



# **Eastern Europe Highlights**

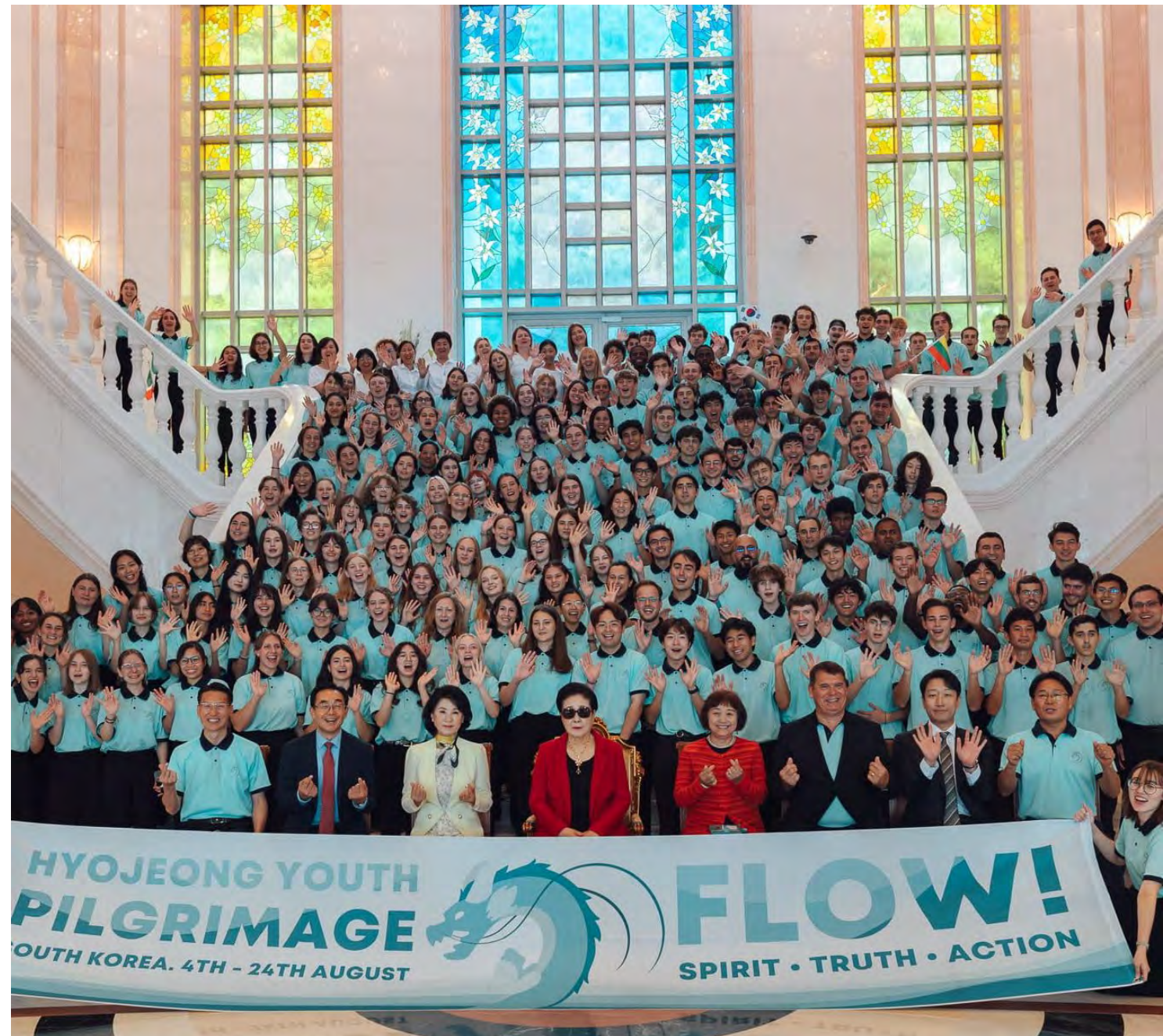
August 2024

# EUME Youths' Amazing Pilgrimage to Korea

The 2024 EUME pilgrimage to Korea had about 200 participants, including staff, 50 percent more than in 2023. There were 52 participants from the Eastern Europe sub-region, with Russia having the biggest number: 29. The average age was 22. The majority had amazing and even life-changing experiences with Heavenly Parent and True Parents. The workshop started with Divine Principle and continued with lectures on the Only Begotten Daughter, True Parents' life course, the CheonBo providence, the Blessing, and witnessing. President Yong-cheon Song, Dr. Chang-sik Yang, Dr. and Mrs. Michael Balcomb gave special talks. To the staff's surprise, the majority of the participants loved Vigil Prayer, investing all their heart and energy. Vigil Prayer was held Monday to Friday, and Chanyang sessions twice a day.

During four days, the Pilgrimage visited the DMZ (where participants held a Peace March), Cheon Jeong Gung, True Father's burial site, Cheongpa-dong, Hannam-dong, the Yeong Pyeong resort, and the Rock of Tears and Beomnetgol in Busan.

All the participants were looking forward to meeting True Mother, and when they heard that a meeting might not be possible because of her intense schedule, everyone was disappointed but didn't lose hope. Finally, the participants were invited to Cheon Jeong Gung, where they performed for True Mother and she talked to them for quite a long time. Members offered her flowers and gifts, including two paintings of True Parents created by a Russian brother. – *Gani Rroshi*





During their meeting with True Mother, our EUME pilgrimage participants presented her with two beautiful paintings of True Parents. These paintings were created by our Russian brother Nikolai Ryzhevsky from Moscow (above). The painting of True Father was prepared for the 21-day Russian witnessing campaign in 2023, and the one of True Mother was created for the 21-day witnessing campaign in 2024.

Inspired by True Mother's visit to the Slav Epic paintings of Czech artist Alphonse Mucha, who was famous for his art nouveau style, Nikolai decided to create True Mother's portrait in that style.

# Belarusian Members Cherish True Father's Memory

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In Belarus, the commemoration of the 12th anniversary of True Father's Ascension began on 20 August with a Family Pledge morning service and by observing a moment of silence at 8:00, 12:00 and 18:00. On 25 August, a festive Sunday service was held. Brothers and sisters brought flowers and donations during the bowing ceremony. Adults offered testimonies on "What True Parents Taught Me," read excerpts from Father's autobiography, and sang together, while the children colored drawings of True Father. After the service, we enjoyed treats from the offering table and had lunch together. During the Resolution Week, seven members – three First Gens and four Second Gens – took part in a Divine Principle lecture competition. – *Olga Plotnikova*



# Estonians Remember True Father with Joy

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A cordial and joyful atmosphere filled the Tallinn Peace Embassy on 20 August as Estonian members commemorated the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of True Father's Holy Ascension. (This year the anniversary coincided with the Estonian Independence Day.) After watching a video based on True Father's autobiography, the members read and discussed a chapter from the autobiography, and participated in a moment of silence at noon. Avo Martinson then performed a song he had written about the heart of Heavenly Parent and True Parents. The event concluded with a meal and fellowship together. – *Olga Martinson*





# True Mother's Memoirs Are Published in Estonian

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The 30<sup>th</sup> of August was a historic day for the Estonian movement, as members at last could hold True Mother's memoirs in the Estonian language. National leader Avo Martinson started the translation in September 2022. Every day he would translate two to three pages. The translation was completed in January 2024 and then was sent to the editor Mrs. Kati Kuhi, who earlier had edited True Father's autobiography. She finished editing on 20 April. Mr. Julian Gray at International Headquarters in Korea supplied the photographs, and Mr. Peter Staudinger gave support in the position of mentor. We published the first edition on 28 August and received 40 physical copies two days later. – *Avo Martinson*



## Romanian Guests Didn't Want the Commemoration to End

Despite many people being out of town because of the Romanian national holiday, 21 guests came to an event in the Bucharest Peace Embassy commemorating the anniversary of True Father's ascension. The successful turnout can be attributed to the hard work of blessed families and the leaders of YSP and CARP leaders in inviting their family members and friends, distant members and "old guests." After a video about True Father's life and accomplishments, there were testimonies and recollections from various members. National leader Miki Predescu told of a personal experience with True Father, describing him as a peacemaker, person of love, and parent of humanity. The last part of the program was a meal of Korean traditional food. In accordance with the Romanian tradition of sharing food to commemorate those who have passed on, all the guests enjoyed the meal and told us "Bogdaproste" – which means "God bless you for it." At the end, the guests didn't want to go home, but wanted to keep talking about True Father. – *Miki Predescu*



# Romanian Family Workshop Goes Deeper

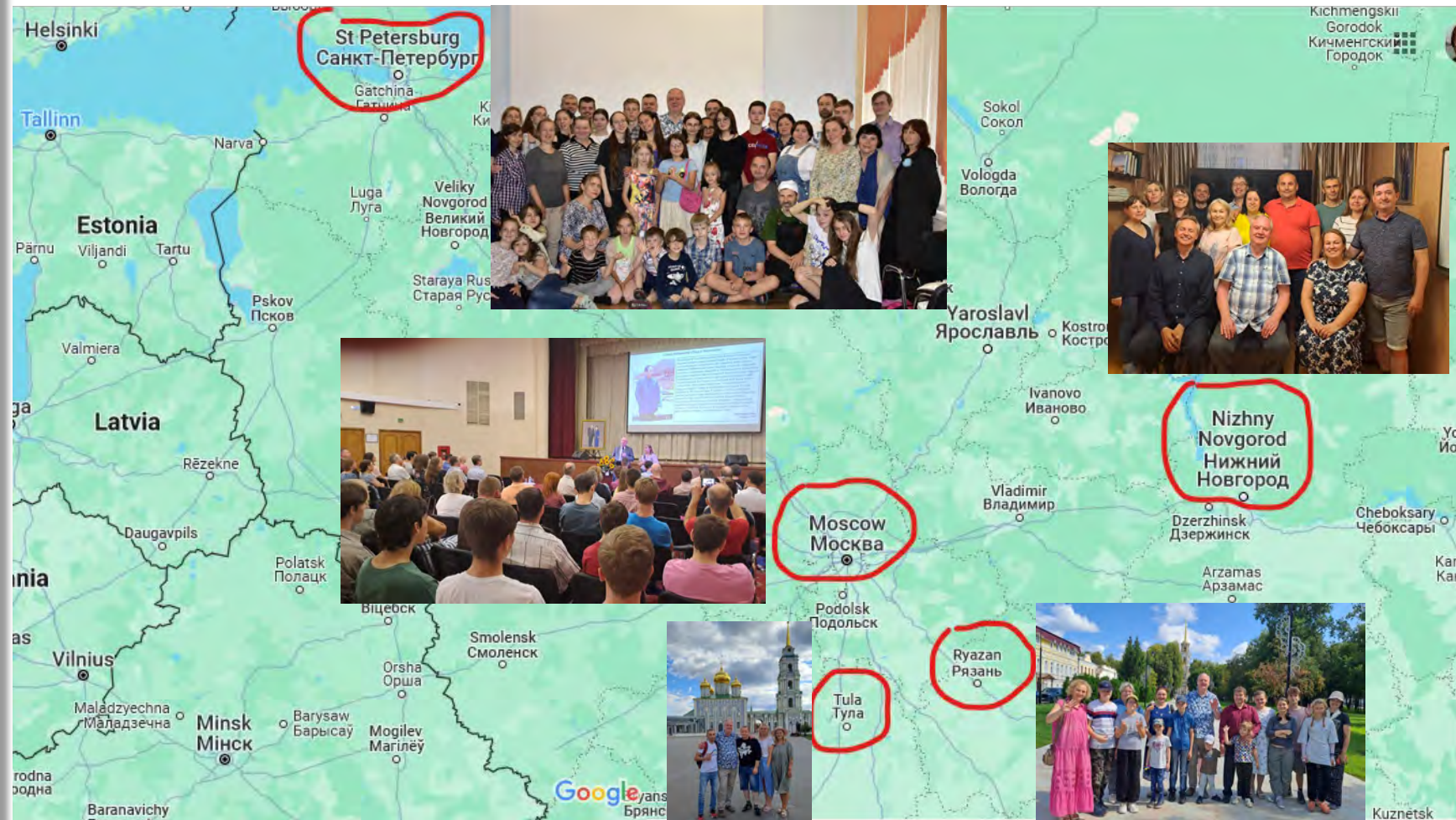
Romanian blessed families and core members attended a family workshop that focused on creating deeper relationships with Heavenly Parent and True Parents as well as among brothers and sisters. The participants were three blessed couples with children, a Romanian sister who lives in Hungary, and a Romanian brother and sister who are preparing for the Blessing. On Friday, the workshop joined online with the CheonBo Great Works and the 1111th CheonShim Vigil Prayer. Saturday's schedule featured two lectures and discussions on the recent providence, especially about Cheon Won Gung and Cheon Mu Won centered on True Mother. Each participant also gave his or her testimony, creating a very deep atmosphere. The workshop was held in the home of a blessed family who moved from Ukraine to a village in the north of Romania. Wanting to do something for the village, the participants on Sunday organized a small Peace Road event for the local children and their parents, with the support of the school director. After an introduction to Peace Road and prayers for peace in Ukraine and Russia, everyone made Origami cranes as symbols of peace and then walked to the village hall. A local Orthodox priest joined our group to pray for 600 innocent children who passed away because of the war. The priest kept the list of children and promised he would continue to pray for them.

– Miki Predescu





On Red Square with Russia National Leader Couple, Alexander and Alyona Timofeyev



On August 4<sup>th</sup> Eastern Europe subregional president Jack Corley concluded a two week visit to Russia in which he visited the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tula, Ryazan and Nizhni Novgorod (formerly Gorky).



# Russian Families Enjoy UPF Summer of Eco-Education

In southern Russia's Voronezh Region, over 1,000 participants and approximately 50 volunteers have attended interactive, family-oriented events held this summer to raise environmental awareness. The project, co-organized by the local UPF chapter, has the motto: "This Is Where Eco-Traditions Are Born!"

The project has hosted eight eco-game sessions in the central city park, two environmental film lessons at summer camps, a community clean-up in a village, an outdoor eco-lesson, and a visit to a local history museum.

Local UPF leader Elena Knyazeva, who is also the UPF-Russia coordinator of environmental programs, has become well-known in the Voronezh Region as an environmental education advocate.

A multifunctional center for eco-education recently opened in Voronezh, largely due to UPF efforts. Fifteen people attended the grand opening of the "EcoEnvironment" center, whose goal is to bring together eco-activists, non-profit organizations, and government agencies to solve pressing environmental issues. Alexander Knyazev, a federal environmental inspector and the director of the non-profit organization New Ecosystem, gave the keynote speech. – *Elena Knyazeva*

# Poetry-Loving Russians Pedal to Honor Pushkin

Fourteen bicyclists in the Russian Republic of Tatarstan rode 100 kilometers to honor the 225th birth year of Alexander Pushkin, considered by many to be the greatest Russian poet. The Peace Road event, titled "Following the Path of the Poet," was organized by UPF-Russia and the Union of Cyclists of Tatarstan. Aside from promoting physical activity and introducing the region's natural and cultural landmarks, the event aimed to deepen the understanding of Russia's historical and cultural heritage. The journey began at the house-museum of the poet Yevgeny Baratynsky, a friend of Pushkin's, where participants immersed themselves in the atmosphere of that era. The route continued through picturesque landscapes in and around Kazan, Tatarstan's capital. Each day was filled with excursions to local museums and meetings with cultural heritage guardians. Overnight stays under the open sky and discussions around a campfire created a special atmosphere of unity and reflection on the work of Pushkin and other great Russian poets. The project concluded with a symbolic ceremony at the Kazan Kremlin. – *Dmitry Samko*



# Activities in Moldova - HPHC

During Resolution Week, members met together to read from True Father's autobiography, pray and offer reports. The Friday night Vigil Prayer included a video of True Father giving a speech in 2002. In this way we strove to comfort True Father and to feel his presence. ... On Saturday evening, Unificationist youth were invited to a gathering to remember True Father, in which they read from his autobiography. ... The most recent Sunday service also focused on the 12th anniversary of True Father's Ascension. After the sermon, the members enjoyed a meal of True Father's favorite Korean dishes, such as bulgogi, rice and kimchi, which had been prepared with love by the Zhuchkov family. The program concluded with a game of *yut*. – *Sabina Nadejdin*



# Activities in Moldova - FFWPU

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Peace Corps Moldova posted a positive article to its Facebook page about its visit to the Sunflower Center and its collaboration with Family Federation. ... Moldovan national leader Sabina Nadejdin represented the Sunflower team at a farewell ceremony for U.S. Peace Corps volunteer Brittney Irby, who supported our work at the Sunflower Center. Ms. Irby gave a tearful testimony about her experience. – *Sabina Nadejdin*





# Sports and Spiritual Food at Sochi's Seaside

Ten boys experienced physical activity and spiritual guidance at a sports camp held at the Russian resort of Sochi. Alexey Pavlov, the leader of Tong-il Moo-do in Russia, gave instruction in the Korean martial arts form and brought one of his students, a 10-year-old brown belt who is the Urals champion in his age category. Dumitru Bredeuncan, the leader of Moscow's Eastpoint International Football Academy, trained the boys in football. He brought four of his students, Indians who are living and studying in Moscow. The other five boys were Russian Second Generation.

Every day there was one lecture, two football sessions, and one Tong-il Moo-do session. Some of the lectures were about the Three Blessings and the Four Spheres of Heart. Other lectures focused on the dangers of cigarettes and vaping; the use of bad words; overcoming anger in sports and in life; Internet safety and pornography.

Four times the boys took part in matches with Russian football teams. Every day they swam in the Black Sea, and one day there was an excursion into the mountains. The boys were divided into three teams. One day, they competed with each other in e-sports, football, volleyball, and basketball.

There was a very interesting interaction between the Second Gens and the other boys. The non-members were very inspired by the lectures, which surprised the Second Gens. The secular children were not afraid to talk about God, whereas the Second Gens were embarrassed to talk about God and their faith. On the other hand, the Second Gens set an example for kindness.

The camp was very good. Sports teams come from all over Russia to train there. Next summer we plan to organize a camp for 50 children, with Alexey and Dumitru bringing more of their students. I hope that more Second Gens will join and also bring their friends. – *Elena Kalmatskaya*



***Thank You!***