

# 50 years Anniversary Summer meeting of the Unification Movement in Finland

- Report by Hannu Hassinen

The first Unification missionaries to Finland came in January 1972 from Germany. (See the story in the recently published book “Dawn of a new era”.)

To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that historic occasion, the Unification community in Finland had this year in January two celebratory Zoom-meetings.

Now, on June 18.-19. in Helsinki, we had a festive Summer gathering in person. The site was the Cultural center of the Orthodox Church in Finland, a picturesque place in the outskirts, in a forest at a sea-side.



Some fifty brothers and sisters, mostly from Finland, but also those who travelled from Austria, Germany and Sweden, gathered under the theme:

## **Thank to God and to True Parents Unification Movement 50 years in Finland Remembering - Understanding - Recommitting**

On one side of the meeting hall there was a photopanel and albums presenting innumerable events and persons throughout the decades, as well as a booktable showing publications by the Unification movement in Finland, and media reports.

Above them, there was a ribbon of flags from the twenty nations from which Unification members contributed to the Heavenly providence in Finland over the past five decades.



The Saturday was mostly an interactive history review starting from the early days and throughout the years, noticing the key events in Finland, in Europe and globally.

Following the timeline, brothers and sisters shared their experiences in grassroots witnessing in the cities of Finland, in international mobilizations in UK, Germany, Japan and USA, as well as with missions in CARP, Seilo, WonHwaDo, WRIST, fishing in Kodiak, etc. Notable are the many Japanese sisters and brothers, who have sacrificially invested themselves for Finland over the years, in specific missions, and as blessed wives and husbands. Moreover, all the four National Messiah families have given their decisive contribution to God's work in Finland, and continue strong.



It was exciting to listen to the testimonies, for those who had been part of those missions, and interesting for everyone to hear the unknown stories.

The highlight of the Providence in Finland is, of course, the visit by True Mother in Helsinki, on 21.-22. May 1999, during her world speaking tour, which remains a special Heavenly input for our country and for us personally.



Holy Songs and folk songs sung together in-between, and instrumental performances by Mirva Lähteenmäki and Hans Ledermüller boosted the atmosphere even more!



On the Saturday afternoon, Ambassadors for Peace joined our gathering. Some of them have cooperated with us since over twenty years, such as Mr. Lauri Oinonen, a three-term MP and a Lutheran Minister, who welcomed True Mother during her visit; Ms. Johanna Broman, a nationally known clairvoyant and author of four books, who has helped thousands of people in their life with her God-centered, family-oriented guidance, and who even came to Cheongpyeong; and Mr. Pentti Rantala, an entrepreneur and an avid fisherman, who through his fishing club has trained hundreds of immigrant girls and boys to fish, and who also bought one of True Father's GoodGo-boats.

They gave beautiful speeches appreciating and identifying themselves with the work of UPF and True Parents.



On Sunday, the sermon was delivered by our National Director Josef Svacina. After the Service he invited all the 40-year anniversary Blessed Couples of 1982 Blessings and the 30-year anniversary Blessed Couples of the 1992 Blessing to come in front. Each couple received a small gift of appreciation from the Family Federation, as well as a present, a piece of Tiffany-artwork, made by the Hynninen couple, a 1982 Blessing couple themselves.



On Sunday afternoon we were divided by lottery into groups to make a creative performance on given topics. It was fun to prepare, fun to present and fun to watch. Indeed, such a variety of creativity!



Over the weekend the natural and healthy meals provided by the local staff were really completing the experience of this memorable gathering.

Heavenly Parent must have felt comfortable to see us have this wonderful time together.

Many brothers and sisters noted that this reunion and celebration was unexpected nice. Our history and our life in present is just too rich to wrap up in one weekend. So there must be more to come on this anniversary theme.

*Some from among contributed feedback and reflections:*

*Happy 50 years anniversary to Finnish community!*

*I feel 50 years anniversary event was a great success. We had more than 50 participants which consist of regular members, ambassadors for peace, old time members and even Finnish members living abroad. Variety of testimonies were given by different members. Testimonies were short but very personal starting from 1970s to the present days. Hearing nice musical performances and singing songs together made the atmosphere warm and relaxed. At the very end of the program the atmosphere became even more fun when everybody performed their*

*creative skits in smaller teams. People could share their precious memories in a warm atmosphere and experience fun creative program. Thank you for all the organizers and participants for making this event so joyful!*

***Kimmo Mikkanen***



*Big Thank you for such a very warmhearted and well prepared Celebration. One could feel the many hands who prepared with a loving heart. Location was great and it was very good idea to have different MC's in the program, because each one of them brings a new aspect to others. A beautiful and deep atmosphere was created and I am sure it was a valuable start for a good future. Thank you from my heart.*

**Christa Hassinen**

*50-years anniversary was a very good event. I enjoyed it. During this 2-days program I found things that are important to know or reflect and also pleasant and funny entertainment. Atmosphere was good, relaxed. I think it was amazing that so many of us dare to share experiences including ambassadors for peace. It was a lot of work to prepare this event. Thank you for all of you who made this effort.*

**Dorota**

