

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's FFWPU European Peace Rally in Vienna, Austria

Seok-Byeon Kim
June 27, 2018



Monthly Chosun – June 2018 Issue (Mainstream Korean Monthly Magazine)

Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

Peace Rally held in Europe

Claiming peace in the center of Europe

A large-scale international event with 10,000 people from 60 nations was held on April 29...

Accelerating network expansion to the world by awakening Christian Civilization from deep sleep

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification is touring around the world, holding large-scale Peace Rallies, to spread the message of "peace" throughout the world. We have covered the foundational history of FFWPU missionary work in Europe by observing this Peace Rally held in Vienna, Austria.

Stephansdom, located at the center of Vienna, Austria, is lively and always brimming with tourists from around the world. Although this Gothic cathedral has historically served as a sacred place to hold Mass, it has long since become a bustling tourist site, flashing with cameras and phones. The state religion in Austria is Catholicism. However, as is the case in other parts of Europe, Austria maintains its Christian culture, but the peoples' faith in Christianity is rapidly declining. Although Europe was the starting point of Christianity, many cathedrals and churches have closed down in recent years. Young priests or ministers are rarely seen, and fewer people are getting baptized. Those who attend the Mass or church services are mostly the elderly. Likewise, the Christian civilization in Europe is in a deep sleep. However, another religious group is expanding its influence by awakening the Christian civilization in Europe. They are the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (hereinafter referred to as the FFWPU), who are uniting the people of the world by promoting a universal and simple message of "peace," rather than religious doctrines.

On April 29, at 3 p.m., the peace event was held at the Wiener Stadthalle, which is renowned for its 60-year history hosting concerts and performances. This expansive indoor concert hall boasting a capacity of 15,000, was nearly packed with attendees from around the globe. Former prime ministers, former and current government ministers and parliament members, religious leaders, scholars, women's leaders, entrepreneurs, etc., from Austria, England, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Netherlands, Russia, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Israel, etc., listened intently to the speech given by a religious leader who came all the way from Korea.

A keynote speech by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: "A Peace-Loving Global Citizen"

"The FFWPU has a fifty-year history of missionary work in the European region. Our members went through many difficulties, due to misunderstanding of those in the Christian realm. Furthermore, there were many difficulties due to Communist Thought, which came out of the Christian realm. In particular, the early European members engaged in missionary work through underground activities known as 'Mission Butterfly' to liberate the people of countries suffering under Communist regimes. It is true that there were many sacrifices. Yet, those who knew the providence and knew Heaven's circumstances took a path of unchanging absolute faith." Many European members nodded their heads in rapt agreement to Dr. Han's message acknowledging the trials and rigors of their missionary providence.

Dr. Han pointed out the decline of European civilization saying, "European modern civilization brought us scientific development. Yet, many problems occurred as well, and the future of human life and the earth cannot be guaranteed. We have reached the limit of what human strength alone can do." Then, she said, "In the past, they could not realize Christ's essence and failed by creating a culture of selfishness, rather than of giving true love. Just as your ancestors headed out to the world under Christ's name, I ask you to become the proud people of Europe who will save the world," and offered a direction to peace in Europe.

The founder of the FFWPU, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon (75), who took an eleven-hour flight, gave an

impromptu speech for 30 minutes, without looking at a draft. All of the participants who share different languages, races and nations were united into one through Dr. Han's speech. According to the FFWPU, this was the second formal peace rally in Europe attended by Dr. Han since Rev. Sun Myung Moon's ascension.

Ten-thousand people, including former Austrian Defense Minister Dr. Werner Fasslabend and other former and current ministers, parliament members and religious leaders, gathered at the event. Upon introducing Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, Dr. Werner Fasslabend pointed to his own experience saying, "Through my life in public office, it was immensely tough and hard to create peace. On the other hand, once disrupted, it takes more than a decade to restore peace in the heart of the people." He then said, "On behalf of the city of Vienna, I welcome Dr. Han, who has contributed to world peace throughout her life by practicing the life of living for the sake of others."

Inauguration of Interreligious Association for Peace and Development-Europe

Continental Chairman of FFWPU-Europe Dr. Michael Balcomb, who presided over the peace rally, emphasized that peace starts within each individual by saying, "Peace starts with 'me.' Peace is determined by my behavior. As Mahatma Gandhi said, the future depends on what you do in the present." He then proclaimed, "Let us create peace from today from this very place from the person sitting next to you. Let us put an end to the history of darkness and head for a history of peace." The rally went on for more than two hours with various programs and performances. With the host of Central Region President of FFWPU-Europe Dieter Schmidt presiding, there was a presentation of flower bouquets by third generation youths born through the Marriage Blessing Ceremony, followed by performances held by various artists, including Grammy Award winner Yolanda Adams and the Longfield Gospel Choir, the most prominent Gospel choir in Austria. FFWPU-Europe set the theme of this rally as "Peace Starts With Me," because "When I change, my neighbors and even the world will change." President of FFWPU-Korea Lee Ki-seong, who participated in the event, said, "The Peace movement is the role of religions. Peace must start with me right now, and we must start practicing this right now."

This rally did not end merely as a one-time event, but rather as the inauguration of a groundbreaking peace organization called the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD). On April 29, at the inauguration ceremony held at the Parkhotel Schönbrunn in Vienna, with more than 400 religious leaders in attendance, the President of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts Dr. Felix Unger stated, "Since religion has been at the center of human history, interreligious movements must become the spiritual bridge to maintain peace and respect life."



Other religious leaders, including the President of Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe, Archbishop Dr. Johannes Ndanga and the President of the World Congress of Faiths Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, also emphasized the role of interreligious peace movements. The Korean Ambassador to Austria Mr. Shin Dong-ik was also invited to the inauguration ceremony as a special guest. At this inauguration ceremony where influential religious leaders of the world attend, Ambassador Shin Dong-ik emphasized the importance of the North-South Korean summit, as well as the realization of exchange between North and South Korea. He explained further about the preparation made by the Korean government for the reunion of North and South Korean families and pointed to the Korean Unification Flag used at the Pyeongchang Olympic. Emphasizing the significance of the goal of financial and military discussions and complete denuclearization, the Ambassador asked the participants for their continuous concerns and prayers. Then, a peace ceremony for religious harmony was held, and representatives of 12 religious orders, including Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Shia and Sunni Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism, etc., joined together in conducting the candlelight and water confluence ceremonies.

The Youth and Students for Peace (YSP)-Europe was launched during the peace rally. YSP- Europe is an organization dedicated toward educating youths in the European region to overcome extreme nationalism, and to become the future leaders of harmony and peace.

At the inauguration ceremony attended by more than 1,000 youths in Europe, including FFWPU second generation members of families who married through the Marriage Blessing Ceremony, FFWPU International Chairwoman Sun Jin Moon delivered a heartfelt speech, leaving a deep impression through her spiritual message to the future leaders.

Ceremony to liberate the victims of Nazi concentration camp

On April 30, FFWPU conducted a liberation ceremony of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria, notorious for its severely brutal conditions among the Nazi concentration camps. It was the place where Nazis executed, tortured and arrested political opponents, as well as Jewish people, as repressive measures against any opposition to the Nazi dictatorship. Approximately 120,000-320,000 people were executed at this site.

It is said that prisoners from 40 nations were executed here. The prisoners who were forced to work at the nearby quarry were later on mobilized to build underground production sites of rockets and other arms. It is infamous for its brutal scars of war crime, including the gas chamber and crematorium that both still remain in the camp.

The liberation ceremony was conducted in front of the "Stairs of Death." Back then, male prisoners were forced to carry large blocks of granite weighing up to 50kg. If a prisoner dropped a block in the middle of the stairs, he was shot to death. Through the liberation ceremony at this scene of tragedy, the FFWPU members and religious leaders from 12 nations, including Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic, appeased the souls of the victims, and prayed so that such tragedy would never occur again.

The large-scale peace rallies held each year through the FFWPU continental tours have invigorated the organization and have also expanded the religious influence of the FFWPU. They chose Austria as the center of Europe because there is a United Nations Secretariat in Vienna. In 2015, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon made a speech at the UN Secretariat in Vienna during a conference hosted by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). Since this permanently neutral country Austria is geographically located at the middle of Eastern and Western Europe, influential religions have sent missionaries to this country for quite some time. At the time when Communism was spreading in Europe, Austria, as a neutral country, became an important landmark in Europe's transition from the iron curtain era of Communism. Likewise, the FFWPU has also out sent missionaries to carry out mission activities from the early days of its inception. In 1965, the FFWPU was registered as an official religious organization, and its status was reconfirmed in 2015. They say the FFWPU has been confirmed as the eighth official new religious organization in Austria.

According to Continental President of FFWPU-Europe Rev. Michael Balcomb, FFWPU missionary activities in Europe started back in 1965 when its late founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon located 19 Holy Grounds in 16 European nations including England, Germany and France. And this happened in the mid-1960s, long before Korea achieved economic growth. On March 28, 1969, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon planted the seeds of the mission providence in Europe by blessing eight couples through the Marriage Blessing Ceremony in Essen, Germany. The Marriage Blessing Ceremony, one of the significant features of the FFWPU, started in Korea in 1960 with three couples and began to spread worldwide from 1969 in the USA, Europe and Japan.

Rev. Moon placed special emphasis on missionary work in Europe, and stressed that the FFWPU must expand its influence in Europe without fail because Europe is a region centered on Christianity. In 1973, the FFWPU held the International Conference on the Unity of Sciences (ICUS) in London, England, and in the 1980s, developed its activities centered on Germany. Back then, the FFWPU carried out missionary works and enterprise activities simultaneously. What Rev. Moon emphasized the most was "How to overcome the threat of Communism and breakdown the Berlin Wall through the VOC (Victory over Communism) movement." In the 1990s, he placed special emphasis on sports and the arts, and in 2009, he even held the Peace Cup, an international football tournament in Spain. Furthermore, Rev. Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon demonstrated their foresight on the significance of Europe from early on. At the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA) held in 1985 at the Continental Hotel in Geneva, Switzerland, Rev. Moon told Dr. Kaplan to proclaim the fall of the Soviet Union and its Communist empire. Half in doubt, nobody at the conference believed his word. But four years later in 1989, Rev. Moon's statement became an issue as the Soviet Union collapsed and was divided into the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 1987, the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), a FFWPU-related organization, gathered more than 2,000 members in front of the Berlin Wall in Germany, and carried out a march for world peace, as well as for the removal of the Berlin Wall. This peace march was the largest international peace rally held ever since the Berlin Wall was built.

This shows the efforts the FFWPU has devoted toward Europe. FFWPU-Europe has divided 72 nations into six regions, and each region is managed by a regional chair. Each region is composed of eight to 18 nations. Currently, conflicts are arising constantly as the number of immigrants from Islamic nations

increases throughout the European continent. FFWPU- Europe is urging people not to exclude the immigrants by emphasizing Rev. Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's message of "One Family under God." Due to the increase of family breakdown, more youths who are supposed to become future leaders are demonstrating tendencies of radical and extreme violence. In order to resolve this issue, the FFWPU is devoting much effort in its activities to strengthen family values. As a part of such efforts, they held the European Youth Conference 2017 in Brussels last December.

Underground missionary activities conducted in Eastern Europe – "Mission Butterfly"

The missionary process of the FFWPU in Europe faced many difficulties up until it gained the religious influence it enjoys today. The members had to risk their lives to go on missionary works in Communist nations in Eastern Europe. We were able to hear about the situation back then from the former president of FFWPU-Czech Republic, Juraj Lajda.

Dr. Lajda (68), who was born in Slovakia, started to hold a deeper interest in perpetuating global peace after going through the Prague Spring in 1968. He came to know the FFWPU in 1971, and then he was imprisoned for three years from 1973, as he was carrying out mission activities under the Communist regime. Back then, the media was censored and religious movements were restricted in Czechoslovakia. Due to the authority's censorship, FFWPU had no choice but to conduct its missionary works in secret. When the authorities found out that the FFWPU was conducting a movement against Communism, they tightened control against them. In 1973, the government started to place new restrictions on FFWPU members, and those who were caught were sent to prison on charges of attempting to overthrow the state. Back then, 25 members were imprisoned, and one of them died a martyr. It was the time when people who revolted against the government were taken away without question. The secret missionary works were referred to as "Mission Butterfly" among FFWPU members. It was not hard to imagine the sufferings of FFWPU members who carried out the anti-Communist movement at the risk of imprisonment.

Dr. Lajda, who is also a linguist and philosopher, was matched to Ernestina Lajdova by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon during the Marriage Blessing Ceremony held at Jamsil Gymnasium in Korea in 1982. They have three sons and two daughters and one of their daughters Jana loves Korea so much that she traveled all the way to Korea to study at the Sun Moon University. "I wish South and North Korea would reunite soon," said Dr. Lajda.

Conveying the message to "Forgive. Love and Unite"

At the center of the profound world missionary works of the FFWPU is the spiritual leader of this organization, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. Although she is a mother of 14 children, as well as a grandmother of 40 grandchildren, she lives her old-age restlessly and travels around the world. Since last year, she has conducted large-scale peace rallies with more than 10,000 people in the USA and Japan. Despite her age, she is working inexhaustibly. More such large-scale events are scheduled to be held in North and South America, as well as in South Africa in the latter half of this year. Since Korea is the root of the FFWPU, Dr. Han is strongly determined to put special effort in connecting the foundation of the FFWPU in the Korean peninsula to the world. Stressing the True Family Movement in achieving a peaceful world, Dr. Han is taking an active interest in creating an environment for politicians and religious leaders to interact through IAPP and IAPD. In December, they are planning to hold the Asian Summit by gathering the leadership of Asia in Nepal.

Dr. Han said, "We have reached the limit of what human strength alone can do. We must move forward centered on God. The way to world peace must be achieved through overcoming religious and national barriers." She is truly worthy of being called a global citizen who has lived peace and loved peace throughout her entire lifetime. Under Dr. Han's spiritual guidance, the FFWPU is conveying the message of hope and life to "forgive, love and unite," and is developing active missionary works in 194 nations. Although they come from different nations and races, FFWPU members are living as one family based on their common lifestyle patterns and community activities. FFWPU officials revealed their goal of carrying out various events in all parts of the world to testify to the life course of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, as well as to praise their dedication toward realizing the peace and wellbeing of humankind by 2020, the year which marks the 100th anniversary of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's birth.

Continental Chairman of FFWPU-Europe Michael Balcomb stated, "Peace starts with me. Starting today, let us live our lives to achieve peace."

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has held peace rallies with more than 10,000 people in the USA and Japan. She is truly worthy of being called a peace-loving global citizen who has lived a life of peace.