

## 19th Annual True Family Values Banquet in Chicago

Kazuo Takami  
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“In my fifty years with True Parents, I never saw True Father so excited.” Speaking in Chicago during the 19th Annual True Family Values Banquet on Saturday, December 6, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, the North American Continental Director of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), shared a brief history of the True Family Values movement.



The first national level True Family Values conference for clergy was held in Washington, D. C. in June, 1996. True Father was delighted when he heard about the Christian ministers' enthusiastic response to the program. Ultimately this True Family Values initiative with ministers led to the establishment of the American Clergy Leadership Conference in ACLC in 2000 and to the 50-State Speaking Tour in 2001. The American Clergy Leadership Conference was established to bring America back to God's side, which is fundamental to establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth. Throughout the years, True Father and True Mother spoke at five of the nineteen True Family Values Banquets. On this most recent True Family

Values Banquet, Dr. Kim reminded the audience of True Mother's words, "You have the mission from God to save the American family."



Over 300 people attended the banquet at the Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel. Among the many prominent guests attending the banquet were Rev. Dr. Stephen J. Thurston, Pastor of New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church and past President the National Baptist Convention of America; Minister Willie Williams, a successful entrepreneur and Chicago Mayoral Candidate; and the Honorable Christine Winger, member of the Illinois House of Representatives. The Honorable Rodney Craig, the Hanover Park Mayor, and several other elected officials sent their congratulations. Also present were representatives from the National Headquarters of FFWPU, including Dr. and Mrs. Ki Hoon Kim; Dr. and Mrs. Michael Balcomb, National President of FFWPU; Dr. and Mrs. Michael Jenkins, Dr. Tyler Hendricks, Rev. David Rendell, and Rev. Tom Cutts, the National Executive Director of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC).



The Banquet Keynote Speaker was the Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, Jr. Co-Chairman of ACLC and Prelate and Founder of the Imani Temples African American Catholic Congregations. Quoting the Bible, Harry Potter and John Lennon, he emphasized the importance of the choices we make in life. He explained twelve points on how all people can live together as one family under God. He concluded by quoting Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The Emcee for the banquet was Minister Fannie Smith, who is a National Executive Board Member of the Women's Federation for World Peace. Rev. Helen Cooper, the Pastor of the Westside Center of Truth offered the invocation. Remarks were made by Rev. Kazuo Takami, the Midwest Co-Chairman of the American Clergy Leadership Conference; Dr. Ki Hoon Kim; Dr. Tyler Hendricks, President Emeritus of the Unification Theological Seminary and former President of the FFWPU; Pastor T. L. Barrett, Pastor of the Life Center; and Dr. Michael Jenkins, ACLC Chairman Emeritus.



“Many people on the stage spoke about the importance of uniting with one another, regardless of color,” said Elmo Guterrez of the Chicago Family Church, “which reminded us that we are all brothers and sisters in one family. My 3 children, ages 10-13, all attended the banquet with my wife Elizabeth and I. We come every year and do everything together: Study Divine Principle, cooperate with other churches, etc., so we have to show our children this is who we are and what we do. “



“I truly enjoyed the beautiful fellowship and sharing of God’s word,” said Apostle Maxine Williams, Pastor of Christian Unity Pentecostal Church. “The message given and the entire program made it such an enjoyable banquet. I most sincerely hope and pray that everyone can continue the great work they are doing and continue to have these annual banquets. I thank and praise God.”

After the keynote speech, the following people received the 2014 True Family Values Awards: Rev. William Martin (Pastor of Chance Ministry), Dr. Michael T. Ross, MD (President, Defending Our

Father's House, Detroit, Michigan), Mr. Takashi and Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama (Chicago Family Church) and Mrs. Janette Wilson (Philanthropist).

Prior to the banquet a True Family Values Forum with over 70 participants was held on the same morning. Panelists included Dr. Ted Williams (Prof. at Kennedy-King College, Chicago), Dr. Michael T. Ross (Medical doctor from Detroit, Michigan) and Dr. Sherion Weston (2014 National Parents' Day Award recipient) and Dr. Tyler Hendrick, President Emeritus of the Unification Theological Seminary and former National President of FFWPU. The speakers shared their insights into the current state of marriage and family in America, and offered solutions for rebuilding the family.



Immediately after the banquet, Dr. Michael Balcomb and Mrs. Fumiko Balcomb met with a group of Unificationists and later that same evening with young Unificationists in particular. Dr. Balcomb gave encouraging words from True Mother about parenting. The following Sunday at the Chicago Family Church, he gave a sermon and challenged everyone to make a list of their family and contacts, and to reach out to at least one of these people before the end of the year.

Congratulations to Rev. Takami and the Chicago Family Church on a very successful True Family Values Banquet and Forum. We can look forward to a glorious 20th Annual Banquet in Chicago next year.