

Reiner Vincenz, a Unification Saint is laid to Rest

Michael Balcomb
January 26, 2015



The Seonghwa (ascension) of Rev. Reiner Vincenz, held at the Wyndham Garden Schaumburg Chicago Northwest Hotel in Schaumburg, IL on Saturday, January 24th 2015, was a joyful and victorious celebration of a life well lived in the service of God and True Parents. Almost 300 members from the Chicago Family Church were joined by Unificationist leaders from around the United States and the world who had come to pay their respects to one of the great saints of our early church. The ceremony was broadcasted live throughout the world. Over 8,000 people attended this ceremony via internet.



True Mother personally bestowed the special grace of an International-level Seonghwa ceremony upon Reiner, who received the Marriage Blessing in 1969 at the 43 Couples' Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony. He is survived by his wife Barbara, daughter and son-in-law Leena and Jario Vincenz-Gavin, and granddaughter Mirelle.



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, North America Continental Chair, told the congregation in his Seonghwa message that True Mother had been meditating and praying for Reiner and his family in recent days, remembering him as a courageous missionary in France and later as one of True Parents' most trusted international leaders. In addition to the special ascension calligraphy, "A Victorious Son returns to the Heavenly Palace," True Mother also sent their daughter, Leena, a pearl necklace made from three pearls found in a single oyster True Mother handpicked in Hawaii as a special gift of encouragement.



"The Seonghwa ceremony is a time for joy and appreciation, not sorrow," said USA Family Federation president Dr. Michael Balcomb, who served as the Officiator. "True Father taught us that we all go through three stages of life: 40 weeks in the womb, surrounded by water; 100 years or so on earth, breathing air, and then an eternity breathing love in our true home, the spiritual realm in the presence of our Heavenly Parent. So let us honor and encourage Reiner with our happy memories."

After joining the Unification Church in 1964, Reiner, who later served in Germany, Britain, Japan, Korea and the United States, volunteered to be a missionary in France. There, he persevered for three years

before finding his first spiritual child and convert, the late Henri Blanchard who was later to serve as president of the French church for many years. Together they planted seven churches and raised 100 new Unificationists in France before being called by True Parents to work in the United States. True Mother sees him not only as a faithful individual, but also as a representative of many sacrificial and dedicated people, especially European Unificationists, who took on life-threatening, underground missions in communist countries in the early days. Slide shows and historical materials from Rev. Vincenz's personal archives chronicling his life, were on display for all to view. This was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to understand and inherit his life of faith and his love for our True Parents and Unification families worldwide.



“Rev. Vincenz was the truly spiritual father of our nation, every bit as important to us as Joan of Arc,” said Mr. Patrick Martin-Prével, who came from Paris with Mrs. Hilde Blanchard. “We owe him everything, and we are deeply grateful.” Mrs. Genie Kagawa of UPF International who was herself the fourth person to join the Unification Church in France, vividly remembered Reiner’s spiritual advice: “Be humble, serve and sacrifice so you can make Satan, who can do none of those things, so uncomfortable that he has to leave!”



Dr. Dieter Schmidt, from Germany, offered the Invocation and read a message from European Continental Chair, Rev. Paul Ahn. Rev. Franco Famularo of Canada, who served with Reiner in Germany and England, offered some personal recollections of Reiner's years at the helm of the German movement and as one of the leaders of the 1978-1980 European evangelical crusade to Great Britain.



Mr. Farley Jones, a former Unification Church President in America, and current member of the Supreme Council of the United States, read a moving message of congratulations from Dr. Bo Hi Pak, who led the IOWC (International One World Crusade) working closely with Reiner in Japan and Korea, culminating with the Yoido Island rally of 1.2 million people in 1975. "True Parents really trusted Reiner, especially in times of crisis," said Dr. Pak in his letter. "True Father told me: If there is a difficult task or mission to be done, I'll give it to Reiner Vincenz. He will do it. He is such a loyal, faithful, and hard-working man. He always brings one victory after another."



The Vincenz family asked Rev. Phillip Schanker, who served for many years as director of the both the Blessed Family and Education ministries for FFPWPU USA, to share a contemporary testimony, wanting

the community to know something about the very real trials of the final years of Reiner's life as he wrestled with Parkinson's disease. "Today Reiner is released from the prison of his rebellious body," said Schanker, who supported and counselled the family, "but he is also freed from the spiritual challenges of doubt and regret we all must face. He always felt that he hadn't done enough to serve God and True Parents, and almost to the end, held onto the dream of buying a Winnebago mobile home so he could go on one last missionary tour with his family to save America. It was only in this last year that he was able to come to peace with the realization that his true legacy lives on through his family, his children, and the hundreds and even thousands of men and women that he helped bring to True Parents."



Following the Seonghwa ceremony, the Won Jeon (burial) service was held at the Evergreen Cemetery in Barrington, a Northwest suburb of Chicago. To the great but unspoken relief of the congregation, the weather was unusually mild for January, where temperatures can often fall twenty degrees below zero. "We are celebrating the completely victorious life of a true son of True Parents," said Dr. Michael Jenkins in his Won Jeon address. "As Reiner goes to work with True Father in heaven, let us all promise to 'March On' to complete the work ahead of us."



After cheers of “Eog Mansei” led by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, all Reiner’s family and friends gathered for a joyful reception at a nearby restaurant where further testimonies were shared, including messages from the British Church President, Rev. Jack Corley, close family friend Linda Nagai, and several of those who had worked with Reiner on the IOWC.



“Thank you all for coming here today,” said Pastors Jario and Leena Vincenz-Gavin on behalf of all the family. “You helped us create an atmosphere that was bright and uplifting, and we all felt Reiner’s spirit very close and clear. We are again grateful to True Parents for their love, grace and blessing upon us all.”

