

# 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the creation of the first UK Holy Ground in Kensington Gardens, London

London, United Kingdom, 15. July 2015



By Tom O'Connell

On a beautiful, warm summer evening on Wednesday the 15th July more than 30 local Church members gathered in Kensington Gardens to commemorate the 50th anniversary of True Father's blessing of this special Holy Ground. In 1965, when True Father came to the UK he was 45 years old. FFWPU UK National Leader, Matthew Huish and Continental Director for FFWPU Europe, Jack Corley were also present. The Service was led by Pastor David Franklin of our Central London Community.



We gathered in a circle around the Holy Tree and sang Blessing of glory. This was followed by a reading from True Father's Autobiography:

*“From childhood, my mind has always yearned for faraway places. In my hometown, I would climb a mountain and long for the sea. When I arrived in Seoul, I wanted to go to Japan. I have always dreamed of going to places larger than where I was.*

*In 1965, I embarked on my first trip around the world. My suitcase was filled with soil and stones from Korea. My plan was that, as I travelled around the world, I would plant Korea's soil and stones in each country to signify Korea's linkage to the world. For ten months, I toured forty countries, including Japan, the United States, and the nations of Europe. On the day I left Seoul, hundreds of our members came in buses to see me off, and they filled the departure lounge at Kimpo Airport. In those days, going overseas was a significant event. Our*

*members thronged to the airport on that January day with a cold strong wind blowing out of the northwest. No one had told them to do this. They did as their hearts told them. I received their hearts with deep gratitude.*

*At that time, we were performing mission work in ten countries, and it was my plan to increase that to forty countries within two years. It was to lay the foundation for this that I decided to visit forty countries on my trip. My first stop was Japan.*

*My second destination was the United States. I entered the country through the airport in San Francisco, where I was met by our missionaries. From there, we toured the entire country. During my tour of the United States, I visited every state except Alaska and Hawaii. We rented a station wagon and drove day and night.*

*After the United States and Canada, I went to Central and South America, and then on to Europe. To my eyes, Europe was in the cultural sphere of the Vatican.*

*It seemed to me that we could not succeed in Europe without understanding the Vatican. Even the Alps, which were supposed to be so di-cult to climb, seemed of little significance in comparison to the Vatican. I went to the Vatican, where Europeans gather to pray, and prayed with such fervour that beads of sweat ran down my face. I prayed that religion, which had become divided among so many denominations and groups, could be unified quickly. God created one world, but people have divided it in ways convenient to themselves. I became more convinced than ever that these divisions must be erased and the world unified as one. From Europe, I went on to Egypt and the Middle East and completed my tour after ten months. When I returned to Seoul, my suitcase was full of soil and stones from 120 locations in forty countries. When I planted the soil and stones I had taken from Korea, I took soil and stones from each location and brought them back to Korea. I connected Korea to these 40 countries in this way to prepare for the day in the future when the world of peace would be realized centering on Korea. I began preparations to send missionaries to those forty countries”.*



Following the reading Matthew Huish delivered a very powerful and sincere prayer honouring the immense blessing that the UK has received through True Father's blessing of this Holy Ground all those years ago.

A reading about the history of the holy ground followed. Here is an excerpt:

*“Dr Young Oon Kim, who arrived on April 26, 1965 was the first official missionary of the Unification Movement to the UK and set about building a foundation for True Father's first visit just 3 months later. In those days the organization was called ‘The Unified Family’. Miss Kim, as the first members affectionately addressed her, remained in Britain for only eighty days, during which time she contacted several spiritualist groups.*

*True Father's first visit from July 14-20, 1965, was a very special one because he was on his world tour of*

*forty countries to create Holy Grounds. He was accompanied by Mrs Won Pok Choi and President Hyo Won Eu. He arrived from Madrid on July 14 and was met at Heathrow Airport by a small group of seven people, including Miss Kim, Sir Anthony Brooke (who provided a limousine for the visit) and five new contacts.*

*On July 15, True Father chose as the National Holy Ground in London's Kensington Gardens, a particular London Plane tree that had been damaged by people carving their names into its bark. He later explained that he chose the tree because of its damaged condition represented the state of the nation and also because of all those who had carved their names in hearts, expressing their love for each other. The tree is near the Peter Pan statue where Miss Kim would often pray.*

*The location was fortuitous as the national headquarters of the Unification Movement was many years later to be established only a few hundred yards away.*

*Miss Kim brought a professor from Cambridge University, a leading light from the Quaker Movement and also Sir Anthony Brooke and several of his aristocratic friends to make a foundation of twelve people to welcome True Father.*

*Anthony Brooke was the last Rajah Muda, or White Rajah of Sarawak and a well-known spiritualist. He was introduced to the movement in the United States by Doris Walder and had met True Father in America and in Korea.*

*He testified strongly to True Parents on Korean television. He was asked to teach the Divine Principle in St Annes in the North of England to spiritual groups. Anthony Brooke was directly involved in the famous sitting with the clairvoyant, Arthur Ford, who testified to True Father's providential role.*

*He had many aristocratic and influential friends but sadly did not want to accept the bride that True Father recommended and did not understand his role in the Providence and, like John the Baptist, continued to go his own way.*

*True Father gave his first recorded speech in the house of Anthony's future wife in Mayfair, London on July 17, 1965 entitled “Our Mission is Great”. Over the next three days many people came to hear True Father speak including many guests from aristocratic backgrounds. He emphasized to those present that they*

*were living in the last days, saying “In these last days, we must feel our responsibility in this part of the mission assigned by God. The responsibility is upon the whole church as well as upon each individual ... we must join these together to create the national responsibility. This is our mission”.*

*The last speech on July 19 attracted fifteen people and three of them were directed to begin a study group.*

*True Father sent missionaries to various countries after completing the Blessing of Holy Grounds worldwide and Sandi Pinkerton was sent from the USA to London in 1965 to pioneer the United Kingdom, with Dr Young Oon Kim becoming responsible for the European Movement.*

*June Darby from Swaziland was witnessed to while on holiday in Italy in August, 1966 at the time when Doris Walder (Orme) and Martin Porter were teaching the Divine Principle in Rome.*

*June joined Sandi in London in December, 1966 when the first centre was established at 17 Emporer's Gate, South West London. Later that month, June met an old University colleague, Eve Hardman, on a coach which was travelling from London to Scotland. Eve moved into the centre in February, 1967 and in May, her sister, Patricia Hardman (Hartley), a student nurse, came too. The Hardman girls had also grown up in South Africa. It is interesting to note that the first three pioneers in the UK were all women from the British Commonwealth”.*

Jack Corley then prayed to close this part of our ceremony.



Nearly 200 balloons were prepared with tickets attached under netting. Members from around the UK had the opportunity to purchase a ticket which was then attached to a balloon. The balloon that travelled the furthest would be the winner of £50.

With favourable winds the balloons were released and very quickly went on their way, high up into the sky heading in a south westerly direction.