

My impressions of the Bromley Family Festival

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One of the things I think about is how we can make the Blessing as accessible as possible. I want my friends, colleagues and neighbours to capture True Parents' vision of a world of loving families built on God-centred marriage. I want them to see the evidence of how a widespread revolution of heart is possible, and for them to believe in it themselves. I acknowledge that the Blessing is something deeply profound and yet I also believe that we can unpack it in a way which is palatable and digestible. There is no reason why we need to dilute the message; I intend to uphold the highest standard possible for the Blessing and simultaneously make it as widely available too.

I have been inspired by the communities that have embraced this tension by hosting local Family Festivals. Having seen how other communities have created meaningful programmes which have been enjoyed by our own members and the guests that also attended, I made a request to all the communities at the start of this year to each host at least one Family Festival in 2018.

In truth, this was a bold invitation. If I reflect on how we are as communities – the challenges we are facing and the limitations that constrain us – then in many ways we are unprepared to take on this challenge. And yet I'm inspired to see blessed families, who have accepted the commission from True Parents to be tribal messiahs. They audaciously pioneer directions that perhaps they know they cannot reach, and yet do so because it is necessary anyway.



Last Sunday in the Bromley community, we hosted our first Family Festival. I genuinely enjoyed the event. Even my young children enjoyed the event. I was proud that our community to host an event of quality that could be enjoyed by the members present and the guests we invited. If I reflect on the practical preparations and how things could have been organised so much more thoroughly, and then consider how successful the event actually was, I can only conclude that God is truly on our side, responding to our devotion and mobilising heavenly fortune to support us in our efforts.

But credit is also due to the many individuals who contributed so significantly. I was most impressed by the musical performances, which were so widely different in spirit and genre: Howard Miller effortlessly playing a cheekily tricky piano piece by Mozart; Jeff Bateman hypnotising us with his Japanese & Irish flutes; Rhiannon Davies belting out a Stevie Wonder classic and crooning while accompanying herself on the piano with confident stage presence; and David Mann offering uplifting folks songs on the guitar. I must confess that as someone who has studied music, I often struggle to enjoy amateur performances, yet these artists raised the bar and left me feeling a range of emotions, all of which were good!

The fellowship afterwards, with a buffet dinner and gracious good weather, facilitated many meaningful conversations to take place in a relaxed manner. The programme itself was child-friendly (as demonstrated by the many painted faces running around happily afterwards!) and the message delivered by David Rennie was relevant and direct, boldly testifying to the healing power of the Blessing within his own family, as he traced across 5 generations a line from his grandparents to his grandchildren. Did he shy away from referring to True Parents and the Blessing? No, he did not. Was his delivery sensitive to the audience and entertaining? I believe it was.



Honestly, I was terrified about this event just moments before it started. I didn't want to show it – even to myself – but I was concerned that amidst the chaos, I would be part of an embarrassing event. In complete contrast, I felt so good about this event, I can't wait until we host the next one, to which I plan to invite some neighbours and friends.