

## The 2017 European Blessing Family Department Annual Meeting (Highlights of Susan Crosthwaite's experience, including a wonderful exercise at the end)

Three days from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October were spent by 45 delegates in Neumühle, Camberg, Germany.



*the UK team in attendance this year*

Three things impressed me most:

1. The quality of guidance and programs shared with us to help us nurture ourselves and those in our care and area of influence.
2. The inspiration from stories shared among us all during the breaks and groups which show in reality how God and loving people are working to build communities and solve dilemmas and problems by using and/or creating really GREAT helpful programs.
3. Dr Mike Balcomb's encouraging words about the future view of sharing True Parents' Marriage Blessing.

Neumühle is such a delightful place both spiritually and in terms of the natural environment. Every time I walked up the hill to the trees that True Father planted in 1975 I received some very helpful ideas and sentiment for me to bring home. The songs we sang deeply enriched our souls; thanks to our director **Dr David Hanna** for those. With David's initiation Parents' Matching Support Team Co-ordinator, **Jane Toresen** and ESGD Representative **Patrick Hanna** MC'd and coordinated so creatively and clearly before-hand and throughout the 3 days. Behind the scenes our secretary **Margaret Staudinger** organised many things: communicating with us all and providing materials during the Meeting.

Presentations included:

**David Hanna:** Essentials of 'Real Love' by Dr. Greg Baer and clips from his online counselling sessions. As Director of our department Dr Hanna also gave beautiful closing talk in which he quoted Augustine of Hippo who said, "Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you."

**William Haines:** 2 lectures on the theme of the Biblical Stories and healing relationships, "Reading Life Through the Principle; Healing the Family."

**David Perry** (France): "Living Without Casting any Shadows": a report about the High-Noon Settlement Conference of March 2017 in the USA, highlighting the problem of online pornography and masturbation that is causing suffering and even breakdown of marriages. Heidi Toresen ( 19 year old BC, Norway) spoke movingly via a video about the urgent need for us to face this issue and bring it out in the open.

**Kurt Sattleberger:** Original Energy Therapy, and Empathetic Communication:

**Hans Karlsson:** How to Support Young Couples

**Heidi Mayr** ( Austria): Guiding Young Couples before and after their Blessing

**Jane Toresen** (Norway): Raising very Young Children

**Lisa Janssen** (Holland): Communication for Family Closeness

**Susan Crosthwaite:** The Prepare/ Enrich Program, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Gen Matching System

**Sarah Zimmerman** (Germany): The Hyojeong Blessing Ceremony at Neumühle and pictures from the event.

**Hilde Wiemann** (USA): Strategies in Supporting People including Real Love – 2 sessions with fascinating and extremely helpful Q&A

**Yun A Johnson** (Denmark ): 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen delegate who has effectively used The Marriage Course in her community for young couples

**Patrick Hanna** (UK) and **Orlande Schenk** (Austria) spoke about their experience in the ESGD and practical plans for the next months:

- 24+Matching Convocation for parents and 24 yr. old and older BC's: November 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 2017 at [Seminarhaus Neumühle Camberg](#), Germany.
- PMConvocation in Spring (TBA)
- Next Blessing Preparation Workshop for 2<sup>nd</sup> Gens: December 7th-10th at [Seminarhaus Neumühle Camberg](#), Germany.

And there is very exciting news that ESGD has been safeguarding a fund which will become available next year for *national-level* BFD's to use for a 2nd Gen. Blessed Couples' Retreat.



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For your use and enjoyment I have printed up the Family Communication Exercise that Lisa shared.

Family Communication Exercise - 5 steps + 3 rounds of sharing.

1. sit quietly with your family members
2. one person takes the role of the guide
3. everyone takes a few deep breaths, forget all your worries and wait for something nice to happen
4. take a moment to get in touch with what you feel right now
5. Everyone write down 3 things you are feeling e.g. anxious, excited, afraid, hopeful.....

1st round: each person names the 3 feelings and the guide writes them down . Everyone listens to the 3 feelings being named by each person without commenting

2nd round: the guide reads each persons 3 things and we all listen to the person explain why they feel these things; only listening and no discussion

3rd round: the guide asks each person to share what are their wants and needs, e.g. "I need a hug", "I need more help from.....with this or that" "I want to go clothes shopping with Mum." " I want .....to spend more time with me."etc. and every/someone responds in action or words to those requests.

Finally there is free sharing.

I did it with a group of 6 people and it was really wonderful. After sharing we decided to pray hand in hand for each other's needs and wants to be cared for. The guide sang a song gently when she felt we were finished. I usually feel rather uncomfortable when I hold hands with non-family members, but after having done this exercise I felt the same kind of closeness with the 5 people as I do when I hold my husband and children's hands. Lisa suggested that we do it 2 or more times a week.