

Marriage Beyond Borders Family Festival Brings the Blessing to Our Community

Matthew Huish

May 12, 2019



Family and friends gathered at Lancaster Gate to participate in the family festival in order to understand the significance of marriage in today's world.

The festival began with MC Matthew Huish welcoming attendees before inviting Jeff Bateman onto the stage for a rendition of 'Danny Boy', played on an Irish flute.

Ajay Rai was invited onto the stage following the musical performance. He spoke on the topic of 'The Unificationist legacy to the world'. He said: "I'd come to this idea of what this really meant. Was this marriage just about me? Or was it something more than just me? Was it even something more than just me and my wife?"

"And that's what I came to understand. That actually through this marriage, through this Blessing, we are doing something beyond ourselves."

He continued: "As a Unificationist community, you can go almost anywhere in the world and find a blessed family, and that in itself, that picture, that vision, that embodiment, that personification of that idea of the Blessing, is basically who we are.

"We as families, are bringing the world together."

David Rennie spoke of the theme of 'Ending Hatred, Starting Love'. He shared about his own experiences in his family and the how the inter-racial Blessing marriage broke down barriers of race, resentment and hatred. He said: "He [Rev. Moon] blessed in marriage, our members, who came from warring nations. Dutch with German, English with German.

"He [Rev. Moon] said 'If you can transcend your national antagonism, for the love of God, we will build a unified Europe. If there is no hope in your family, there is no hope in Europe. Will you pledge to overcome hatred and replace it with love?'"

Ron and Catherine German, the Marriage Blessing Ceremony officiators for the family festival, came on stage together in order to initiate the ceremony by beginning with the Holy Juice Ceremony. This was followed by interfaith readings, the Holy Water Ceremony, vows and prayers, all concluding with the Atonement Ceremony. The couples participating in the Blessing joined Ron and Catharine German in front of the stage.

Once the Blessing Ceremony concluded, David Mann offered two celebratory songs before inviting his spouse onstage for a third song. A quiz based around the family followed, before MC Matthew Huish brought the festival to an end with closing remarks.

The family festival gave attendees the opportunity to celebrate the union of marriage as well as helping them understand how significant marriage is in today's world.

For more information on the Blessing, please contact the Blessing department: jeff.@ffwpu.org.uk

