



## Family Federation for World Peace and Unification – Europe & Middle East

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### Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the 8 Couples Blessed in Essen, Germany, March 28 1969

Fifty years ago today, our True Parents came to Germany and performed the first Marriage Blessing Ceremony to be held in Europe, in what was to become part of the International ceremony for 43 Couples. At the time, True Father himself was still in his late 40s, and True Mother was a young woman still in her 20s. Those who were blessed on that day were the pioneers of the European Unification Church Movement, men and women of great faith who went on to offer many years of service and dedication to our Heavenly Parent and True Parents, both in Europe and later overseas.

Of those eight couples who were blessed in Essen, exactly half of the participants are still alive, and half have ascended and are now in the spirit world. There are—

- Two couples where both spouses are alive (the Kunkels and the Vanderstoks)
- Four where one spouse has ascended (the Koch, Werner, Orme, Verheyen families)
- Two where both spouses have already ascended (the Vincenzes and the Porters)

Six of these eight ascended in the United States, far away from the country of their birth, and Doris Orme, an American, ascended in Great Britain. Only one, Peter Koch, ascended in his home country. *(The Seonghwa details can be viewed by clicking on the underlined hyperlink next to their name)*

True Parents always taught us that love is eternal, the most precious thing throughout heaven and earth for both God and for ourselves, saying:

“The invisible love is the greatest among all kinds of love. It would be no fun at all if love were visible. Since love is invisible, it can be the highest, widest, and deepest. Some say love is like the Rocky Mountains or like the Niagara Falls. Those are correct similes. The invisible God is precious because invisible love is precious. It is true that we have to enter the state of the complete absence of ego in order to find God. God lives deeply and quietly in the invisible world rather than in the visible world where we live.”

Today our European family pauses to offer our thanks and congratulations to these pioneers of faith, whether in heaven or on earth, and our sincerely best wishes to their families. We all join together in offering gratitude to the True Parents who gave to us all the most precious gift of the Holy Blessing!

Happy Golden Anniversary!

Michael and Fumiko Balcomb,

Regional Group Chair, Europe and the Middle East



*The eight couples with True Parents on their Blessing Day. From the back left:*

<b>Husband</b>	<b>Residence</b>	<b>Wife</b>	<b>Residence</b>
Gerhard Kunkel	Frankfurt, Germany	Romana Maierhofer	Frankfurt, Germany
Dennis Orme	Bedford, UK	Doris Walder	<u>Ascended, UK, 2016</u>
Teddy Verheyen	New York, USA	Pauline Philips	<u>Ascended, USA, 2008</u>
Martin Porter	<u>Ascended, USA, 2013</u>	Marion Porter*	<u>Ascended, USA, 2006</u>
Johann van der Stok	Netherlands	Elke Klawiter	Netherlands
<i>Paul Werner</i>	<u>Ascended, USA, 2008</u>	Christel Werner	Dusseldorf
<i>Peter Koch</i>	<u>Ascended, Austria, 1984</u>	Gertrud Güse	Maryland, USA
Reiner Vincenz	<u>Ascended, USA, 2015</u>	Barbara Koch	<u>Ascended, USA, 2016</u>

\* This photo shows Dawn Faroni, Martin's first match