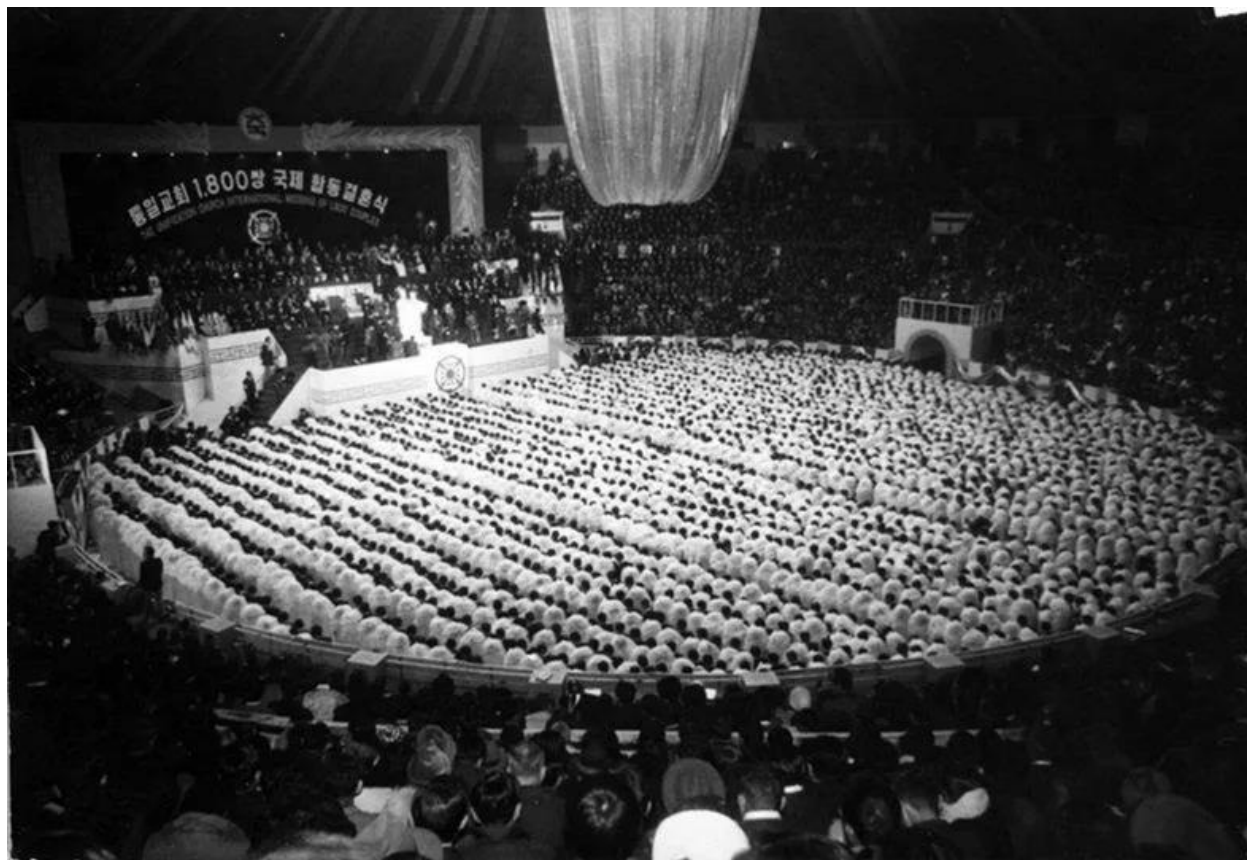


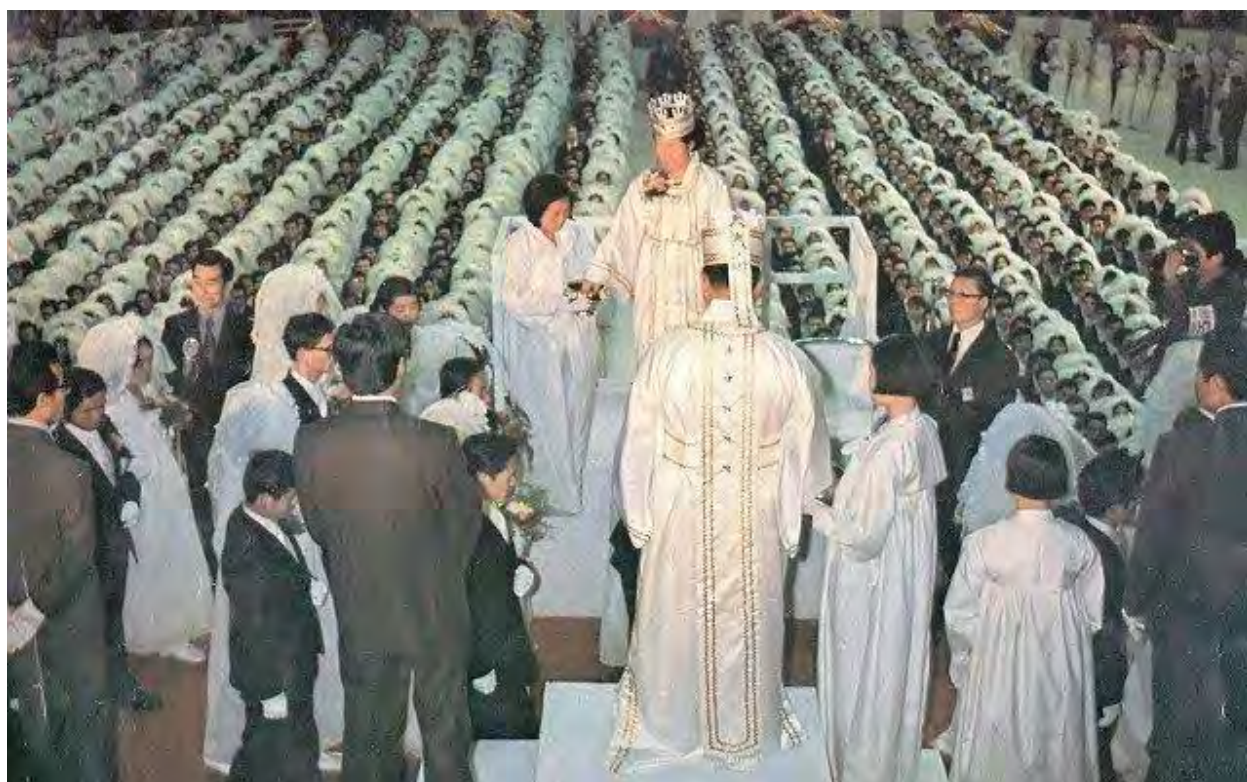
FFWPU Europe and Middle East: 50th Anniversary for Blessing of 1800 Couples

Knut Holdhus
February 8, 2025



The [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony of the 1800 couples on February 8, 1975

1800 couples blessed in marriage 50 years ago in record-breaking event in indoor arena in Seoul



[Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) sprinkling holy water on the 1800 couples as each couple passes between the [True Parents](#)

Today, the many couples that took part in the [Marriage Blessing](#) of 1800 couples on 8th February 1975, can celebrate their 50th anniversary. It was what the Guinness Book of World Records then recorded as the largest [mass wedding](#) in history and was officiated by Reverend [Sun Myung Moon \(Father Moon\)](#) and his wife [Hak Ja Han \(Mother Han\)](#), founders of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), then called the [Unification Church](#).

The location of the spectacular event was [Jangchung Gymnasium](#), a large indoor arena - now famous for

hosting professional volleyball league matches, but in the seventies also used for presidential inaugurations. The gymnasium can be found in a central part of Seoul called Jung-gu.

The 1800 couples - it was actually 1,816 - came from around the world, from 20 nations to be precise, including 892 couples from South Korea, 811 from Japan, 76 from the United States, 35 from European countries and two from the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The South Korean Minister of the Board of National Unification gave a congratulatory speech. More than 10,000 guests could watch the event. Straight afterwards, the couples boarded 94 sightseeing buses for a parade through the downtown streets of Seoul.



From the [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony of the 1800 couples on February 8, 1975

Hal McKenzie (1948-2010), who had joined the movement in 1968 in Philadelphia, USA, participated in the [large wedding](#) ceremony with his Lynda (née Champion). He wrote on 11th February for the [Unification Church](#) publication "The Way of the World" in an article titled, "The Largest Wedding in Human History",

"This international wedding underscored the teaching of the [Unification Church](#) that [God](#) transcends all national and racial barriers, and that the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on earth can be built based on [God](#)-centered family units.

[Rev. Moon](#) pronounced the newlyweds 'couples forever' in [...] the largest indoor hall in Korea, site of the church's 777-couple wedding conducted in 1970. Ten thousand spectators and well-wishers watched as the couples marched in, two couples abreast, up a set of stairs leading to a platform where [Rev.](#) and [Mrs. Moon](#) sprinkled perfumed water on them as they walked past. Lined up in orderly rows, the couples completely packed the red-carpeted gymnasium floor."

The record-breaking [mass wedding](#) ceremony symbolized international unity, world peace, and the establishment of "ideal families under [God](#)". By emphasizing intercultural and interracial unions, such events promote global harmony. The 8th February 1975 event was part of the [Family Federation](#)'s larger mission to build a worldwide "family under [God](#)".

According to [Family Federation](#) tenets, the [marriage blessings](#) help to restore humanity by creating families that invite [God](#) into their midst.

Many of the couples had been matched in advance by [Father Moon](#) himself, based on faith and spiritual guidance.

The 1800 couples Blessing of 1975 included international participants, marking the [Family Federation](#)'s growing global outreach. It laid the foundation for even larger [mass weddings](#) in the 1980s and 1990s, with ceremonies involving tens of thousands of couples.

This event remains a landmark in the history of the [Family Federation](#), symbolizing its vision of spiritual and social transformation through [family values](#).



[Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) praying for all the couples at the [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony of the 1800 couples on February 8, 1975

The [True Parents](#) blessed the 1,800 couples 15 years after their own [Holy Wedding](#) in 1960. The 1975 event opened the way to the [movement](#)'s international work. That same year about 300 members from those 1,800 couples travelled to 123 nations on foreign missions, laying the groundwork for the [Family Federation](#)'s current global presence. [Father Moon](#) said in a speech, "The 1,800 couples represent all humankind." At the time of their [marriage blessing](#), he stated, "We enter the age to embrace the world."

Text: Knut Holdhus

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Large Wedding Ceremonies

Large wedding ceremonies since 1960 – door to true marital love



For more than 60 years, [Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#) have organized large wedding ceremonies in order to realize [God's](#) family ideal. People from all races, cultures, religions and nationalities participate. After [Sun Myung Moon's](#) death in 2012, his wife [Hak Ja Han](#) has officiated at the major international ceremonies.

Since 1960, millions of couples have been blessed in such large wedding ceremonies as a way to realize their desire to achieve the eternal ideal that true conjugal love represents, and at the same time raise their children with an absolute and unconditional parental love.

Among the many who have had their marriages blessed by [Father](#) and [Mother Moon](#), there are thousands who asked [Father Moon](#) to choose a spouse for them. He had received from [God](#) the ability to see the individual's spiritual character and inherited qualities. This enabled him to suggest with whom a person was best suited, and what kind of partner one would need for his or her spiritual growth. That tradition came to an end some years before [Sun Myung Moon](#) left this world in 2012.



"While marriage counselors and parish priests are wringing their hands over the breakdown of family life, the [Unification Church](#) is doing something about it. The [God-centered](#) family is not merely a nice slogan or a spiritual ideal suggested by the church leaders. It is the essential core of community among the faithful of the church. It is also a deeply motivated system for restoring marital fidelity and family stability to modern society."

(*Marriage, Family and Sun Myung Moon*, article by [Father Joseph H. Fichter](#) (1908-1994), Jesuit and sociologist of religion, published in the Jesuit magazine *America* 27th Oct. 1979.)

Couples who are already married within the framework of their own religion also participate in these ceremonies. They do not need to change their religion, but on the contrary find that such an experience gives them the opportunity to deepen their marriage and sacrifice it to [God](#), as they renew and strengthen their faith. At the same time, they also decide to realize [God's](#) ideal in their family.



There are many who have come to positive conclusions after closely studying the life of families of believers who base their marriage on [Father Moon's](#) teachings and tradition. In the above mentioned article, Jesuit sociologist [Father Joseph H. Fichter](#) (1908-1994) writes about the impressions he got when he studied the couples who have chosen this path. He says that a pragmatic sociologist might very well have concluded that the [Family Federation](#):

"has discovered an effective family plan. [...] one has to recognize its systematic program for the restoration of 'old-fashioned' morality, its emphasis on chastity before marriage, prayerful

preparation for marriage, a readiness to accept guidance in the choice of a partner, marital love reflective of love of [God](#), transmission of spiritual perfection to children." (Fichter)

The New York Times writes that the [Family Federation's](#)

"teaching on marriage does not exalt the romantic, personal side of a marriage. Marriage, according to Mr. [Moon](#), is more than a man and a woman seeking the blessing of their church on their decision to live together. With as much fervor as other world religions stress celibacy as a means to a godly life, Mr. [Moon](#) writes that marriage is necessary to complete one's godly duty of seeking perfection in individual and communal life."
 ("Marriage Seen As Godly Duty", article by Charles Austin, The New York Times 2nd July 1982, section B, page 1.)

We hold seminars on the meaning of the marriage blessing. You do not have to be a member of the [Family Federation](#) to participate.

"Large Wedding Ceremonies" – text: Knut Holdhus



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