

Toronto, Canada Celebration of True Parents' Birthday and the Marriage Blessing

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On February 3, over 250 people gathered at King's Garden Banquet Hall in Toronto for its fourth annual celebration of True Parents' birthday. Sponsored by the Toronto chapter of the Family Federation, Universal Peace Federation (UPF), this year's celebration, for the first time, included a Holy Marriage Blessing and Rededication Ceremony.

After a delicious lunch, Alyssa Grace, a 17-year-old finalist of the Filipino reality television show, *The Voice*, captivated the audience with a great musical performance. She paved the way for sincere opening remarks from Dr. Moon Shik Kim, Regional Chairman of Family Federation Canada, and the much published author Qamrul Khanson, who both spoke from their hearts about True Parents.

After Alyssa returned with a rendition of "The Wind Beneath My Wings," the audience was held spellbound by the testimony of Pastor T.L. Barrett, the Senior Pastor of the Life Center Church of God in Christ. In the pastor's early interactions with True Father, True Father had predicted that Cleo, who was Pastor Barrett's former wife at the time, would "return soon." Cleo was married to another man, so True Father's prediction seemed utterly impossible, prompting Pastor Barrett to initially conclude that True Father could not be a man of God.

Nine days after True Father's prediction, Cleo arrived at Pastor's Barrett's church with all her bags. True Father's prediction came true, and Cleo returned. When Pastor Barret and Cleo were finally reunited, they

decided to be Blessed in Marriage. They are still together and happily married to this day, grateful for True Parents' guidance and the values of the Blessing.



Following Pastor Barrett's moving testimony about the Marriage Blessing and True Parents, those in attendance had the opportunity to participate in the Holy Marriage Blessing and Rededication Ceremony themselves. Officiated by Dr. and Mrs. Kim, the ceremony also recognized Dr. and Mrs. Chae Hee Lee, one of the 72 couples blessed by Rev. and Mrs. Moon in 1962, for their accomplishment in bringing 430 couples to be Blessed over the years.

Even those who were unfamiliar with True Parents' teachings were happy to get a glimpse of who True Parents were: "It was a pleasure to be in the presence of one people under God and to learn of the great work that God has done through Rev. Moon," said Rev. Jean Henry, a local Christian pastor. "The birthday celebration sent a message of love and the communion was a way to bring everyone together under God."