

The Fourth All-German Festival

Fritz Piepenburg

June 7 – 9, 2014

Neumuehle, Bad Camberg, Germany



German members enthusiastically received Rev. Young Hwi Kim.

After weeks of meticulous preparation, the fourth All-German Festival took off at our Seminar House Neumuehle, about fifteen kilometers from the small city of Bad Camberg. Thanks to True Mother's generous grant and the successful sale of the other seminar house in Schmitten, Seminar House Neumuehle is now almost completely restored and ready to function as a center of education especially for our young generation. European regional president, Rev. Young Shik An, has established a new European headquarters in the main house at Neumuehle and was able to watch all preparations at close hand. True Parents had stayed in Neumuehle on four separate occasions -- in October 1975, in June 1981, when they conducted a matching and a Blessing Ceremony; in November 1989 and in April 1990, having come straight from the historic World Media Conference in Moscow.

Fortunately the weather was perfect and thus some six hundred people -- members, ambassadors for peace, other friends and guests enjoyed the Pentecost weekend full of activities and events over a period of three days. (Fifty days after Easter, is the Monday holiday called Pentecost, celebrating the Holy Spirit's descent on Jesus, described in John 1:32–33. The Sunday of Pentecost weekend is sometimes called Whitsun in reference to many people that choose to be baptized on that day and wear white for the occasion.)

Sports Festival

Saturday was dedicated to a sports festival, mainly, but not exclusively, for our young people, both men and women. The competition was fierce but fair, with live commentators, background music and lots of noisy support from onlookers. The community of Giessen, just north of Frankfurt, won most of the competitions, such as soccer, dodge ball and Frisbee.

The southern region (including Stuttgart, Munich and Nuremberg) won the volleyball tournament and the northern region (including Hamburg, Hannover and Berlin) the relay. The winning teams were honored on Sunday evening. Between breaks, everybody joined in Zumba dancing -- something new, especially for the elderly.

Just before lunch, the All-German Festival opened with greetings from Dieter Schmidt, national leader of Germany, Rita Seewald, president of German WFWP, Rev. An our regional president, and (the highlight of the opening ceremony) Young Hwi Kim, three-time national leader of the Korean church, who had been staying in Neumuehle for the previous four days. Other activities in the afternoon included a guided hike to nearby Gnadenthal Castle, dancing classes and a seminar on "maintaining good health" conducted by a medical doctor.

After dinner, Rev. An presented True Parents Award 2014 to fifteen recipients from Germany, as well as Cheon Il Guk citizenship cards to all ten community leaders in a short but beautiful ceremony.

This was followed by a PowerPoint presentation on True Parents' eleven visits to Germany. Following this, everyone, holding a lit candle, went up to the holy ground for prayer and meditation. We finished the day there in a wide circle around the two trees.



Participants in the fourth All-German Festival express their winning spirit.

Honoring Early Members

After Hoon Dok Hae in the morning, everyone prepared for a large outdoor Sunday Service starting at 10:00 am. Our band comprising second-generation musicians set the stage with songs, including a workshop song written by one of our HARP members. Dieter Schmidt gave a moving sermon, "It is not finished yet," calling upon the audience to leave the past behind and make a fresh start toward fulfilling the goal of Vision 2020.

In the afternoon, we began our Open Day program, to which local government officials and people of the neighboring village of Beuerbach had been invited. Both the mayors of Huenstetten (of which Neumuehle is a part) and of Bad Camberg came as guests of honor. Each brought a gift on the occasion of the reopening of the seminar house.

Karl-Christian Hausmann, vice-president of the German Family Federation, led the program. Heinz Schaus, president of the Bad Camberg City Parliament, remarked in his address that God is beyond religious denomination and not confined to only the Catholic or Protestant branches of Christianity. He brought a large clock as a gift to be hung on the wall of the seminar hall. Wolfgang Diehl, deputy mayor of Huenstetten, elaborated on the time, when in 1973 the Unification Church purchased Neumuehle. People of nearby Beuerbach were wondering who the new owners were, especially since the road leading through the property up to the village was then closed to the public. He explained that the local government now very much appreciates the new open policy of the house, in which people can freely visit and even rent the facilities for conducting their own seminars or celebrations. He presented a book, *Six Thousand Years of history in Beuerbach*, and a glass tablet depicting the eight communities (including Beuerbach) that now belong to Huenstetten.

Dr. Marko Frenschkowski, a protestant theologian and professor of comparative religion, then took the podium, stating in quite personal terms why he likes to work with the Family Federation and UPF. In terms of inter-religious dialogue, according to Dr. Frenschkowski, the mainline churches can learn something from the small Unification Church. "We have learned to deal in much more relaxed way with new religious movements. There is lots we have in common."

The well-known soprano Seiko Lee rendered two songs in German at the end of the event. The mayor of Bad Camberg liked this small lady from whom such a brilliant voice emanates, so much that on the spot he invited her to give a concert in the city's public hall. Later, she performed for another full hour in front of an enthusiastic audience.

About forty people had walked over the hill from Beuerbach to have a look at the new premises of our seminar house. They were invited earlier by folders passed out to every household by our HARP members. After coffee and cake, they received a guided tour in and outside of the two buildings.

The first order of business in the evening was announcing the winning teams from the sport competitions and awarding them with trophies. Winners of a competition on creating a logo for Neumuehle were then announced and presented with prizes.

The evening was dedicated to honoring the founding members of the German "Society for the Unification of World Christianity," as it was called fifty years ago. Representing the founding members, who signed the original registration documents, were Ursula Schuhmann, Christel Werner and Johan van der Stok, husband of Elke Klawitter. Gertrud Koch wrote a nice letter of greetings on the occasion of this ceremony. Reiner and Barbara Vincenz unfortunately could not join the celebration for health reasons. Fritz Piepenburg, vice-president of the German Family Federation, led the program, first honoring the missionaries, who were sent out from Germany in 1972, pioneering other European nations, others in 1973 especially to the United States and yet more in 1975 to nations all over the world. Then the founding members were given time to talk about the early days and how they met the church. They were finally presented with flowers and a certificate of honor and gratitude.

Special Emissaries, Special Lecture

Meanwhile many other European leaders had arrived at Neumuehle for the inauguration of the two special emissaries to Europe, Prof. Lan Young Moon, special emissary to Eastern Europe and Rev. Kwan Kee Sa, special emissary to Western Europe. Prof. Moon was introduced by Caroline Handschin, president of WFWP Europe and vice-president of the European Family Federation. Rev. Sa was introduced by Mark Brann, UPF Europe's secretary-general. European Regional Leader An, explained more about the tasks of the special emissaries.

After the inauguration, Pres. Young Hwi Kim addressed an overflow audience, with three hundred people inside the hall and two hundred outside the hall. He gave an overview of the development of the Unification Church starting sixty years ago in Korea and presented a projection of our expected future development until 2020 and beyond. Brothers and sisters warmly welcomed him, giving him a long standing ovation. Everything was recorded as audio and video and will be made available to the public in due time.