

74 Couples' Anniversary celebrated in the panel room at the World Mission Center

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The 72 Couples enjoying dinner in the Panel Room

As we gathered in the panel room at the World Mission Center on February 21 for our first anniversary celebration, we were excited and surprised to see the beautiful tables and the hard work that went into the preparation for our very special evening. The tables were decorated with spring flowers, which were presented by the Belvedere green house.

As we were busy getting reacquainted, renewing friendships and sharing experiences, we were served a delicious Korean dinner of Bulgogi, vegetables, rice and sauces. Then the tables were cleared and the speaking and entertainment began.

We were delighted to have Mr. David Kim to host our evening with his wit, humor and charm. He also gave a very refreshing talk. His honesty and sincerity in relating to our problems, misconceptions and misunderstandings, obstacles, joys, fears, hopes and future plans gave us all a renewed determination to strive for unity. Mr. Kim stressed the responsibility of each person to grow quickly. He also suggested that all blessed couples read the article by Anne Edwards in the Summer 1977 Blessing Quarterly: "Marriage: Some Practical Concepts."

We were privileged to hear the excellent voice of Mr. Joong Hyun Pak, director of the Performing Arts, Manhattan Center and World Mission Center.

The evening's entertainment continued with each couple standing and giving a short reading or singing a song. The most special event of the evening was the announcement of many couples of the coming birth of their first child.

A beautiful three-tiered anniversary cake was presented. On the top were three cherubs, or baby angels, symbolic of the importance of bearing children to create a God-centered family. We sang "Happy Anniversary" several times, and the honor of cutting the cake was given to Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Peemoeller. Served with three flavors of ice cream, it was also a highlight of the festivities.

Our speaker for the evening was Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak, who delivered a beautiful message deep from his heart. Again we were blessed with an honest, realistic approach to the needs of our daily lives and complications which inevitably arise between couples everywhere in the world. Our goals are different from the fallen world and we grow as family members in relation to our life of faith, our missions and our responsibilities, explained Rev. Kwak. We must learn how to relate to our life as God-centered families.

He gave us insight and inspiration in sharing his own personal experiences. He showed us his deep understanding of problems all blessed couples in every nation will experience. We grow as a people in deep faith -- all blessed couples in each country moving towards the same goal: to establish ideal families for the Kingdom of God and a foundation for the True Parents. To establish a heavenly tradition for the future generation is now our challenge, he said.

In closing, Rev. Kwak stressed that the most important mission of Blessed couples is to bear heavenly children for God. The worst sin for a blessed couple, he said, is to neglect or reject their heavenly responsibility to bear children. The message left us all with a deeper appreciation and respect for our marriages and our future. Both Mr. Kim and Rev. Kwak sang for us, and then Mr. Kim led us in three hearty cheers for our True Parents, which ended the evening.