

Maryland Holy Blessing Held at Historic Upshur House In Washington, D.C.

Jim Boothby
February 16, 2014
Photos: Liana Rodriques



Live for something greater than just self

“We sensed that each of the young people, after going a course of some adolescent trials and tribulations, and the familiar searching process, each independently had decided they wanted something more. They understood and embraced *the live for something greater than yourself ... God and Humanity’s well being*, that always informed the ministry and work of Rev and Mrs. Moon from the beginning .”



Blessing with thousands of other couples

As more than 2,500 couples exchanged vows in front of the officiator, Mrs. Sun Myung Moon in a Unification church stadium in South Korea, the same ceremony was being held (via satellite) here in NW Washington DC and hundreds of other locations around the world.

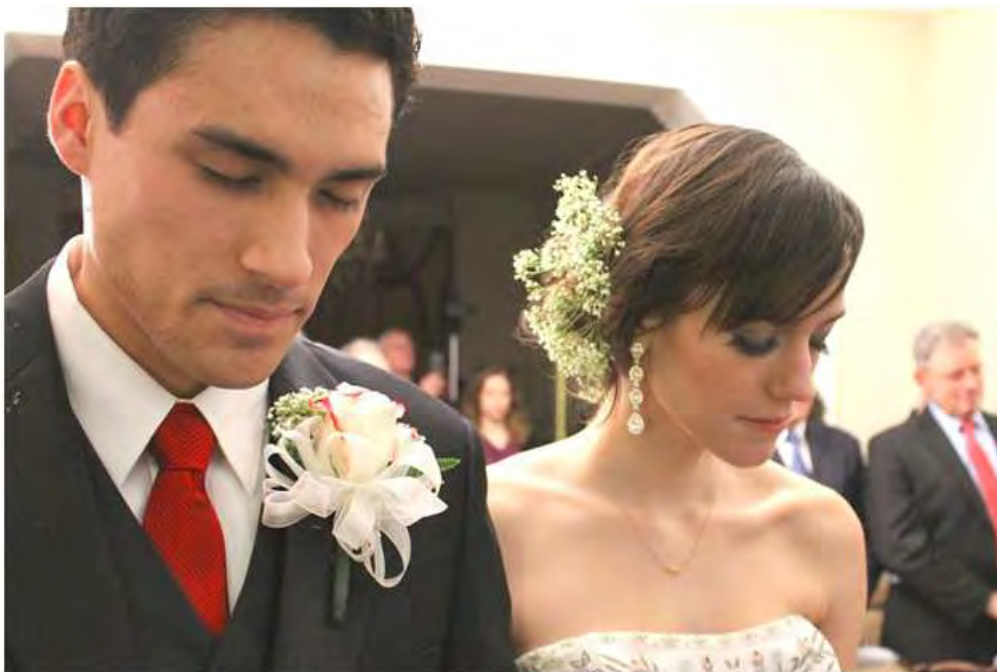
Joyous parents

Parents express gratitude to their daughter as they open the **ceremony on Valentine’s week February 11, 2014** – and reflect on the incredible turn around course of their lovely daughter who despite an early religious and spiritual inclination, did not at first easily embrace the faith of her parents.



Bride's reflection on a local blessing

A bride commented "Having a local blessing was one the greatest gifts I'd ever received from my community. It reminded me of how much the MD community invested in me—my entire life—up till this point. At first, people asked me; 'Why not go to the blessing in NY?' Looking back, I wouldn't have done it any other way. Only those who came, could know how incredible and beautiful it was. I'm very excited about my MD community hosting another local blessing like this again! I think everyone should have a chance to enjoy something so personal and precious right close to home."



From the heart

The groom said, "My favorite moment was when my dad went up to talk about me, and he was struggling to speak as he fought back tears. I was so moved. I hadn't seen him that way before."

Many of the 20,000 couples blessed in marriage on this day were interracial or intercultural. Rev Moon famously declared that the Heavenly Parent is color blind and real true love easily transcends color and religious barriers.

Historic Upshur House

The first building bought by Rev. Moon in 1967 served as both an early headquarters and a home to Rev Moon for two years. Outreach Pastor Jim Boothby prays to open the ceremony as the evening's emcee, Pastor Miilhan Stephens and the bride and groom front row, listen.



Careers and education

The groom after graduating from university with a degree in software engineering is now a successful data analyst for Capitol One Bank . The bride is a senior at Towson State University and is finishing a communications degree. She anticipates a career in public relations .



Happy to be part of history

“We’re so happy our daughter and her new husband could be blessed at historic Upshur house where Rev and Mrs. Moon blessed the first 13 Americans pioneer couples in the movement in the late 60’s .” said a father reflecting on the event.



Some things remain the same

The church reported 20,000 mostly young couples in their 20s - mostly the children of Rev Moon’s earliest disciples - received the True Parent’s holy Wedding blessing around the world this week. It’s a bold indication of what appears to be the inter-generational appeal of Rev Moon’s “holy eternal weddings” where the couples consciously marry not solely for themselves, but rather the sake of God, and the sake of rest of humankind



Becoming one family from two

The groom's family of South Carolina and the bride's family of Maryland and Delaware joined together by the family commitment of the shared Unification church Holy Marriage Blessing.

The bride and groom descend the stairs

The same site used as the first Unification Holy Blessing in a small but poignant blessings ceremony held over 40 years ago. The World Peace through Ideal Families movement begun by Rev and Mrs. Moon has now touched millions around the world and continuous to grow as the central sacramental ceremony of Unification faith.



A mother shares her joy and pride in to see her son arrive at the day of his blessing marriage the same as she did some 30 years before. Each parent and the bride and groom shared a reflection creating a warm family relaxed atmosphere.



Holy water! Sprinkling the holy water of blessing

Event officiators (standing in, representing the True Parents in their physical absence) sprinkle holy water on the participants . Later reflecting on the event Alan noted, “I was so struck by the degree of love and support from the Maryland community- the unconditional love was palpable.”



Thirty years on

Children of the Rev Moon's earliest disciples continue to embrace the faith and traditions of their parents and the church's late founder, who passed away in Sept two years ago. Parents look on as the young couple exchange rings .



Testimony time of warmth and respect

Here Angelina Beltrami starts it all off. As the wedding wrapped up and after True Mother finished the vows and formal ceremony by video link from Korea, friends and well wishers, both first- and second generation, came to the podium to share their love and appreciation of the new couple.



Special valued guests look forward to finding their own respective future spouses and themselves participating in one of the future upcoming Blessing ceremonies. Here they receive commemorative gifts from.



Hope for a new couple brings excitement and good feelings the world over

Invited wedding guests and well wishers enthusiastically endorse the new union and raise hands in the traditional church gesture of “Mansei “ -- a happy , yet serious Korean version of the traditional “hip hip hurray.”



Family affair

Special events coordinator Keiko Burton arranged food and beverages for the event.



Good food too!

Guests seem to approve of the menu. At 9 pm as the formal ceremony wrapped up, and the cake cutting concluded, the celebratory meal was rolled out and guests lingered for another hour or so before heading home on a cold February night.



Local blessing planning team for the 2014 Maryland Blessing



Matchmakers

Long time successful special matching advisors Doug and Cheryl Wetzstein were instrumental in introducing the couple to each other. The matching process involved several dedicated years of diligent prayer, family discussions and meeting prospective candidates before they settled on each other.



Unification church Holy Wedding We rings – His and Hers

The center symbolizes the loving Heavenly Parent God, the fulfillment of the 4 position eternal foundation of complete union with God , the 12 eternal gates and true unselfish love in give and receive action.

Back-story

The New Hope Family Church Holy Wedding Blessing saw a gathering of 50 well-wishers celebrate a worldwide marriage blessing that was taking place simultaneously around the globe. As more than 2,500 couples exchanged vows in front of the Officiator, Mrs. Sun Myung Moon in a Unificationist church stadium in South Korea, the same ceremony was being held (via satellite) here in Northwest Washington, D.C. and in almost every other country on earth.

Several other young Maryland couples took part in the blessing ceremony held at the church seminary in Barrytown, NY. The young couple, was brought together by their parents and "matching advisors" some nine months ago and with their own prayerful agreement. Guests caught a TV view of the parallel event happening across the ocean. Together, couples pledged not only to be faithful to each other but to live a life centered on the welfare of both God and the larger interests of humanity.

After the rings were snugly on, families and friends of all faiths joined the excitement of the moment by sharing their own hopes for a brighter future and ending with songs, music and feasting on cake and sushi.

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