

## **Unificationists Prepare For Satellite Participation in the 2012 Unification Church Marriage Blessing**

Douglas Burton  
March 7, 2012

Unification Church members from around the world will pledge themselves to their partners in a sacramental wedding event in South Korea they call the “Marriage Blessing,” or simply the “Blessing.” They will be joined by clergy from a range of denominations and faiths and like-minded, previously married couples who will rededicate themselves to their marriage at the same event. Most of the 25,000 participants are “rededicating” their vows. Approximately 2,000 individuals are pronouncing their vows to their partners for the first time. The International Marriage Blessing event is the best known ritual of the Unification Church, founded in Seoul in 1954. Since 1992, the ceremony has welcomed participants from many faiths.

Unification Church ministers estimate that 165 individuals from the USA are registered for the Blessing. Most of the couples are second-generation Unificationists, which means that their parents were matched and married by Reverend and Mrs. Moon. The church expects 64 out of the 165 to go to Korea, and of these, 30 are candidates who have registered for “True Parents’ Matching,” which means that they are requesting that Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon suggest their spouses.

The March 24, 2012 International Marriage Blessing ceremony will take place in a stadium near the shores of picturesque Cheong Pyeong Lake, approximately 70 miles east of Seoul,

Satellite-blessing events will take place on the evening of March 23, 2012 at the following four locations: the Manhattan Center (311 W. 34th St., in New York City, NY 10001); the Denver Church Center (3400 West 14th Ave., Denver, CO 80204), Pasadena House (950 Holly Vista Drive, Pasadena, CA 91105) and the San Leandro Church Center near San Francisco (2305 Washington Ave. San Leandro, CA. 84579). Reporters and camera teams for local news media are welcome to observe.

The members of the Unification Church believe that Father Moon and Mrs. Moon have been anointed by Jesus Christ to realize the vision embodied in his prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven, which includes exalting the institution of marriage through the large, public wedding celebration. The participants in the blessing believe that the Kingdom of Heaven on earth will result from families founded on true love, and that the bond of love and loyalty between husbands and wives is built over time by common efforts to live for the sake of others.

### **Unification Church Marriages Stand the Test of Time**



2,075 participants exchanged marital vows during Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon's mass wedding in Madison Square Garden in 1982.

In 1982, 2,075 couples were Blessed by Rev. and Mrs. Moon at Madison Square Garden in New York City. A Unification Church survey showed that in 1998, 83 p

In 1982, 2,075 couples were blessed by Father and Mother Moon at Madison Square Garden in New York City. A Unification Church survey showed that in 1998, 83 percent of those couples were intact. Rev. Phillip Schanker, director of the Blessed Family Ministry in the USA, estimates that 70 percent of those couples are intact today.

According to another church survey, 81 percent of couples married since 2004 are still together. Rev. Schanker points out that with improved education and preparation that commitment between spouses and Blessing education are getting stronger, and he says he is confident that the numbers will continue to improve in coming years.

There are 115 certified matching advisors in the Unification Church, who support young adults and their parents in the process of finding potential partners and building committed relationships. About 80 of these are active and are listed on [www.familyfed.org](http://www.familyfed.org). These advisors undergo training four times a year.

**What Others Say:**

Dr. Robert Epstein, one of America's most respected psychologists, has said of the blessing "My research, which I've been conducting since 2003, suggests that arranged marriage in the Unification Church works as well as arranged marriages in other cultures and certainly far better on average than mainstream marriages in the United States. With mainstream Hollywood-inspired marriages failing so badly in the U.S., I think we need to take a close look at other, more successful models for marriage. Unification Church and other arranged marriages can begin to teach us about the possibility of creating marriages in which two committed people work together over time to create stronger bonds – to build a love that gets deeper over the years."