

Unificationists from all over Europe gathered in Vienna to hear True Mother's message

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Springtime with True Parents brings new hope and celebration among many European Unification communities. True Mother's European Tour kicked off on May 10, 2015 in Vienna, where longtime missionary and pioneer families were honored for their years of service. European Unificationist families from all over the continent gathered in Vienna to hear True Mother's message. In the grand spirit of the tour, the event in Vienna highlighted the 50 years of the European Unification Movement and its elders. Over 400 young professionals also attended the first European Cranes Club event with True Mother after her speech.



In the coming weeks, True Mother will meet with more than a thousand European Unificationists for a family reunion in major cities like Berlin, Paris, and London and she will publicly speak on May 11 at the United Nations Headquarters office in Vienna.

Attendees came from over 32 hours away, crossing mountains and seas to get there. A video of pivotal events spanning decades of True Parents' work and that of early Unificationists revealed the monumental task of outreach taken on by the Unification Movement in Europe.

Over 400 people then attended the Cranes Club gathering, a chance to network in the arts, humanities, medical and other professional fields. Each participant had the chance to announce their area of expertise, and took part in a group discussion in their respective fields.



In July of 1965, True Parents first came to Europe. They made a symbolic bridge between the homeland of Korea and the European continent, establishing Holy Grounds in 16 nations. Prior to their arrival, True Parents set the foundation for the Unification Movement in Europe by sending U.S. missionaries, many of whom had European backgrounds. Among them, Peter Koch and his sister Barbara; Ursula Schuhmann; Paul Werner and his wife Christel; Elke Klawitter; and Teddie Verheyen were sent to places like Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. All came as pioneers of their new-found faith, many under the guidance of Dr. Young Oon Kim, a Korean theologian and missionary herself in San Francisco. It was Dr. Kim who served as an important bridge between cultures, translating the first version of the Divine Principle from Korean into English.



This groundwork would later bear fruit in the face of rising Communism. Introducing a new expression of truth to European Christian culture was a challenge all its own. Europe at this time was also cruelly divided between the Communist East and the Democratic West. Undeterred, True Parents turned their heart toward the suffering people of Eastern Europe, held captive by fear and control. Young people, searching for meaning in their lives, responded as they were touched by the heart and logic of the Divine Principle. For many it was the answer they were desperately looking for.

Despite the inherent dangers, “Mission Butterfly,” an underground outreach operation in Communist countries, firmly took root. Many Unificationists risked their lives, some fatally so, to usher in a new truth. One underground missionary, Emilia Steberl, brought in nearly 100 new Unificationists in Czechoslovakia. Maria Zivna, another devoted missionary, was captured and later died in prison. There are many names and people to thank for their sacrifice and endurance. True Father said, “Each time I heard that one of our members had died in jail, my entire body froze ... When they died they suffered in my place ... I asked myself, ‘Is my life worth so much that it couldn’t be exchanged for theirs?’” Butterfly missionaries were sent out mainly from Austria until 1992.



The history of the Unification Movement in Europe also includes the International One World Crusades of the early 1970s, where more than 500 European Unificationists went out to serve the world as international missionaries in Japan, Korea, the U.S., and 120 other nations. They volunteered to leave their home countries behind—in many cases not returning home for decades—some choosing to settle permanently in their mission countries. They also were given an internal goal of overcoming cultural differences, to make unity between representatives of former enemy nations—a condition to eventually return humanity to our

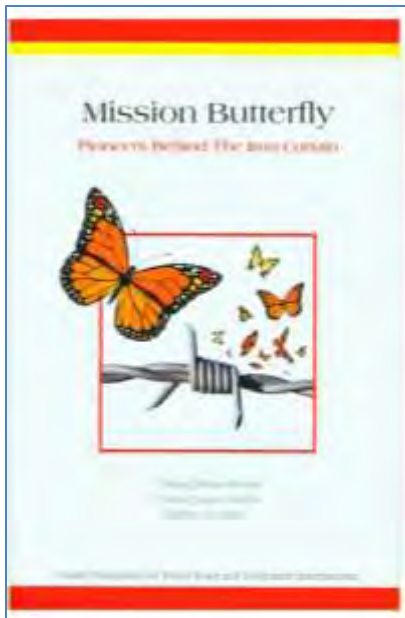
intended state as “One Family under God.”

In addition, there were several successful business and networking ventures by True Parents in Europe, including machine tool companies; fishing and boat-building endeavors; a private kindergarten school in Vienna; as well as European CARP, a value-based college organization. Peacemaking initiatives like the Women’s Federation for World Peace (1992); the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (1996); and the Universal Peace Federation (2005) were also developed. True Parents started to focus their global ministry on efforts to promote inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and reconciliation; peace-building relief work; character education; and God-centered family values. True Parents could foresee that the end of Communism would not bring world peace in an instant.



As the Berlin Wall came down, a feat True Parents anticipated, new-found freedoms did emerge in Europe, as well as suppressed conflicts. Given True Parents’ altruism and the noble cause for which they have invested so much, it is hard to comprehend why such strong opposition, even at a governmental level, would arise in Europe. Despite this, European Unificationists joined together in prolonged efforts to win various legal challenges and expel unjustified accusations in their countries.

Education programs like STF and DONE also developed for young European Unificationists, as well as various workshops, retreats, and leadership training for people of all ages. All these and more have been developed to build a sense of community that can nurture and guide the next generation and support their families in this task. In 2011, on their final tour of Europe together, True Parents proclaimed that “finally the beginning point for God’s ideal on earth had been established. God’s word, through the unity of God, our Heavenly Parent, and the Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind had become substantial.”



Through this short retrospective, many Unificationists are reminded how much has been invested in the European Movement over the past 50 years. True Parents' achievement is extraordinary; they have continually broken the mold in terms of what religious leaders are expected to do. Many Unificationists have followed True Parents for 20 or 30 years, some for more than 40 or 50 years. This tour salutes them—for holding on to their faith when it was attacked, for not giving up on the ideals that won their commitment, for every offering they made in this work as pioneers together.

The book titled *Mission Butterfly* is a compilation of the accounts of young members of the Unification Movement who went to Communist countries in Eastern Europe to work there as “underground” missionaries during the time period from 1980 to 1992. It is available for purchase HSA Books.

