

## Seong-hwa for Otto Waldner

Neumuehle, Bad Camberg, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012

by Fritz Piepenburg



There was no better place for Otto's Seong-hwa than the Neumuehle. Otto died on October 26 at a high age of almost 93 years. It was here at the Neumuehle, where Otto together with his wife Joo-hwa from Korea spent his happiest days. Here is the hut which served as his studio for painting and sculpturing till the very last day. And here is also this small "Garden of Eden", where the statue of Eve



touches a small deer while Adam lovingly looks on – all figures from Otto's "Tree of Life". Otto and Joo-hwa were planting various vegetables in this tiny garden and took great care of it, as if it was part of the lost Paradise. It made them very happy.

Less than two months after the Seong-hwa of his wife

Joo-hwa Waldner Kim, Otto followed her into the spirit world. He did not want to live any longer. Those who visited him in the hospital could get this feeling from him.

Some 60 brothers and sisters were in attendance, among them his two sons Wolfgang and Peter, his daughter in law Tae-sun and granddaughter Jennifer. Cooperation with the mortician was very smoothly. Like with Joo-hwa before, the company put up the coffin and created a beautiful environment. We took care of putting up the banner, the picture and the candles in place. There were wreaths not only from relatives, the German church and the Gießen and Frankfurt communities, but also from Pres. and Mrs. Song, from Bishop Ki-hun Kim, Family Imai (who stayed with Otto in Iran) and other friends.

Margaret Staudinger, accompanied on the piano by Tomoko Yoo, opened the service by singing the old church hymn "You have called us, Lord", followed by the entry prayer. After jointly singing a holy song, Claus Dubisz presented parts of Otto's own autobiography, starting with childhood memories in the industrial area called Ruhrpott, passing through World War II and leading up to his spiritual experiences while joining the Unification Church and getting blessed with Joo-hwa. The climax of his artistic activities was designing and constructing the "Tree of Life", a 30m meter tall tower, depicting providential figures from Adam and Eve all the way to True Parents. True Father himself watched over the design and gave his approval. The tower has gone, but the various figures

from the Old- and New-Testament are still there behind the seminar building of the Neumuehle. After reading the autobiography, a slide show with those providential figures followed.

After a second song by Margaret Staudinger ("So nimm denn meine Hände"), friends and family members gave testimony about their experiences with Otto. Peter Schmittat and Franz Sölva related memories and stories. Even Lothar Schlichting, who once worked with Otto at the Regelsmühle and lives now with his family in the United States, put his memories in writing. The final speaker was his son Peter Waldner, who especially thanked all those who took good care of Otto, especially during the last weeks and months of his life.

Then everybody went to the small but beautifully located cemetery of Beuerbach, where Otto found his last rest besides his wife Joo-hwa. The coffin was lowered into the earth at the trumpet sound of "Großer Gott wir loben dich", played by Peter Valenta. Fritz Piepenburg, community leader of Frankfurt, offered the final prayer and blessing and then everybody sang "Kein schöner Land" at the tune of the instrument Otto loved most – the mouth organ.

*Fritz Piepenburg*

