

Hyung Jin Nim Finishes European Tour in the United Kingdom

August 31, 2010



This was the final stop on the European leg of our International church president, Rev. Hyung Jin Moon's, tour and the strong desire of the British church members was to make it the most memorable. From his touchdown with his wife Yeon Ah Nim at Heathrow airport on the evening of Sunday, August 29, till their departure on the evening of Tuesday, August 31, the couple was kept busy with a dizzying succession of events.

In fact, there turned out to be two Yeon Ah Nims in the party; we were privileged to also be able to welcome Choi Yeon Ah Nim, Hyo Jin Nim's wife, to the UK.

Arriving in Central London via the Heathrow Express, our guest's first port of call was the picturesque Kensington Gardens. Their destination, following a brisk walk through the rough grass, was one particular tree established as a 'Holy Ground' by True Father in 1965. It was 7:30 pm and they were welcomed by around seventy members, their singing breaking into natural applause.

After a short but intense prayer, laying their hands on the tree, the couple led the crowd to where more than four hundred blue and white balloons, each emblazoned with the Cheon Il Guk symbol, were tethered. This was the start of a great 'Balloon Race'. The objective was to see which would travel the furthest - maybe even to one of the countries they had just visited - and each to raise funds for the restoration of the movement's headquarters in Lancaster Gate. It was a magical moment as the cloud of balloons trailed off into the sky high above London.



Praying at the Holy Ground which True Father has established in London, Hyde Park on 15th July 1965

The high spot of the visit was undoubtedly the showcase event on Monday, when Hyung Jin Nim had the opportunity to address an over capacity crowd of 700 members who congregated from the length and breadth of the country to welcome their International President and receive his words of inspiration and encouragement. The event was staged in the splendour of the Chelsea Old Town Hall, a fine example of late Regency architecture on the celebrated Kings Road. Such was the number of those seeking to attend this event that the adjacent Small Hall also had to be pressed into service to handle the overflow from the Main Hall and Gallery.

The meeting was hosted by Jack Corley and preceded by a musical performance featuring the best of 1st and 2nd generation talent. The main message of Hyung Jin Nim on this - as on other occasions - was to emphasize the importance of prayer and the attitude in which it is offered. To this end he used his detailed scholarly knowledge of theology and religious texts and his practical experience of building bridges with faith leaders from a diverse range of world religions. For example, he pointed out how Jesus' words in the Lord's Prayer were often understood by Christians as a liturgical prescription, whereas he suggested they should rather be seen as a template: opening our prayer with praise for God ("Hallowed be Thy Name"), seeking to understand and fulfill His will ("Thy will be done") and only then addressing our own concerns and wishes (of which God is already well aware!). He praised the Muslims' attitude in this regard, both in that they always start off their prayers with the assertion that God (Allah) is great, and in that they defend intently their right to profess their faith in the face of any type of criticism.

Another area where he made favorable comparison of Islam with other religions was in their ability to distil their core belief into a simple formula: that there is one God (Allah) and Mohammed is His prophet. Hyung Jin Nim proposed a similarly succinct formula for Unificationism: that we should inherit the true love of God. Finally, given the high standard practiced by many of the practitioners of other faiths, we should remember that, if we wish to testify to others about True Parents and the Divine Principle, we should seek first to establish a higher standard of spiritual discipline, so that they might be attracted by what we seek to offer them as something beyond what they already have found.

While being frank about the difficulties our movement has faced in recent years and the decline in church attendance in years gone by, Hyung Jin Nim was upbeat about future prospects. First, he explained that the reason he had not travelled around the world earlier to meet members was that he wanted to build a personal spiritual foundation and to reverse some of the declines experienced by the Unification movement in Korea. In this regard he was able to report success, with the membership there more than doubling in the last few years; also the Korean movement was now a net contributor to the Japanese rather than a dependent as it had been for so long. Second, he reminded us to take pride in the fact that no other religious movement at any time in history had seen anything like our level of success in the lifetime of its founder as ours. This assertion won the warm applause of the audience. Here and in many other ways Hyung Jin Nim showed that he was very much in tune with the hearts and minds of the membership.

The meeting closed with the customary cutting of a celebratory cake. In addition, President Song and Rev. Simon Cooper were presented, by Hyung Jin Nim, with gold chains in recognition of their committed service to the Providence in Europe and in the UK. Finally, the visiting party took the time to allow each of the hundreds of families present to have an intimate photograph taken with them in a marathon photo shoot.

Later that afternoon, he visited one Blessed Family in South London, and spent many hours sharing with them about their life. The true family really lifted up the family with their genuine love and open heart. Before he left, Hyung Jin Nim gave them some spiritual practices to do as a family which involved making time for each other and recognizing each other's blessings and good qualities. At the end, he wrote a beautiful message for them in Chinese characters.

Each day of the visit started with a meditation and exercise session at 3 am, followed by Hoon Dok Hwe at 5am. For those who took part, it was hard to imagine how Hyung Jin Nim was able to keep this up on a daily basis. At the first session, testimonies were presented by David Earle about the success they had enjoyed through building up interfaith activity in Birmingham, and by Kenko Fuji about the suffering he had experienced in his youth while his parents offered themselves in frontline missions around the world, and how he had overcome this to succeed both in his studies and in witnessing to fellow students through his standard of service and love. Many in the audience struggled like Kenko to hold back their tears. This latter testimony impressed Hyung Jin so much that he referred to it in his main address later that day.

Another important purpose served by this visit was to give Hyung Jin Nim the opportunity as International President of the UPF to propose at the Houses of Parliament its vision for the inauguration of an Inter-Religious Council at the United Nations. An eager group of religious and political leaders and Ambassadors

for peace turned out at the Boothroyd Room in Portcullis House to hear presentations by Hyung Jin Nim and representatives of the faiths of Christianity and Islam. Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths, and Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid JP, Chairman of the Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony, both expressed their support for the initiative, after which Hyung Jin Nim spelled out the proposal in more detail, emphasizing the pioneering work his father, the Rev Sun Myung Moon, had done throughout his life towards this goal. His busy schedule did not allow him to stay for the conclusion of the meeting (which carried on in heated discussion) as he was whisked away for a final session briefing the press in the form of Forbes magazine and The Sun newspaper about his work as the International president of the Unification Church, before taking the train to the airport, and returning to Korea.

We are deeply grateful for their visit and are now making the first step to respond to all the guidance and inspiration that we received throughout these momentous few days.

Contributed by Colin Turfus, from the UK



Simon Cooper, national leader for UK, and Rev. Yong Cheol Song, continental director for Europe receiving the necklace with the symbol of the UC.



Hyung Jin Nim praying with the Unification family members.



Visiting Blessed Family George and Anna Maria Robertson, 6000 Couple



Hyung Jin Nim as Int'l President of the UPF presenting at the Houses of Parliament its vision for the inauguration of an Inter-Religious Council at the United Nations. A eager group of religious and political leaders and Ambassadors for Peace turned out at the Boothroyd Room in Portcullis House.



Hyung Jin Nim as Int'l President of the UPF presenting at the Houses of Parliament its vision for the inauguration of an Inter-Religious Council at the United Nations. A eager group of religious and political leaders and Ambassadors for Peace turned out at the Boothroyd Room in Portcullis House.



Four hundred blue and white balloons, each emblazoned with the Cheon Il Guk symbol, were tethered. This was the start of a great 'Balloon Race'. The object was to see which would travel the furthest and all to raise funds for the restoration of the Movement's headquarters in Lancaster Gate.