

German Festival – A New Beginning for FFWPU

May 14-15, 2016. Neumuehle Seminar Center, Bad Camberg

This year's Whitsun meeting in Camberg was a 'German Festival' with the theme: 'A New Beginning for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification!' Although the weather was cool and changeable the event attracted more than 450 participants (190 1st gen., 239 2nd gen., 13 3rd gen., and 7 guests). The joy of reunion was everywhere tangible and visible.



The event started off at 9:00 a.m. on **Saturday** morning with **sports and fun-activities** for all ages on the meadows near the brook.

The big highlights were the football and the frisbee competitions in which five 2nd gen. teams from four German regions and one international team engaged with great enthusiasm - accompanied by cheers and much excitement on the part of the spectators.





Then in the afternoon, there were **four presentations** to give food for thought:

1. *Family Federation as an expression of God's guidance and love in our time* (Christian Hausmann)
2. *The mission as a constant factor in changing times* (Dieter Schmidt)
3. *Arrival in the Family Federation as a citizen of Cheon Il Guk* (Hildegard Piepenburg)
4. *The young Family Federation* (Hyo Man Noguchi)

The essence was that although there have been many changes since the founding of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity by our True Father in 1954, the goal - peace and unification of all mankind under God as parents - has stayed the same. We have passed from the time of the 'Last Days' of the fallen world to the 'First Days' of the Heavenly Kingdom, guided by our True Mother. Now is the time to build not only families but also 'tribes' who receive the Blessing. It is also a time of transition in which our younger generation members are taking more and more responsibility within the Family Federation. The importance of active membership (including the submission of application forms from the age of 18) and tithing was particularly stressed, in order that projects, events and work on the new website can be financed. The American website, which explains our goals in a contemporary and bold style, was demonstrated as an example.



The **World Café** that followed offered different topics which were discussed in rotating, changing groups. Thirty minutes were allocated to discuss each of the three questions:

1. *What is the task of the Family Federation?*
2. *How can we tackle Tribal Messiahship?*
3. *How can we hit the right nerve of our time?*

In each group, a designated moderator guided the brainstorming and despite the short time, there were fruitful discussions, interesting encounters, and very different viewpoints expressed - all competently moderated by Hyo-Man Noguchi.



In the 'Spirit Festival' that evening, gracefully led by two young ladies, Anja Wenzel and Sollinde Röhring, awards were presented to Rita Seewald in acknowledgement of her services as president of the Women's Federation for World Peace and to Gerhard and Sunny Mehli for their years of dedication as HARP Parents. Testimonies were given by two 1st and two 2nd gen. on the topic 'why I am part of the Family Federation'. There was atmospheric flute and piano music, songs with guitar and an African Christian song about the family of Jesus led by African protestant Pastor Lolowengo Botembe and his German wife Sigrun. A review in pictures of 50 years Unification Movement in Germany and the latest video about the history of True Parents were shown, prompting memories of past events and people and generating deep feelings of gratitude to Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

The audience greeted all the presentations with great enthusiasm and the room was filled to overflow. Those who lasted the course went to the Holy Ground for a unison prayer by candle light and ended the day with a 'chill-out', creatively dancing to lounge and club music and sustained by fruit cocktails and snacks.



On **Sunday**, the big **Whitsun worship service** took place in the hall, since inclement weather unfortunately ruled out an open air event.

Dieter Schmidt's sermon, *'a new beginning with the power of our creator'*, gave an interesting Pentecostal dimension to our festival! His comparisons of our brain with the workings of a computer gave colorful insights into the human psyche and the hope to fulfill our common desire of a healthy and active spiritual and physical life.

Afterwards many families registered for the task of Tribal Messiahship and placed a flag in their hometown on the large map of Germany. The collection of 1,200 € will be used for the building of a terrace behind the hall.



At lunchtime, the large wood oven was put to good use. The pork roast was prepared here and the nearby information stands - the Women's Federation, the Blessed Family Department, the International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF), the DP-brochure stand and the UC archives - profited from the heat!

Food was distributed outdoors and the rain kept its distance so that the HARP stand selling ice-cream and drinks was able to collect some money for its youth work.



In the afternoon, the **cultural program**, moderated by Marcel Lichner and Kyung-Yun Yoo, generated the atmosphere. To start off with, prizes were given for the 2nd and 1st places in the sport competition: 'NRW' and 'the North' in frisbee, and 'the South' and 'Gießen' in football. Five young people who are active in the Family Federation were given Wonmo scholarships by Rev Jun-Seok An. The 'guess the number of jelly beans' competition brought 400.- € for the IRFF school project in Central Africa and the happy winner was Mabida Domingos, the son of the Angolan General Consul in Frankfurt!



Solo contributions on piano and guitar from talented people of all ages, as well as the mixed-ages choir, Melody of Peace from Giessen, generated enthusiastic applause. The Evergreens, a revival of the 'Go World Brass Band' from the 1970's, and the percussion solo from Stefan Schmid, really got the room hopping! Inspired by accordion music and German folk songs, young and old left their seats for a Polonaise, and then those who had still not had enough were able to dance on to an encore from the band, while the others made their way for coffee and cake.





Goodbyes were prolonged and heartfelt, and big thanks go to all who worked hard in the preparations, both in front of and behind the scenes.



This was a hopeful kick-off and a successful new start for the Family Federation. The power of Camberg was once more palpable and we can only hope that we can transform all this power into energy and activities in our hometowns.

*Report by Magda Haugen and Hildegard Piepenburg. Translation by Catriona Valenta
Photos by Manfred and Benjamin Rauschert*

Some testimonies:

It has been a long time since I felt as good as I did at the German festival! During the spirit festival and at the Holy Ground, I was filled with a deep feeling of gratitude and memories of the early times, when we were carefree and young and full of enthusiasm... and we are still here, now even with our children. The worship service and culture festival were a lot of fun and I felt a deep unity between the brothers and sisters, just as Dieter said in his sermon: 'God let the rain fall (during the service), so that we could be closer together in the hall'. (Heidi Wakayama, music coordinator)

This was a very important and historical event to launch FFWPU in Germany. The concept was good and the event well prepared. It was well attended by both first and second generation members, and such a meeting greatly helps with sharing and eventually handing over responsibility to the next generation. I myself got most enjoyment out of cheering for the youth during the sporting events! (Makoto Noguchi, Düsseldorf community leader, director of Jeong Song Hwe for Japanese members in Europe)

Our guests from Berlin were very inspired by the atmosphere and the content of the festival. The African pastor and his German wife, a teacher, were overwhelmed by our young people in whom they see a great potential. This is the future, they feel! They brought a guest from Togo who is a member of a Christian spiritual group and had not known our movement before. He studies the Divine Principle in three languages now, which he feels does enrich his Christian spirituality greatly. (Bernd Flieger, Berlin community leader)

I was really happy to see members whom I had not seen for a long time. I enjoyed Dieter's sermon very much, and what I got out of it was that I should scan my spirit again and urgently activate the anti-virus program on my spiritual hardware! I found it also really great that the Band was there and at the end played animated music which inspired us to 'rock-out'. Even my wife danced! I will for sure be back next year. (Herbert Beyer, Düsseldorf, DP workshop lecturer)

For me, the highlight was the 'North' winning the Frisbee competition! On this occasion, we could experience just how it is when weather conditions do not permit everything to take place outdoors. But I found the atmosphere in the spirit festival, the worship service and the cultural program to be warm and intensive because we were all in close proximity to each other. A big praise, of course, goes to the kitchen staff for the excellent catering. (Ulrich Ganz, UPF representative and community leader, Hamburg)

The spirit festival on Saturday evening was excellent, the atmosphere high. I particularly liked the walk up to the holy ground with candles and the prayer and song in a big circle. It was a splendid idea to have a cocktail party and rock out afterwards so we could celebrate well until midnight! (Anja Wenzel, board member, German CARP)

The team work of 1st and 2nd generation members within the organizing committee was excellent. Our technical staff received positive feedback from the musicians. All the festival staff worked very hard behind the scenes, so everything ran smoothly. Although there are various points to be improved next time, the organization was praised particularly by 2nd gen. who enjoyed the festival very much. (Marcel Lichner, board member, German CARP)