

FFWPU USA: Honoring Our Blessing Foundations - First Blessing of Americans

Naokimi Ushiroda
March 1, 2023



Photos courtesy of Rev. Randy Francis

1969 was a pivotal year in American history for a number of reasons, with newly elected U.S. President Richard Nixon taking office, Neil Armstrong landing on the moon, True Parents embarking on a groundbreaking world tour, and 13 young American couples who became the first to participate in a Holy Marriage Blessing ceremony outside of Korea - held on American soil in the nation's capital.



True Parents officiated the 13 Couples Holy Marriage Blessing at the historic Upshur House in Washington, DC on Feb. 28, 1969, celebrating the blessing on the 20th day of their visit to the U.S. during their world tour. True Father said the blessed couples represented the nation's 13 founding colonies, and indicated they would pave the way for subsequent couples.

"The Unification [movement's] holy wedding is the celebration of receiving such a blessing from God, centering on the ideal of true love," True Father said. "It is the beginning point in the process of becoming true husbands and wives, and in establishing God's ideal, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and in the eternal world."

In a special program, "Honoring Our Blessing Foundations," the 13 couples recently celebrated their 54th blessing anniversary while also honoring the 777 Couples, which included the first American couples to receive the Blessing in Korea in October 1970. The joint event, held Feb. 25 at the Capital Family Church, featured a cake cutting, award certificates, and testimonies from couples from both blessings, as well as remarks from FFWPU USA leadership.



"It was great to see [our members] really honoring our foundations, and especially the challenges [early members] had to overcome in order to be among the first couples to be blessed here in America and open the door for others," said FFWPU USA President, Rev. Naokimi Ushiroda.

"Everything we do has the purpose of being eternal through practicing true love, and everything is training for our eternal life," shared Dr. Chung Sik Yong, Regional President, FFWPU North America, in his remarks about the importance of the blessing and our spiritual life.

[RELATED: Celebrating 54 Years: 13 Couples Blessing Anniversary](#)

While the international Marriage Blessing movement has grown in scale over the years to include hundreds of millions of couples from diverse backgrounds worldwide, it was on the foundation of early ceremonies and couples that such great success arose. "This [event] was a beautiful opportunity to bring a few of them together and really honor them," said Rev. Randy Francis. "Their testimonies were amazing ... especially with Upshur House, where they were able to visit there again."



Participants of the 13 Couples Blessing included: Edwin and Marie Ang, Philip and Vivian Burley, George and Diane Fernsler, George and Sylvia Norton, Robert and Vivian Oswald, Vernon and Maxine Pearson, Carl and Linna Rapkins, Ken and Orah Pope, Galen and Patty Pumphrey, Wesley and Gladys Samuels, John and Marie Schmidli, Jon and Sandra Schuhart, and Fred and Jacque Stock.

The program's speakers were featured in person and online through Zoom. Testimonies were shared by Marie Ang and Sandy Schuhart of the 13 Couples Blessing, as well as Farley and Betsy Jones, and Hugh and Nora Spurgin of the 777 Couples Blessing. Organizers said a video recap of the program will soon be produced.

You can learn more about the international Marriage Blessing [here](#).

National

Celebrating 54 Years: 13 Couples Blessing Anniversary



Congratulations to the 13 American couples celebrating their 54th blessing anniversary on February 28! True Parents officiated the 13 Couples Holy Marriage Blessing in 1969 at the historic Upshur House in Washington, DC. This was the first blessing ceremony held outside of Korea at the time, and the first of three ceremonies that together came to be known as the 43 Couples Blessing.



True Parents celebrated the 13 Couples Blessing on the 20th day of their visit to the U.S. as part of their 1969 World Tour. The blessed couples, who True Father said represented the nation's 13 founding colonies, included: Edwin and Marie Ang, Philip and Vivian Burley, George and Diane Fernsler, George and Sylvia Norton, Robert and Vivian Oswald, Vernon and Maxine Pearson, Carl and Linna Rapkins, Ken and Orah Pope,

Galen and Patty Pumphrey, Wesley and Gladys Samuels, John and Marie Schmidli, Jon and Sandra Schuhart, and Fred and Jacque Stock.



True Parents later held a blessing ceremony of eight couples in Essen, Germany, on March 28, 1969, and a ceremony of 22 couples in Tokyo on May 1, 1969, which became part of the 43 Couple Blessing conducted on the foundation of the 430 Couple Holy Blessing held the previous year in Korea.

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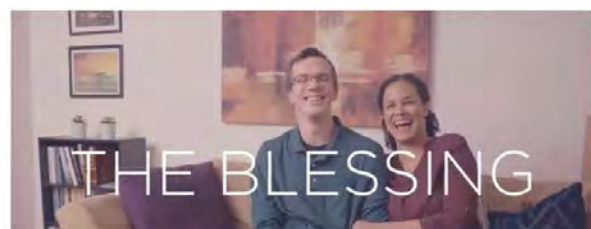
Boy meets girl.
They fall in love.
But feelings can change...

The Blessing is
marriage with a purpose
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The Blessing experience is unique to



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