

Peace Blessing Festival in Hong Kong

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By FFWPU/UPF Hong Kong: We held a Peace Blessing Festival in Hong Kong on January 17, 2016 with 160 participants. Three religious leaders (Confucius – The Hong Kong Confucian Academy Christianity – The Lord Grace Home for the Aged and Buddhism – Western Monastery) also joined to give their blessing to the couples.

Acknowledgement from Guests:

Mr. Chan Yung Wai, the representative of Dr. Tong Yun Kay from the Hong Kong Confucian Academy, and his wife: The husband said he liked the holy water and indemnity stick ceremonies the most. He felt the holy water cleanse his mind, and he literally felt himself being calmed when he was sprinkled. He also found the indemnity stick very significant as he really felt like the resentment between their couple was resolved at that moment.

Dr. Li Siu Kei, Chairperson of the Fuzi Association which promotes Chinese culture, **and his wife:** Dr. Li said he found the indemnity stick part special as it was his first time to “hit” his wife. But they felt the event was very meaningful. Mrs. Chan said she felt very touched to see couples of various age groups receiving the Blessing together, especially the elderly.

Prof. Lilian Lui, the honorable Executive Director of The Hong Kong Association of Senior Citizens, and her husband: She expressed several times that she felt it was a very meaningful event, and she liked it because it promoted family values. She was also impressed by the cooperation of FFWPU members in making such an event happen. When we told her it was because many of them had gone through the Blessing and were grateful and wanted to share it with others, she was happy and expressed that she should join a Blessing in Korea in the future.

All VIPs were so impressed by the unity and passion of all members of FFWPU to create such a beautiful event in Hong Kong. Especially they could see that our members are international and talented but loving Hong Kong very much and wanting to make it a joyful city; this made them feel ashamed of being native Hong Kongers and not doing more.

Mr. and Mrs. Chan, participants of the Blessing Ceremony invited by Mr. and Mrs. Lai Fook On: They found this event very meaningful. Mrs. Chan liked the hugging part as she felt it was very warm. They think they will be an even sweeter couple after this event.

“Blessed Hong Kong, Loving Families, Blessing Ceremony 2016”

After observing Holy Blessings in Thailand, FFWPU Hong Kong was inspired to host its own Holy Blessing ceremony. We determined to hold a Blessing event before Foundation Day 2016, as an offering to our Heavenly Parent and True Parents. The date was set for January 17, 2016 and we started our efforts with internal preparation, through two 40-day conditions of reading Blessing-related *hoon dok hae*. FFWPU Hong Kong echoed the theme and vision of creating a “Happy Hong Kong” by initiating a “Happy Family” movement in the city.



The UN's World Happiness Report, among other indexes, show Hong Kongers rating themselves as less and less happy in recent years. High housing costs and living costs, together with long working hours, put an enormous strain on individuals and even more so on families. Through community outreach, FFWPU called on couples and families to stand up and put strong and loving families first, by dedicating their own family to this ideal.

Hong Kong members invited their neighbors and friends to come and participate in the Blessing Ceremony. Pastor Namhi Hwang and Eve Lau reached out to community leaders and contacts of the Filial Piety Initiative, who strongly agreed with the need for such a movement and who were inspired by FFWPU's initiative.

Many community partners of FFWPU committed to join the event as guest speakers as well as participating couples to receive the Blessing. Rev. Lee Mo-fan, Director of the Lord Grace Home for the Aged, gave the Christian prayer blessing and brought 12 couples to participate. Mr. Chan Yung Wai from The Confucian Academy gave a Confucian blessing and also participated in the Blessing with his wife. A representative of Master Kwan Hsing from the Western Monastery chanted a passage from a Buddhist text to bless the participating couples. Congratulatory remarks were made by Dr. Li Siu Kei, Chairperson of the Fuzi Association; Mrs. Lilian Lui, the executive director of the Hong Kong Association of Senior Citizens; and Dr. Amen Lee, the founder of Happeace. Dr. Lee also contributed a beautiful reflection journal of his own design for each participating couple, which will be part of the 40-day education program following the Blessing.

Members brought their relatives and neighbors as well. There were some newly Blessed couples, as well as many previously married couples renewing their vows. In total, 25 couples gathered to receive the Blessing, as 32 friends, family and guests looked on.

The program began with a video of our marriage blessing activities, followed by the graceful and heavenly music of the church choir led by Kaoru Obara. The audience rose to welcome the officiators, Rev. and Mrs. Lee Ker Shung, the Regional Director of the Greater China Region, to the stage to lead the Blessing. Representative couples – one VIP, one elderly couple and one new couple – stood in front, while others gathered close behind to receive the One Heart holy tea and holy water blessing. The atmosphere was vibrant and joyful as couples hugged and held hands tightly. The various religious leaders then gave the interfaith prayer blessing for the couples.

Mr. Peter Poon explained the significance of the 40-day separation leading to the 3-day honeymoon period for couples to make a new start in their relationship. Those who committed to participate in the 40-day program received a reflection journal to focus them on attitudes of gratitude during this time of self-purification and renewal. The participants were attentive and supportive, and pledged to make a new start in their marriages. The Blessing event ended on a joyful note, with three cheers, and many guests and members expressed their happiness and gratitude for the Blessing event, and wished that we could have more Blessings in the near future.