of fear inside me that I might be matched to her. Father Moon changed from matching interracial couples and asked all those who were older than forty years to come to the front; suddenly the whole room shifted. People who were standing in the front moved to the back to make room for the older people of forty years or more. I didn't change much because of where I was seated. I looked to check on the sister; I saw her move forward and stand in the second row straight across from me! It continued this way three or four times. Father Moon kept on switching from matching interracial couples, to young couples, to older couples.

Finally, my time came! Father Moon came to me and asked me a few questions, such as how old I was and where I came from. All the while I was answering him, Father Moon was looking deeply at me beyond my external appearance. Reverend Moon has the spiritual gift and power to see your soul and your spiritual background all the way to past ancestors! After he talked to me, he walked to the sisters' side, talking to different sisters' here and there. It took a while before Father Moon matched any couple, so I thought maybe it was not my time yet. When Father Moon pulled a sister out from way back in the ballroom and walked with her toward the front, I had no idea to whom that girl would be matched. I couldn't even see what she looked like because she was walking behind Father Moon as he guided her by the shoulder. When Father Moon got closer to me, he pushed the sister to me and with his other free hand he pulled me by the shoulder and pushed us together.

Suddenly, the crowd broke into a big roar and loud applause, and a few voices close to me shouted, "Good match! Good match!" The atmosphere was so intense; we didn't even look at each other. We walked out of the ballroom behind one of Father's disciples where we were guided to a seating area, just outside the ballroom door. Again as we walked to this special area, we were greeted by another round of applause from members gathered outside the ballroom. A beautiful angelic looking lady by the name of Traudle Burn, welcomed us with her bright smile. She was one of the assigned elder church sisters who was there to help counsel newly matched couples and help them if they had any issues.

When the couple accepts their matching, they go back to the main ballroom and offer a full bow to Father and Mother Moon as a sign of acceptance and walk out again, which we did. As we walked out of the ballroom, I looked to my matching partner, and I couldn't believe my eyes! This sister was so beautiful! I couldn't believe God would match me with such a stunningly good-looking sister! I fell in love with her right at that spot! We were then taken to the registry desk and registered our names and church centers we came from. We were given the number of our matching and had our picture taken by a professional photographer for the record. After that, we were told to go out together into the city and have a coffee.

I tell you! My first walk with this stranger was awesome. I became totally intoxicated with love! Holding hands and walking in the streets of New York, everywhere I looked, I saw love. We walked for about five or seven blocks, I can't describe the feeling. I felt like a billionaire man walking tall next to this most gorgeous, most elegant lady. We came to a street corner on Fifth Avenue and saw a posh café. A nice table by the window was set there vacant as if it was set for us! We sat there and had coffee and talked for approximately two hours. My beautiful partner came up with a name that we call each other, "Providential Partners."

35 some years later we are still married and happy and thankful to Rev. Moon.