

A brief history of the Unification Church in Europe

Circa 2015



The European Unification Movement began when missionaries, most of them of a European background, were sent from the United States where they had encountered the fledgling Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity - first to Germany in 1963 and '64, to the Netherlands and United Kingdom in 1965, and to Italy in 1966.

Peter Koch and his sister Barbara, Ursula Schuhmann, Paul Werner and his wife Christel, Elke Klawitter and a little later, Teddie Verheyen, Sandy Pinkerton and Doris Walder all came to Europe as pioneers of their new-found faith. They had all met the Movement on the West Coast of America through the theologian, Dr. Young Oon Kim, one of the first Korean missionaries of the Unification Movement to the western world.



It was Dr. Kim who served as an important bridge between cultures, translating the first version of The Divine Principle from Korean into English. Many young Americans and Europeans in San Francisco were spiritually guided to meet her and encountered the truth of Divine Principle under her loving guidance.

The first branch of the Holy Spirit Association in Europe was formally founded on the 11th December, 1964, in Frankfurt, Germany. Soon the humble apartments in Frankfurt and Essen were unable to provide space enough to house the steadily growing number of new members. In 1965, centres opened in other German cities, Paul and Christel Werner began the mission work in Austria, in 1966 Reiner Vincenz went to France and Ursula Schuhmann went to Spain. Within the next five years, True Parents were in a position to dispatch missionaries to pioneer or support mission work in ten other European countries; and

even in other continents.

Europe at this time, of course, was cruelly divided between the Communist East and the Democratic West. When new members began flooding into the Movement in Western European countries, True Parents' heart turned to the suffering peoples of Eastern Europe. True Father had fearlessly declared Communism to one of God's major headaches, but what could be done to overcome such a tyranny, holding hundreds of millions of people captive in the chains of fear and control?



In 1980, you sent in young volunteers under the code name 'Mission Butterfly'.

Already, in 1968, the first underground missionary, a sister, Emilia Steberl, with the support of Paul and Christel Werner had slipped into what was then Czechoslovakia. After several years of investment by Emilia - despite constant danger - a group of almost one hundred enthusiastic, Czechoslovakian followers had formed. In 1973, thirty were arrested by the regime. They were accused of "subversion of the republic" and sentenced to prison terms of between one and four years. One sister - Maria Zivna - died in prison, the first martyr to die while conducting missionary work in a Communist country, and in the following year another person lost his life in prison.



There are many names, people to thank for their sacrifice and endurance: Maria, Anton, Betka, Milos, Juraj, Erika, Vlado, and many others...

Until 1992 butterfly missionaries were sent out, mainly from Austria, under the guidance of Peter and Gertrud Koch, to work in underground mission. They experienced unspoken hardships but also many miracles of spiritual guidance and protection.

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF MISSION WORK IN EUROPE



True Father visited Europe for the first time during his world tour in 1965.

He toured Europe for about forty days from the first city they visited, Lisbon in Portugal, to the Vatican, and established nineteen holy grounds in sixteen nations.

"The Vatican is the concentrated hub of European civilization, the place where the essence of European civilization accumulated. Just as you intend, Father, we will bring the innumerably divided religious denominations and orders into oneness. So Father, please be with us." True Parents' devotion, with which Father offered his heartfelt prayer at the holy ground in the Vatican, has continued to this day."

True Parents have visited Europe more than twenty times and have guided the mission work with deep blessings and grace.



Europe is an important in the history of the providence of salvation.

This importance comes from Christianity having gained influence in Europe beginning from Rome after Jesus' death on the cross and from there propagating its gospel to the rest of the world. True Parents invested deep devotion into Europe and bestowed blessings on her.

In 1978, to begin the Home Church providence, they stayed for four months in London, England, during which they blessed 118 couples at the UK headquarters church. True Mother had been unable to accompany Father because she was in her last month of pregnancy, so True Father and Ye Jin nim officiated the Blessing Ceremony. Additionally, when True Parents stayed for some weeks in Germany in 1981 to invest in the machine tool industry, they officiated a Blessing Ceremony of thirty-nine couples and the engagement of 309 blessing candidates.



These two Blessing Ceremonies in Europe paved a new ground for supporting worldwide mission work as the blessed couples established themselves. The machine tool technology introduced into Korea at the time later became a model for technological equalization.

Members set out on mission work in communist Eastern Europe, where freedom of religion was scant. The advance base in this campaign was Austria.

During the Cold War, the easiest route to Eastern Europe was through Vienna. Members who set out as secret missionaries made preparations by learning their target country's language and offering devotions through all-night prayer vigils and through fasting.



In August 1968, Paul Werner, national leader of Austria, sent out Emilie Sterberl - a Slovakian who had been deported from her homeland as part of the outcome of World War II - as a missionary to Czechoslovakia. She had been a church member for just two years. At the time of her dispatch, Warsaw

Pact countries participated in crushing the reform movement's "Prague Spring" and occupied Czechoslovakia. When it became difficult to continue her mission work in Prague, Emilie Sterberl moved to Bratislava. While studying the Slovakian language at university, she witnessed to twelve people in two years. She was only able to remain until 1970. Alzbeta Daniskova then led the movement in Czechoslovakia and the membership grew. They had established thirty pioneer centers by 1973.



The local members carried out their missions under the most difficult of situations as the police put them under surveillance and hounded them. At the time, the number of members exceeded a hundred in the Czech Republic, and they had taken charge of carrying out underground mission work. In the end, however, the police arrested and imprisoned nearly thirty members. Among them, Maria Živná died a martyr in Bratislava Prison on April 16, 1974.

"Can you imagine the burden of heart I carried, being unable to hold them and save their lives?"
-True Father speaking of missionaries to communist countries, April 30, 1990:



You would not be able to fathom how many tears True Parents have shed and how many prayers they have offered as they thought of all the members who suffered in prison. In 1994, True Parents officially

recognized Marie Živná, who had died under mysterious circumstances in a cold prison cell at such a young and beautiful age as a Unification Church martyr.

True Parents appointed Peter Koch to succeed Paul Werner as national leader of Austria. After careful preparation, Austrian members under Peter Koch's overall guidance entered Eastern Europe beginning in 1980. The members carried out underground mission work at the risk of their lives in communist nations, such as Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, East Germany and even the Soviet Union.



Heaven will remember these missionaries, who risked their lives to set out on underground mission work even though most had never even met True Parents. Brave members carried out this mission campaign, named "Mission Butterfly," in the communist realm where surveillance and oppression were prevalent. Their mission work is a milestone in efforts to open up Eastern Europe to democracy.

Thanks to the sacrifices made by the missionaries at the time, the propagation of True Parents' teachings in the Soviet Union began. Unknown to others and without receiving glory for their efforts, they faithfully carried out their work. These dazzlingly beautiful butterflies will be remembered in the history of God's providence, shining in eternal glory.



In Europe, we can still see a great footprint from the march to end to the Cold War.

In 1985, in Geneva, Switzerland, at a time when the expansion of the communist realm had reached its zenith, the professors of the Professors World Peace Academy proclaimed the downfall of Soviet communism in accordance with True Parents' own prediction. Two years later, Hyo Jin nim led three thousand CARP members from across the world, who had come to appeal for the end of the Cold War at a demonstration in front of the Berlin Wall - a symbol of the Cold War and the division between East and West.

"God is eternal. Let us join our forces to break down this wall. Let us do it with love, with true love. True love can break through anything. Please join us and pray together with us. Let us pray for the people suffering under communism. Let us pray for the world."

We confidently believe that the passionate appeals and the prayers, jointly offered by Hyo Jin nim and three thousand young people, reached Heaven and set in motion the domino effect that would culminate in the collapse of the communist realm.



Rome – 03.27 (29. April 2011)

True Parents were also unjustly persecuted in Europe.

Beginning from the mid-1990s, a dozen nations in Western Europe refused to permit True Father to enter their countries for more than a decade. In 1985, eleven nations in Europe signed the Schengen Agreement to break down national boundaries and make it possible for their citizens to travel between these nations without a passport. With the birth of this agreement, they also created a blacklist of people not allowed to enter those nations. Nations opposed to True Parents included them in that blacklist for various reasons. Though the United Kingdom was not one of the nations bound by the agreement, just before True Father was to speak in London in 1995, they barred him from entering the country. Citing the unreasonable view that True Parents threatened national security, the Schengen Agreement nations blocked the way of Heaven's providence, hurting True Parents' hearts and causing European members to feel ashamed.



From 1992 True Mother toured to all parts of Europe and guided their revival.

In accord with the progress of the providence, True Mother proclaimed the new word and invested her whole self to lead others to God. Hosting such events as the Women's Federation for World Peace Inaugural Assembly, the Assembly to Proclaim the Completed Testament Age, and the inaugural assembly of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, she endured a grueling schedule of visiting one nation a day to convey God's Word.



On November 13, 1992, the day True Mother arrived in the United Kingdom, the Church of England finally allowed the ordination of women after years of debate. This incident symbolized the fact that the era of women had indeed arrived. During her European tour, True Mother sang the famous song "Santa Lucia" with authentic Italian pronunciation at a celebration following a speech. This was a beautiful gift to all the members on an occasion with a truly wonderful atmosphere, as if paradise had visited the earth. The members later testified that they saw with their own eyes the unbelievable love that connected True Parents as one.

During the two years of the transition into the new millennium, 1999 and 2000, True Parents held the Rally to Advance the Globalization of True Family and the assembly commemorating the beginning of the second forty-year course at the Holy Wedding Ceremony of True Parents. In 2005, they inaugurated the Universal Peace Federation in the United States and held inaugural assemblies in Europe. Even when True Parents arrived in Poland for the first event, it was impossible for them to deliver their speech in Western European nations, except for Switzerland and Ireland. To overcome this situation, European members offered devotions devoutly, which wrought miracles. After eighteen successive forty-day conditions had been offered during two and a half years throughout Europe's thirtyfive nations, the United Kingdom, which had been the first nation to deny True Parents entry, finally granted them permission to visit. Thereafter, in 2007, the Federal Supreme Court of Germany ruled that putting True Parents on the Schengen List had been unconstitutional. Finally, after more than a decade, True Parents were free to travel to any country in Europe.



True Parents' European tour fostered progress and development in various aspects.

In particular, during True Parents' speaking tour in 2006, they were welcomed with appreciation by leaders in Eastern European countries, including President Moisiu of Albania. The barriers that had hindered the development of the providence until then had been broken down. Following that, in 2009, we held the Peace Cup football tournament in Spain and in 2011 True Father proclaimed the Word as God's Substantial Self, despite the strain on his health.



In Switzerland, a permanently neutral state, True Parents stayed for quite a while in 2005 and 2006, where they delivered a speech at the United Nations' Geneva Headquarters offices and offered devotions in the Alps. In addition, Switzerland is a blessed land where, after the declaration of the Foundation Day of Cheon Il Guk in 2013, True Mother offered devotions on Alpine peaks. Gathering the resolve of all Unification Church family members worldwide for success in Vision 2020, True Mother offered devotions at the summits of twelve mountains. Her prayers for world peace and the salvation of all people, which echoed throughout the Alps, became the driving force behind activities in the Cheon Il Guk era that are now being led by European members.



1995. 09.30 European Blessing Ceremony, Camberg Training Center, Germany, 104 people from 20 countries

There were several successful business and networking ventures by True Parents in Europe, including machine tool companies; fishing and boat-building endeavors; a private kindergarten school in Vienna; as well as European CARP, a value-based college organization. Peacemaking initiatives like the Women's Federation for World Peace (1992); the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (1996); and the Universal Peace Federation (2005) were also developed. True Parents started to focus their global ministry on efforts to promote inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and reconciliation; peace-building relief work; character education; and God-centered family values. True Parents could foresee that the end of Communism would not bring world peace in an instant.