

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: 25th Anniversary of 30,000 Couples' Blessing

Knut Holdhus
February 13, 2025



[Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) Feb. 13, 2000



Graphic of the large [Marriage Blessing](#) on 13th Feb. 2000 in Chamshil Olympic Stadium in Seoul with picture of [Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) superimposed

25 years since 30,000 couples received the Blessing on their marriage from Father Moon and Mother Han in Olympic Stadium, Seoul in February 2000

Today, 13th February, we congratulate on their 25th anniversary the many couples that took part in a large international [mass wedding](#) held at the Chamshil Olympic Stadium in Seoul on Sunday, 13th February 2000.

30,000 couples participated in a packed stadium on a fine and mild winter day. (Korean winters can be very harsh!) One-third of the couples had been matched, while the remaining couples had already been married before meeting the [Family Federation](#) and now had their existing marriage [blessed](#) by [Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) in this [grand ceremony](#).



Religious leaders giving their blessing on the couples in Chamshil Olympic Stadium in Seoul Feb. 13, 2000. From left: Antony, Silverbird, Farrakhan, Hong, Milingo, Lazarovits, Osman, Devendaherty, Barrett

The majority of the couples came from South Korea and Japan, but there were also many from Thailand, Taiwan, the USA, Russia, and Europe (over 500 couples from Europe). The event was broadcast via satellite to similar, though smaller, gatherings around the world. At these local events, couples participated who were unable (or could not afford) to travel to Seoul for the main event. In some countries, a video of a previous ceremony with [Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) was used instead of a satellite connection.



Couples blessed Feb. 13, 2000

Since 1997, other religious leaders have also been invited to give their blessing on all the couples. Thus, at the Olympic Stadium in Seoul, Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo from the Roman Catholic Church participated, along with Dean Igumen Antony from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; the Grand Mufti of Eritrea, Sheikh Al-Amin Osman; Bishop (Superintendent) T.L. Barrett from the Church of God in Christ (an American Pentecostal movement); Minister Leonard Farrakhan Mohammed from the Nation of Islam; Rabbi Erno Lazarovits from the Central Board of the Federation of Jewish Communities; Swamji Devendaherty, the spiritual leader of the Jain religion; Ven. Im-guk Hong, President of the Korean Buddhist Taegu Order; and Reuben Silverbird, Ambassador for the European Indian Village.

Rather than having a small private wedding for close family and friends, many choose to participate in such a [large public ceremony](#) to demonstrate to the world their conviction that their marriage is not just for their own personal satisfaction but that it has a greater and higher significance. Through harmonious and healthy marriages, we can create harmonious families and good societies. World peace ultimately is built on peace in each individual family. All these couples participating in these [big wedding ceremonies](#) know that marriage is the key to world peace.



Seoul Olympic Stadium. Photo (2020)

[Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#) have officiated increasingly larger ceremonies since 1960 when they blessed three couples in a small church in Seoul.

Already an hour before the event began in Seoul, the stadium was full (120,000 people). The program also included performances by several Korean pop stars and famous singers.

The ceremony was the main event of a week-long World Culture and Sports Festival, which included an art exhibition, sports competitions, ballet, folk dancing, various conferences for academics, women leaders, media professionals, and religious leaders, as well as an exhibition about [Father Moon](#) and [Mother Han](#)'s life and their movement. Many of the participants in these conferences also took part in the celebration of [Sun Myung Moon](#)'s 80th birthday.

Major news outlets, including AFP (Agence France-Presse), covered the event extensively.

Text: Knut Holdhus

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50th Anniversary For Blessing Of 1800 Couples

• February 8, 2025 • Knut Holdhus



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. Photo: FFWPU

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
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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 8th February 1975. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

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](#)".



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Father Moon and Mother Han praying for all the couples at the Marriage Blessing ceremony of the 1800 couples on 8th February 1975. Photo: FFWPU

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](#).

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

Featured image above: *The [Marriage Blessing](#) ceremony of the 1800 couples on 8th February 1975. Photo: FFWPU*

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