

Members hold Holy Blessing in Hong Kong

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After observing Holy Blessing Ceremonies in Thailand, FFWPU Hong Kong was inspired to host its own. We firmly decided to hold a blessing event before Foundation Day 2016, as an offering to our Heavenly Parent and True Parents. We set January 17 as the date, and we began our efforts with internal preparation, through two forty-day conditions of reading blessing-related Hoon Dok Hae material. FFWPU Hong Kong echoed the Hong Kong Tourist Association's theme and vision of creating a "Happy Hong Kong" by initiating a "Happy Family" movement in the city.

Among other indexes, the UN's World Happiness Report -- released since 2012 in conjunction with the UN International Day of Happiness -- shows that in recent years Hong Kongers rate themselves as increasingly less happy. High housing costs, high living costs, together with long working hours, put an enormous strain on individuals and even more so on families. Through community outreach, FFWPU called on couples and families to stand up and put strong and loving families first, by dedicating their own family to this ideal.



Hong Kong members invited their neighbors and friends to participate in the Blessing Ceremony. Pastor Namhi Hwang and Eve Lau reached out to community leaders and contacts of the Filial Piety Initiative, who strongly agreed with the need for such a movement and who were inspired by FFWPU's initiative.



Many community partners of FFWPU committed to join the event as guest speakers as well as participating couples to receive the blessing. Rev. Lee Mo-fan, director of the Lord Grace Home for the Aged, gave the Christian prayer blessing and brought twelve couples to participate. Mr. Chan Yung Wai from the Confucian Academy gave a Confucian blessing and participated in the blessing with his wife. A representative of Master Kwan Hsing from the Western Monastery chanted a passage from a Buddhist text to bless the participat-

ing couples. Dr. Li Siu Kei, chairperson of the Fuzi Association; Mrs. Lilian Lui, the executive director of

the Hong Kong Association of Senior Citizens; and Dr. Amen Lee, founder of Happeace gave congratulatory remarks. Dr. Lee also presented a beautiful reflection journal of his own design to each participating couple, which couples will use during the forty-day education program following the Blessing Ceremony.



Ceremony. Representative couples -- a prominent societal figure, an elderly couple and soon-to-be newlyweds stood in front, while others gathered close behind to receive the one-heart holy tea and holy water blessing. The atmosphere was vibrant and joyful as couples hugged and held hands tightly. Various religious leaders then gave interfaith prayer blessings for the couples.



Members brought their relatives and neighbors as well. Some couples began their married lives through the Blessing Ceremony, while many married couples renewed their vows. Twenty-five couples gathered to receive the blessing, as an audience of thirty-two -- friends, family and guests -- looked on.

We began the program with a video of our marriage blessing activities, followed by the graceful and heavenly music of the church choir led by Kaoru Obara. The audience then rose to welcome the officiators, Rev. and Mrs. Ker Shung Lee, the regional president of the Greater China Region, to the stage to conduct the Blessing

Mr. Peter Poon explained the significance of the forty-day separation leading to the three-day honeymoon period for couples to make a new start in their relationships. Those who committed to going through the forty-day program received the reflection journal to focus them on attitudes of gratitude during this time of self-purification and renewal. The attentive and supportive participants pledged to make a new start in their marriages. The event ended on a joyful note, with three cheers. Many guests and members expressed their happiness and gratitude with wishes that we could hold more Blessing Ceremonies in the near future.