Austrian Unificationists Meet Their Messiah: 
The 1969 European Blessing, Its Context, and 
Aftermath

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1. Introduction

The year 1969 represents an important twofold break in the history of the Unification Movement (UM) in Austria: 1 spiritually and providentially, since for the first time Austrian members took part in a ‘blessing ceremony’ (ch’ukpoksik), the UM’s central religious rite that is believed to cleanse the participants of original sin, empowering them to become rightful ‘citizens’ of the Kingdom of God (cf. Mun 1986d: 172); 2 organisationally, since the Austrian national leader (hyŏphoejang) and first missionary to the country, German Paul Werner (1927–2008), switched position with German national

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Notes on Romanisation and Style: Korean terms and names are romanised using the McCune-Reischauer system. The phonetic transcription of Japanese is given according to the Modified Hepburn system. Korean names are written according to the East Asian custom: family name precedes personal name. To romanise the Korean given names, hyphens are included between syllables.

1 ‘Unification Movement’ is used as an umbrella term denoting a religious body, formally called Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU; Segye p’yŏngwha t’ongil kajŏng yŏnhap) since 1994, and the network of organisations, initiatives, and associations centred on it. The FFWPU replaced the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSAUWC; Segye kidokkyo t’ongil sillyŏng hyŏphoe) founded in Seoul on May 1, 1954.

2 “In the past at the time of Abraham, to become a citizen of Israel one had to be circumcised. And at the time of Jesus, one had to be baptised. Similarly, in the Unification Church, if you do not receive the blessing, you cannot become a citizen of the third Israel”: “과거의 아브라함 시대에는 이스라엘 백성이 되려면 할례를 해야 했습니다. 그리고 예수님 시대에는 세례를 받아야 했습니다. 마찬가지로 통일교회에서는 축복받지 않으면 제 3 이스라엘 백성이 못됩니다.” This and all other translations in this paper are by the author.
leader, Peter Koch (1927–1984), under whose leadership the Austrian group was to turn into the most visible exponent of Austria’s growing new religious scenery. Both events are tightly connected to the visit of the founder and central religious figure of the UM, Mun Sŏn-myŏng (1920–2012). Mun presided over and bestowed the ‘blessing’ (ch’ukpok) in the German city of Essen, a sojourn during which he also announced the change of leadership. Likewise, on the occasion of the blessing, members (with the exception of Werner and his family) for the first time were to meet the perceived Messiah (mesia) in the flesh, an experience much anticipated in previous years. Several days later, Mun was to be welcomed to his second visit to Austria.3

This paper focuses on the Essen Blessing, its theological underpinnings and context, and the immediate time before (January to March 1969) and after the event until the change of position between Werner and Koch took effect (May 18, 1969). In continuation of the author’s previous research (Pokorny and Steinbeiss 2012 and 2014), this paper again stresses a micro-historical approach to the early history of the UM in Austria, drawing on extensive archival sources, the use of qualitative (narrative, semi-structured, and problem-centred) interviews with a number of contemporaries (among others, Christel Werner, Gertrud Koch, Romana Kunkel [née Maierhofer], Brigitte Plöchl, Winfried Schwarzl, Ingeborg Sorgenicht [née Meyer]), video and image analysis, and exegesis. The theological explanations given in this paper are based on the state of Unification thought (t'ongil sasang) at the time of the Essen Blessing. Unificationism has never been a static construct but rather a steadily growing ideological repository, accommodating to newly surfacing historical and socio-political circumstances, personnel, and changes in Mun’s family. This means that much of what members knew and believed in the past was and still is being continuously challenged and broadened by and adjusted to historical developments, the socio-political context, novel theological interpretations, and freshly emerging themes of action. What is more, the transmission of religious knowledge in the early days of the Austrian movement, that is, in the 1960s and early 1970s, passed various ‘gatekeepers.’ These have been, most prominently, Kim Yŏng-un (1914–1989), Paul Werner, and Peter Koch. A former professor of Protestant Theology and the first Unificationist missionary to the United States (1959), Kim has been the most influential figure amid the early UM leadership (Pokorny 2017a: 217-218). On the one hand, her translations and systematisations of Unification theology were deemed authoritative by European members. Additionally, Kim edited newsletters and the members’ magazine The New Age Frontiers

3 Before, Mun had visited Vienna from August 15 to 17, 1965, with only Werner being present representing the Austrian branch.
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(later: New Age Frontiers) which were happily received also in Europe. On the other hand, Kim’s San Francisco commune was the ‘cadre factory’ for future early European missionaries including Peter Koch and Paul Werner. Hence, in the early years, Kim served as the main contact point between the missionaries in Europe and the Korean headquarters. Koch and Werner obtained their religious knowledge via Kim’s distinct interpretations and went on to produce their own translations from the scarce English materials available. Together with Ursula Schuhmann (b. 1937), the second missionary to Germany (and first one to Spain) and his ‘spiritual mother,’ Koch published the first loose German translation of the UM’s then central text, the Wŏlli haesŏl (Explanation of the Principle) (Kim 1963), which was to become the chief textbook within the German-speaking community alongside Kim’s English edition (upon which the German one was based) at the time.4 Werner and Koch, in their roles as national leaders, ‘direct disciples’ of Kim Yong-un, and being among those handful of Westerners who previously had close contact with Mun during his European tour in 1965, acted as the local religious and interpretative authorities.

All this shaped a particular localised form and mode of expression of Unification thought that has substantially been altered over time—a change for which the general dynamics of Unification theology formed the underlying trajectory. In other words, the Unificationist discourse, overall and in its localised form, at the turn of the 1960s (and in fact in every other period) contains semantic aspects specific for the time, and as such different from today.5

The following section delineates the background of and the setting prior to the Essen Blessing, providing a snapshot with rich historical information of the Austrian UM at the time. Section 3 offers a detailed discussion of the blessing ceremony, divided into three parts. First, the general theological and ritual framework is clarified. In a next step, a summary of the symbolic meanings of the various blessing ceremonies leading to the clustered 43 Couples

4 In the late 1960s, Werner started his own translation (based on an English draft translation of the Wŏlli kangnon [WK]; literally Exposition of the Principle; see note 21) of which he already used parts while still in Austria. His Die Göttlichen Prinzipien (The Divine Principles) was finally published in 1972 (Gesellschaft zur Vereinigung des Weltchristentums e.V. 1972). By 1969, the English version used particularly by Austrian members was the 1968 study guide edition of Kim’s Divine Principle and Its Application.

5 To name just two examples: The clearly emphasised imminence of millenarian expectation (cf. Pokorny 2014) but also the exalted soteriological status of blessed families articulated in the 1960s and early 1970s has been saliently relativised today. The salvific role of Mun’s wife, Han Hak-cha (b. 1943), albeit theoretically important at all times, has only since the 1990s notably evolved in practice. Today, the state of messianity is accredited not only to Mun but also to Han, whose salvational contribution to God’s providence is being viewed in a new light (cf. Pokorny 2013; 2014; 2017a).
Blessing of which the Essen Blessing represents the middle part is given. Finally, the Essen Blessing itself and the surrounding events are described. Section 4 takes up the developments subsequent to the Essen Blessing until the arrival of Peter Koch to replace Paul Werner as Austria’s national leader, marking a new era for the Austrian movement.

Starting at the end of the 1960s while still under Werner’s lead, the ‘Austrian Family’ for some years represented the most vibrant Unificationist community in Europe, capable to dispatch dozens of international missionaries. Even today the Austrian UM proportionally comprises the second largest number of adherents in Europe (after Albania), and has in more recent years (December 5, 2014) gained a special strategic status of ‘providential nation’ (sŏmni kukka) conferred by the South Korean leadership within the current proselytising campaign (cf. Pokorny 2013). A vocal proponent of Unificationism in Europe in the past and the present, and, equally, a key protagonist in Austria’s religious history over the last more than forty years—having been in the spotlight of public attention in particular during the 1970s and 1980s—the Austrian UM offers a fascinating object of study for the scholar of religion in Austria. With this in mind, this paper resumes a micro-historical exploration of the UM, aiming to thoroughly trace the varied development of this vital contributor to Austria’s pluri-religious history.

2. The Context

The history of Unificationism in Austria begins with Paul Werner’s arrival on May 18, 1965. Encountering the UM two years earlier in the United States (Sacramento), he and his wife, Christel (b. 1929), both devout Lutherans, swiftly converted. In the spring of 1964, they returned to Germany, intent to help pioneering the European mission alongside fellow German missionaries Peter Koch and Ursula Schuhmann, who already relocated in 1963. Werner (1965: 1) wrote in his diary:

After having attempted for ca. one year in America and, eventually, for one year in Germany to spread the Principles, and, to represent our Master out of deep awareness, I decided to go to Austria in order to spread the Principles

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6 A European membership report from March 3, 2015, circulated by the UM European Headquarters lists Austria as ranking third in Europe in total numbers and fourth by adult followers with 480 members across all age groups. The remaining top-ten ranked nations are the United Kingdom (960); Germany (922); Italy (468); France (381); Spain (259); Hungary (257); Albania (208); the Slovak Republic (192); and Switzerland (171).
there. Only a few days were lying between the [formation of the] idea and its execution [...].

The Austrian mission only slowly picked up pace. By April 1966, he had won over seven followers in good standing (at the time, this already exceeded the neighbouring German mission, which counted six members)—five female and two male, aged between 18 and 28, and all hailing from a Protestant background. Subsequently, he formally incorporated the Gesellschaft zur Vereinigung des Weltchristentums (GVW; Society for the Unification of World Christianity) as an association based on the 1951 Vereinsgesetz (Act on Associations) on May 16, 1966. A couple of weeks earlier, Werner rented a flat in Zirkusgasse 37 in Vienna’s second district, which then became the GVW’s headquarters until another flat was taken in Ölzeltgasse 1B/8 in the third district in March 1967. Additionally, in November 1968, a huge flat was rented in Schlüsselgasse 3/2 in the fourth district, which was subsequently assigned the new headquarters. In September 1966 and January 1967, the Austrian mission expanded for the first time domestically, opening a ‘centre’ in the cities of Graz and Linz, respectively. By the end of 1966, the overall membership increased to around a dozen followers, growing to some twenty members a year later, and more than thirty by late 1968. A first concerted economic effort under Werner’s direction materialised in early 1968 with the launch of a nursery (tenderly called ‘Ingeborg’) in Pyrkergasse 6 in Vienna’s nineteenth district. The year 1968 also marked the inception of the GVW’s missionary outreach abroad. Missionaries were sent to Zurich, Switzerland in March—Bernhard Maierhofer (1943–2012)—and Bratislava, Czechoslovakia in October—Emilie Steberl (later Steberl-Lee, 1932–1981). Whereas the former’s missionary sojourn was unsuccessful, Steberl could indeed recruit followers, thuslastingly establishing Unificationism in Czechoslovakia and its successor states.

From the earliest days of the GVW (i.e., since 1966), proselytising efforts were particularly driven by the perennial expectation of Mun’s visit, fuelled by continued reports of Kim Yŏng-un. Ultimately, anticipation concerning

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7 “Nachdem ich schon ca. ein Jahr in Amerika und schließlich ein Jahr in Deutschland (Wiesbaden) versuchte, die Prinzipien zu verbreiten und aus tiefer Erkenntnis heraus unserer Meister vertreten wollte, entschied ich mich, nach Österreich zu gehen, um die Prinzipien dort zu verbreiten. Zwischen Gedanken und Ausführung lagen nur einige Tage [...].”

8 Whereas during the incipient stage of the Austrian UM, proselytising (chiefly done by Werner himself) largely took place among the Protestant community, with a growing bloc of dedicated adherents, missionary activities naturally reached out to the Catholic environment. From that time onwards, neo-members almost exclusively were former Catholics.

9 What Unificationists then styled ‘centres’ were private flats rented by members.
the Master’s actual arrival became more concrete in January 1969.10 With Mun’s departure from South Korea for his so-called ‘Second World Tour’ on February 2, the itinerary appeared to be relatively fixed,11 including, tentatively, a visit to Germany and Austria at the end of March. Preparation work quickly ensued. The lead article of the March issue of the GVW’s internal monthly Familien Nachrichten (Family News) rejoiced (FN3 1969: 3):

Our Master visits Europe! This joyous message has now kept us in suspense for more than a month already. On a regular basis, we receive reports on the further course of the world tour of our Master. […] In a few weeks time our true parents will be here in Europe. We can hardly grasp the magnitude of the event, encountering the Master and the Mother while in Vienna for a few days. For us, a dream becomes reality, and the time ahead is full of hope and expectation. […] The journey of our true parents is a piece of history of humankind’s road to restoration. Another step towards the goal is being taken; bea- coning humankind back to God. New foundations will now manifest in Euro- pe, so that the work can proceed faster. More bases are active for the impact of the Divine Principles, and the area of good can spread more quickly. However, all the immediate visible preparations, such as the refurbishing of our centre, organisational work, and acquisitions, should be preceded primarily by the renewal of our hearts. A real cleansing of the soul should take place in order to face the coming of our true parents replete with joy. In our centre in the Schlüsselgasse things are being refurbished and rearranged since a few weeks. […] Our greatest joy is our new Master’s Chamber, which has already been fully furnished for the Master’s visit. Doors and windows have been re-painted, the floor has been made shine anew, and the walls have been newly painted. […] In a short time, an exalted spiritual atmosphere should arise so

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10 Until then the travelling plan was in limbo due to visa problems. Interestingly, during 1968 Koch was repeatedly advised to purchase a number of one-way tickets for Mun and company to and later from Germany out of the German group’s pocket in order to speed up the visa application process. Eventually, even though the tickets were bought and sent, they were not used because of changes in the itinerary and the composition of the travelling party.

11 The travel route of Mun and his entourage, especially for the sojourn to Europe, changed several times in-between, so that, for example, the trip to Vienna was suddenly close to being cancelled by mid-February. Yet, after several days, Werner delivered the ‘good news,’ as is reported in a missionary diary (Missionary Diary Ölztelgasse 3: 84): “Today, Paul has told us that our ‘parents’ will come to Vienna after all as planned. We may already meet our ‘true parents’ now; how great and enormous is this thought by itself, and let alone when it becomes reality” (“Heute hatte uns Paul erzählt, daß unsere ‘Eltern’ doch nach Wien kommen werden, wie bis jetzt der Plan ist. Wir dürfen jetzt schon unsere ‘wahren Eltern’ sehen, wie groß und gewaltig ist der Gedanke alleine schon und erst wenn dieser dann zur Wirklichkeit wird”).
that our Master and our Mother can feel during their visit that here we pray in their names.\textsuperscript{12}

The providential purpose of Mun’s visit to Europe was disclosed to members a month prior to his arrival—a blessing of longstanding members, including Werner and his spouse. That the venue of the blessing was to be the German city of Essen was circulated only in early March. The weeks and months before the visit were characterised by increasing elation articulated also through mounting missionary fervour. As one diary entry paradigmatically reads: “Ever more and more shall the street become our native land, shall become home to us” (Missionary Diary Ölzeltgasse 3: 104).\textsuperscript{13} Street witnessing was a fixed component of members’ daily routine following their day jobs, and also constituted a key weekend activity occupying most of Saturday and especially the time after the Sunday service. Evenings were normally reserved for commune meetings, frequently taking place in the headquarters. Ordinarily, these meetings involved \textit{Divine Principle} study sessions, often (co-)chaired by Werner, and joint singing and music-making in preparation for the forthcoming visit of the Master. At the time, discussions were especially animated by the prospect of Mun’s imminent arrival, and, concomitantly, the experiencing of his divinely sanctioned spiritual power. Likewise, English lessons intensified. In all their activities members aspired to conjure


\textsuperscript{13} “Immer mehr und mehr soll uns die Straße zur Heimat, zum Zuhause werden.”
a particular fruitful spiritual environment in order not to harm but to properly harmonise with the spiritually beneficial field supposedly emanating from the Master. The prospect of soon encountering the Messiah was felt by many to be salvific in its own right: “One can hardly believe it; ever and ever again the same thought: soon we get to meet Christ, we get to face our true parents. We of all people! Humanity already awaits him for 2000 years” (Missionary Diary Ölzeltgasse 3: 112).\(^{14}\)

On March 19, Koch informed Werner about the exact date (March 24) of the Master’s arrival in Düsseldorf (coming from London) as well as Vienna (April 5–7). The last preparations in the Vienna headquarters, such as accessorising the ‘Master’s Chamber’ (Meisterzimmer) also with Korea-style decorations, were hurriedly completed.\(^{15}\) The dress rehearsal of the blessing garments, tailored by one of the Austrian members—Herta Goldfuß (later Bendolf)—took place the evening before the departure to Germany (FN 1969: 6). At 5:00 a.m. on March 22, the Vienna party, consisting of thirty-one members, left the Schlüsselgasse headquarters for Essen (see Figure 1). The convoy arrived at 11:00 p.m. at the Essen centre on Alfredstraße 375, where members of various German centres (Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Duisburg, and Stuttgart) as well as international attendees had already gathered. The next day (Sunday) started with a joint morning service headed by the early-day Austrian member Ingeborg Eisner (later van Winden, b. 1938). A fellow Austrian, Dietrich Seidel (1943–2016), who would later (1987) become a professor at the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, delivered the sermon. Following the service, further preparations for adorning the blessing premises and the centre were made, and a twenty-one hour prayer vigil conducted by three members simultaneously began after hourly slots were assigned.\(^{16}\) In the late afternoon, the members drove to the Falkenheim on Holsterhauser Straße 200, a place rented from a transnational socialist youth organisation, the Rote Falken (Red Falcons), founded by the Austrian social democrat Anton Tesarek (1896–1977) in 1925. The Falkenheim served not only as the venue for the blessing and most of its surrounding events but also as a dormitory for the female members, while Mun, his entourage, as well as the male adherents lodged in the Essen centre. After Koch sanctified the premises, the remainder of the evening was spent setting up the technical

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15 In their preparations for Mun’s visit, the hosts in Austria and Germany were meticulously following Kim Yong-un’s guidelines, which she communicated by postal mail.

16 The national leaders of Austria, France, and Germany, that is Werner, Vincenz, and Koch, came first.
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3. The Blessing

For the wedding ceremony conducted in 1960, we had to raise and settle all the indemnity conditions relating to the course of history of four thousand years from Adam to Jesus and two thousand years from Jesus up until today. This event was carrying global and cosmic significance, yet, in actuality, it was effected by a small number of people. The persecution we faced at the time was unimaginable. [...] That day was the day that determined the destiny of the Unification Church (Mun 1986f: 189-190).

Mun’s assessment of the first blessing ever held, given in his well-known Tōkyō speech of February 2, 1969, spells out most distinctive themes of the Unificationist discourse—themes that informed the group’s millenarian tenor most saliently between the 1960s and the 1980s: ruthless and satanically-driven oppression versus compassionate and salvific devotion, and the mechanics behind—what the church elder Kim Sang-ch’ŏl (1915–2011) styled—‘Unification Optimism,’ a positive millenarian outlook in the face of a providential caesura eventually turning the tide in favour of the faithful. This watershed Unificationists recognised at the latest in Mun’s own blessing ceremony, auspiciously called ‘marriage [feast] of the lamb’ (ŏrinyang honin [chanch’i]):

Then what is the [marriage] feast of the lamb? Adam and Eve, who should have been married by God six thousand years ago, joined in marriage while centring on Satan, becoming the evil ancestors. Yet, to rectify this God must

17 “1960 년에 행했던 성혼식의 배후에는 아담 이후 예수님 때까지 4 천년, 예수님으로부터 오늘에 이르기까지 2 천년의 역사과정에서 걸었던 모든 것을 당갑조건을 세워 해결하지 않으면 안 되는 내용이 있었다. 그 행사는 세계적이고 친주적인 의미를 지니고 있음에도 불구하고, 현실적으로는 소수의 사람들에 의해서 이루어진 것이고, 그에 대한 박해는 상상할 수 없을 정도로 컸다. [...] 그날이 통일교회의 운명을 결정한 최초의 나이었다.”

put up a new bridegroom and bride in the historic Last Days and again arrange a feast to celebrate their wedding. That feast is the [marriage] feast of the lamb. Through this feast, the True Parents, who had been lost [to history], will be born in front of humankind (Mun 1986g: 163).\textsuperscript{19}

The fulfilment of John’s vision in Rev 19.7-9,\textsuperscript{20} Mun’s blessing is believed to be the first matrimony centring on and directly sanctioned by God. In other words, this ceremony held on April 11, 1960, after several failed attempts, brought to fruition the first of two stages of God’s ‘ideal of creation’ (ch’angjo isang). As is systematically outlined in the \textit{WK},\textsuperscript{21} God (hananim) created Adam and Eve as the focal point of His love with the intention to install humankind as His foremost object partner. This would have been realised had the first ancestors raised a family, uniting in love and moral allegiance to God. To put it in Unificationist terms, meeting God’s desire and, accordingly, accomplishing the ‘purpose of creation’ (ch’angjo mokchŏk) Adam and Eve would have needed to establish the Four Position Foundation (sawi kidae) centring on God, that is, the archetype of familial harmony between (1) husband, (2) wife, and (3) children, attained and maintained through a mutually endorsing (4) God-directed life (\textit{WK} I.1, 21-69). From such ‘true family’ (ch’am kajŏng), bound together by love and piety, a civilisation of peace and an ideal world would have issued forth, and so the Kingdom of Heaven on earth (chisang ch’ŏnguk) and in heaven (ch’ŏnsang ch’ŏnguk) would have dawned. A major element of and an obstacle for many towards godly living is to embrace sexual purity, that is, morally acceptable sexual behaviour that is limited to conjugality. In fact, Unificationists view

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\textsuperscript{19} "그러면 이 어린양 잔치가 뭐냐? 6 천년 전에 하나님이 결혼시켜 주었어야 할 아담 해와가 사탄을 중심삼고 결혼을 해서 악의 조상이 되었으니. 그러나 그것을 복구하기 위하여 역사적인 끝날에 하나님이 새로운 신랑 신부를 세워 다시 결혼식을 해주는 잔치가 있어야 합니다. 그 잔치가 어린양 잔치입니다. 이 잔치를 함으로써 낳아 ------> 잡부모가 인류 앞에 탄생하게 되는 것입니다.

\textsuperscript{20} ‘Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure’—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’"

\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{WK} has been the major scripture of the Mun-led UM since its publication in 1966. However, with Mun’s passing the central role attributed to the \textit{WK} by the UM leadership is waning in consequence of the promotion of a new three-tier set of scriptures: the Ch’ŏnsŏnggyŏng (Heavenly Scripture), the P’yŏnghwagyŏng (Scripture of Peace), and the Ch’ambumogyŏng (True Parents’ Scripture). Following the Wŏlli haesŏl (1957), the \textit{WK} is the second revision of the Wŏlli wŏnbon (1952; \textit{Original Text of the Principle}), authored by Yu Hyo-wŏn (1914–1970), the HSAUWC’s first president (1954–1970), under the guidance of Mun.
misdirected sexuality as the very reason why God’s design for humankind initially failed. Premarital intercourse, first between the angelic mentor-in-lead Nusiel and Eve, thereafter between Eve and Adam, sealed the Fall of all three protagonists in the Garden of Eden (Pokorny 2017b). Defying God’s will out of envy and arrogance—the result of an acrimonious feeling of having gradually lost divine affection after the creation of humans—the archangel Nusiel defiled Eve (causing the ‘spiritual Fall’ or yŏngjŏk t’arak) and thus turned into Satan. Emotionally stained by her illicit sexual relationship, Eve went on to seduce Adam (causing the ‘physical Fall’ or yukchŏk t’arak), passing on elements of the devilish nature received. The subsequently established Four Position Foundation was—apparently much to God’s sorrow—centring on Satan and became the nucleus of the world to come, the world of chaos to which Mun’s life and ministry heralded the Last Days (malse). Unificationists trust in God’s unalterable providence that His project of cosmic harmony based on ‘true families’ and ‘true love’ (ch’am sarang), that is, unconditional love towards others entrenched in impassionate commitment to God and His principles taught by Mun, will soon come true. The Last Days signify the final phase in this millenarian venture, shouldered by the efforts of the Lord of the Second Advent (chaerimju), Mun, and in his wake, the faithful. According to tradition, Mun was sent by God to successfully conclude what Jesus began two thousand years ago, namely to rightly establish a Four Position Foundation centring on God and so lay the groundwork for the Kingdom of Heaven to materialise. Yet, Jesus’ mission failed inasmuch as he could not raise a true family and, therefore, physically return humankind under God’s sovereignty and instil in them true love. Instead, he was overcome owing to Satan’s machinations and put to the cross, in this way only being able to bring spiritual redemption. Jesus and his successor, Mun, both shared the divinely bestowed state of sinlessness, rendering them potentially capable to indemnify the wrong committed by Adam and Eve, and their sinful offspring. Other than Jesus, however, Mun accomplished the mission ordained by God. That is to say, he received God’s blessing in marriage with Han putting them into the position of True Parents (ch’am pumo), and fathered children free from

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22 In the Unificationist jargon, the term ‘true’ (ch’am) refers to an inherent connection to God.
23 ‘True Parents’ (Wahre Eltern), or individually ‘True Father’ (Wahrer Vater), shortened ‘Father’ (Vater), and ‘True Mother’ (Wahre Mutter), shortened ‘Mother’ (Mutter), is the common honorific appellation used by Unificationists to address Mun and Han. It relates to their status as the first couple that completed the unity based on true love which God originally envisaged for Adam and Eve. From the point of view of the purpose of creation, as Unificationists argue, their blessing rendered Mun and Han the first true
sin, and ever since repeated the restoration ritual that cleansed the satanically-tainted lineage of those taking part in it. This ritual is the blessing ceremony, an emulation of the ‘Marriage of the Lamb’ of Mun and Han in 1960. Fourteen years were taken as necessary to prepare and indemnify so that the conditions were properly set to allow the Messiah to ‘engraft’ (chŏpput’im) a woman onto himself. With Han, Mun picked the seventeen years old daughter of a most devout early female follower, Hong Sun-ae (1914–1989), to assume the role of True Mother (ch’am ŏmŏnim). Through Mun, Han could be engrafted into the divine lineage, a process ritually re-enacted on a larger scale via mass blessings as means to liberate the faithful from Satan’s dominion. At its core, the blessing ceremony serves as a ritual to change each participant’s blood lineage—a ceremony of ‘lineage restoration’ (hyŏlt’ong pokkwi) or ‘lineage conversion’ (hyŏlt’ong chŏnhwan)—by virtue of the salvific power of Mun (with Han). The blessing is described as a transformation process energised by true love consummated through the conjugal love of Mun and Han, in which the participants are ‘reborn’ as God-desired original beings purified from their fallenness (cf. Mun 1986a: 192). The newly blessed couples become themselves saviours of their future now sinless children, “opening the door to their salvation” (Mun 1986b: 32). Ultimately, the blessing shall enable the adherents to enter the heavenly realm in the hereafter, provided they have internalised the religious virtue taught by Mun.

The blessing ceremony traditionally consists of five parts, of which the first three can be carried out consecutively in a single event or separately on ancestors of humankind. In the early movement, Mun was more often than not referred to as ‘Master’ (Meister).

24 Numerological calculations and interpretations (ex post) have always been important to Mun. Hence, even the age difference between Mun and his wife—the former should not have been older than forty, the latter should be under twenty years of age—has been theologically justified. Mun publicly announced the engagement circa two weeks before the wedding. Han has been Mun’s second wife, and the third woman with whom he (officially) sired a child. Possible theological issues or implications concerning these two relationships, one even resulting in a child born out of wedlock, are usually not addressed.

25 In respect to the rationale behind the participation of multiple bridal couples in the blessing ceremony, Mun states in December 1967: “A banquet held by God must be more extravagant than any other banquet in Satan’s realm. However, an individual cannot uphold this standard. That is why we must host joint wedding ceremonies like never before in history (Mun 1986b: 32)”; “하나님의 베푼 연회는 사탄세계의 어느 연회보다도 거창해야 한다. 그러나 개체로서는 그 기준에 설 수 없으니, 역사 이래 없었던 합동결혼식을 올려야 하는 것이다.” Another reason already given early by Mun is the symbolic-numerological and providential significance as discussed in the following section. In explaining why his own blessing, being the most crucial of all, has been comparatively modest, Mun indicates that it was held at a time of severe hardships, preventing a more flamboyant ceremony (cf. Mun 1986c: 70).
one or more days: the ‘holy wine ceremony’ (sŏngjusik); the actual ‘blessing ceremony’ (ch’ukpoksik); the ‘indemnity stick ceremony’ (t’anggambong haengsa); a forty-day separation period, that is, the ‘forty-day consecration’ (sasibil sŏngbyŏl); and the ‘three-day ceremony’ (samil haengsa). Preceding the blessing ceremony, scheduled on the same day to a couple of days before the holy wine ceremony, is the ‘engagement ceremony’ (yakhonsik). Mun and Han’s own blessing on April 11, and the 3 Couples Blessing on April 16, 1960, comprised only the blessing ceremony. The forty-day separation period and three-day ceremony were first introduced at the 36 Couples Blessing on May 15, 1961, the holy wine ceremony at the 72 Couples Blessing on June 4, 1962, the use of ‘holy water’ (sŏngsu) at the 120 Couples Blessing on July 24, 1963, and the indemnity stick ceremony at the 430 Couples Blessing on February 22, 1968. While the general structure of the blessing was determined relatively early, the exact course of action during the first three parts as well as the engagement ceremony, especially in the 1960s, was flexible and as such arranged at Mun’s discretion. The larger the size of the events became, the more formalised the procedure.

Before the faithful can attend the blessing ceremony, they have to be engaged in a separate ritual. In reference to Adam and Eve, who fell at the stage of engagement, the future husband and wife need to bring to mind the events of the Fall and its devastating implications, mentally reaffirming their conviction to and sincerity in further moral self-development, which only works in tandem with others, and proselytising. The ceremony symbolically or mentally cleanses the couple’s fallen nature and lineage and puts them in the position of engaged Adam and Eve prior to the Fall. Following the notional purification, the holy wine ceremony shall then substantially purify the participant’s lineage: “[T]he holy wine ceremony draws out the blood of Satan that has soiled the lineage through the Fall. In other words, it is the ceremony that draws out the original sin” (Mun 1986i: 216). The couple receives a small cup of ‘holy wine’ (sŏngju), which shall be reminiscent of blood, spiritually prepared by Mun and presented by him to contain twenty-one different

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26 This part of the ceremony is today mainly referred to as ‘chastening ceremony’ or occasionally ‘indemnity ceremony’ in English.

27 German-speaking members often use the English terms instead of the German renderings when referring to the various parts of the blessing ceremony. Generally, the usage of Anglicisms and Koreanisms for certain theological terms is common. The German designations for the ceremonial parts are Heiliger Wein Zeremonie or Weinzeremonie; Segnungszeremonie or Segnung; Zeremonie des Wiedergutmachungsstocks; and Drei-Tage Zeremonie.

28 ‘그리고 성주식은 타락으로 말미암아 혐동적으로 더럽혀진 사탄의 피를 뽑아 버리는 것입니다. 다시 말해서 원죄를 뽑아 버리는 식이라는 것입니다’.
ingredients representing all elements of creation and True Parents’ love. Since Eve was the first to transgress God’s will, the bride, being in the position of fallen Eve, must drink first to be restored before she hands the remaining half to the bridegroom, who, being in the position of fallen Adam, empties the cup. Imbibing the wine resembles the Eucharist. The couple consumes True Parents’ blood, the ‘blood of indemnification’ (t’anggam’ŭi p’i), through which they inherit Mun’s untainted vitality, connect to God’s lineage, and thus acquire the potential to grow to moral and spiritual perfection. This potential is effectively sealed by the blessing ceremony that lets husband and wife coalesce in a union of true love, endowing the couple with the authority to carry out the ‘three great blessings’ (sammae ch’ukpok) in line with God’s ideal of creation.\(^{29}\) Whereas the holy wine ceremony binds each participant to God individually, the blessing ceremony establishes the relationship necessary to build the Four Position Foundation, a miniature version of the Kingdom of Heaven. Beginning with Adam and Eve, a civilisation based on the principle of true love would have naturally followed God’s vision for His creation and continued to maintain cosmic harmony. Since humankind fell, however, the faithful, with the blessed couples in the vanguard, must reclaim God’s homeland. This is done by extending sanctified territory alongside a Confucian-minded evolutionary scale towards cosmic harmony, starting from one’s own family—the Four Position Foundation—for which the blessing ceremony lays the foundation. It creates the axis between God’s love and the true love of humans consummated in a conjugal relationship. The blessing ceremony follows a ritualised course, which has been enhanced over time, carrying various symbolic implications. In a 1968 speech, Mun elucidates:

At the blessing ceremony, twenty-four people, namely twelve groomsmen and bridesmaids, are positioned [forming an entryway] to signify formation [lit. ‘revival’], growth, and completion. They represent the number 3 and also the twelve apostles of Jesus [and the twelve tribes of Israel]. After taking seven steps one must make three bows as the condition to have passed through the formation [stage]. This symbolises the course of history from Adam until now. [...] The True Parents sprinkling holy water sets the condition that the participants have been restored through indemnity (Mun 1986e: 269-270).\(^{30}\)

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\(^{29}\) The *WK* (I.1.3, 44) references Gen 1.28: “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’.”

\(^{30}\) “축복 행사를에 소생, 장성, 완성을 의미하는 21 인 [sic], 즉 12 인의 들러리를 세운다. 이것은 3 수를 대표하는 것이고, 또한 예수님의 12 제자를 의미하는 것이다. 7 보를 거쳐 소생을 넘은 조건으로 3 차례 경배를 해야 하는 것이다. 이 노정은
Once the blessing has been received, the couple needs to perform the indemnity stick ritual. The setting can vary from a more symbolically to a physically executed chastening either in private or—more traditionally—amid a smaller circle of people including other blessed couples and officiators. The husband, still representing Adam, starts by striking his wife, or ‘Eve,’ three times on her buttocks which is repeated vice versa. On the one hand, this is to symbolise forgiveness and the removal of past mutual resentment with the husband hitting first since misconduct sprang from Eve’s part first. The locus of resentment between the sexes and thus general disharmony has always been the pelvis—Adam and Eve as fallen human archetypes fell due to the misuse of their sexual organs. On the other hand, the three strikes are meant to indemnify mutual injustice during the periods of ‘formation’ (sosaeng), ‘growth’ (changsŏng), and ‘perfection’ (wansŏng), and the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Completed Testament (i.e., Mun’s revelation) age (sŏng-yak sidae). Subsequent to the indemnity stick ceremony is the forty-day separation or indemnity period after which the marriage is eventually consummated at the three-day ceremony. Forty days of indemnity symbolise the indemnification of all of historical time since the Fall. The highly ritualised course of three days of the last chapter of the blessing represents a tripartite restoration process—fallen Adam and the Old Testament age, Jesus’ suffering and the New Testament age, and the true bride and bridegroom. Among other things, husband and wife have to wash their bodies using each a ‘holy handkerchief’ (sŏnggŏn). Sprinkled with holy wine, the handkerchief is supposed to cleanse of external defilement, referring back to the holy wine ceremony in which the inside has been purified by consuming the holy wine. The three-day ceremony concludes the metamorphosis of the faithful and marks a caesura—the ‘rebirth’ of two people as true husband and wife and future true parents themselves.

3.1. The Background and Significance of the Essen Blessing

The Essen Blessing was a relatively small-scale event, the smallest (providentially significant) blessing ever held. Effectively, it was the second in a series of three individual blessing ceremonies held in the first half of 1969, known by Unificationists as the ‘43 Couples Blessing.’ Rather than by the year the blessings took place, members refer to them by the providentially crucial (occasionally symbolic) number of couples blessed. Every blessing or

아담부터 지금까지의 역사노정을 나타내는 것이다. […] 참부모가 성수를 뿌리는 것은 여러분이 탕감복귀했다는 조건을 세우기 위함이다."
series of blessings like in the case of the 43 Couples Blessing carries a numerological or providential meaning, depicted by the usually quoted number of participating couples, a number which might not always indicate the actual number of couples blessed, as with the 120 Couples or the 36 Couples Blessing where, in fact, 124 and thirty-three couples, respectively, obtained the blessing. The 43 Couples Blessing, and thus the Essen Blessing, belongs to a providentially evolving succession of blessings, commencing with Mun’s own blessing ceremony in Seoul on April 11, 1960, the so-called ‘Marriage of the Lamb.’ In particular during the 1960s and 1970s, Unificationists defined this initial blessing as a providential turning point, after which completion of the millenarian project were to be close at hand. Following the Marriage of the Lamb, and in keeping with the idea of a three-part soteriological and millenarian development process—formation, growth, and perfection—the ‘kingdom-building’ agenda of the UM entered a first seven-year course until 1967, with—according to Mun—a focus on establishing an initial spiritual impact across all stratifications of worldly order, ranging from the individual and the family to the tribe, the nation, and the world. The next seven-year course until 1974, during which the 43 Couples Blessing took place, aimed at further intensifying the mission with the final goal to spiritually restore a nation. Ultimately, Mun projected that by the end of the third seven-year course in 1981 “Unification thought would appear worldwide as the leading thinking” (Mun 1987: 270).  

From a theological perspective, the blessings were crucially important to expedite this ambitious scheme and fill the ranks of those qualified for ‘salvation.’ Apart from the inaugural Marriage of the Lamb, five (traditionally cited as ‘four’) blessings, all of which were solemnised in Seoul, preceded the 43 Couples Blessing in 1969. A rough overview of the varied symbolic meanings—some of which overlap—attached to these blessings shall follow below.

First, the 3 Couples Blessing on April 16, 1960, that is traditionally counted as part of the 36 (33+3) Couples Blessing on May 15, 1961. The three couples—Kim Wŏn-p’il (1928–2010) and Chŏng Tar-ok (1920–2000), Yu Hyo-wŏn and Sa Kir-ja (b. 1933), Kim Yŏng-hwi (b. 1928) and Chŏng Tae-hwa—represent Jesus’ three closest disciples (Peter, James, and John) and their wives, a wedding the historical Jesus was actually unable to conduct. In addition, the male members symbolise the three archangels (Nusiel,
Gabriel, and Michael) and stand generically for Mun’s three spiritual children and sons, which is also why their engagement ceremony had to predate Mun’s blessing. The 3 Couples Blessing was deemed essential to divinely reclaim from Satan the religious symbolicity of the figure ‘3.’ Basically, a larger projection of the 3 Couples Blessing is the 36 Couples Blessing, symbolically calculated as 3x12 couples. The first cohort represents Adam’s family and humanity’s ancestors in general; the second Noah’s family as well as the current generation; and the third Jacob’s or Abraham’s family and future humankind. Furthermore, each cohort corresponds to Jesus’ twelve apostles and, taken together, may also signify fallen humankind from the times of Adam to Abraham as well as the indemnification and harmonisation of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Completed Testament ages. In its symbolic relationship with the succeeding 72 Couples Blessing of June 4, 1962, the thirty-six couples gain yet another emblematic position, namely that of Adam, whose indemnification enables his sons Cain and Abel, represented by the seventy-two (2x36) couples, to reconcile. Furthermore, the seventy-two (3x2x12) couples depict the unity of this archetypical conflicting relationship for each of the three providential ages. Together the 36 (Adam and Eve or husband and wife) and the 72 Couples (Cain and Abel or children) Blessing establish a rightful Four Position Foundation. Another symbolic element underscores the natural succession of the blessings so far: whereas the Marriage of the Lamb enacted the wedding of Jesus, and the 36 Couples Blessing was centred on the marriage of the twelve (3+9) apostles, the seventy-two couples typify Jesus’ seventy-two disciples (cf. Luke 10.1). Spinning this further, the 120 couples of the succeeding 120 Couples Blessing on July 24, 1963, mirror Jesus’ 120 disciples (cf. Acts 1.15; Mun 1986f) who, after his passing, embraced the Holy Spirit. Representing 120, that is, all the nations of the world, and the twelve tribes, the blessing of the 120 couples built the basis upon which global indemnification, and as such worldwide restoration, would henceforth be possible. The four additional (previously married) couples added to the 120 should embody the four directions (i.e., the whole world) spiritually affected by the blessing, and thus set the symbolic condition that would allow married couples to be redeemed.

The 430 Couples Blessing on February 22, 1968, and attendant the 43 Couples Blessing were, above all, meant to signify religious awakening or—in the words of Mun—a “conversion point in history crossing over to a new

34 Mun is aware of both readings of this passage, that is, that Jesus appointed either seventy or seventy-two disciples to preach, applying both alternatingly in his numerological considerations.
era” (Mun 1986d: 173), resting on the providential basis erected by the previous ceremonies. On the one hand, the forty-three couples represent a condensation of the 430, both sharing the same external symbolisms. On the other hand, the forty-three carry a specific internal symbolism vis-à-vis the 430. Inherent to both blessings is the number 43 that signals the kick-off to positive change and the state of nation. The number relates to the 430 years the Israelites lived in Egypt (cf. Ex 12.40), a period of time after which transformation of an own God-devoted nation (i.e., Canaan) ensued. Equally, 43 indicates 4,300 years of Korean history spanning from the (mythical) inception of Kochosŏn (tr. 2333–108 BCE) to 1967, and as such the advent of a new Korean nation. Through the 430 Couples Blessing, especially, the Unificationist mission was emphatically connected to the Korean people as the carriers of global spiritual transformation. Much like the 120, the forty-three couples blessed in 1969, specifically, epitomise the nations of the world, an international extension of the 430. Their blessing granted the Korea-based mission an international dimension, coupling the Korean (430) with a worldwide (43) mission. The international context of the 43 Couples Blessing was secured through three different blessing ceremonies in terms of both location and ethnic composition. The first one was hosted in Washington, D.C. on February 28, 1969, assembling thirteen American couples, a figure believed by some members to be in reference to the thirteen original American colonies. Twenty-two Japanese couples were blessed in Tōkyō on May 1, 1969. Bracketed by these two events was the first European blessing, comprising eight couples, held in Essen on March 28, 1969. Like with the two other parts of the 43 Couples Blessing, the adherents receiving the blessing at the Essen ceremony were all (save for one) early pioneering members with some spearheading national missions. Among them were eight from Germany, including the then Austrian national leader, Paul Werner, and his wife Christel, two Americans, two Dutch, two English, one Austrian, and one Italian. Germany’s hitherto seminal contribution to fostering the European mission (cf. Pokorny and Steinbeiss 2014: 186 n13), its weighty providential status as a ‘nation on Satan’s side’ (sat’an’pyŏn kukka) (cf. WK II.5.4.3, 513-519) notwithstanding, served as a fine theological argument carrying symbolic power for bringing the first blessing on European soil to Germany. A few months after the blessing Mun remarked: “Then by centring on Germany [via the blessing], the Adam nation on Satan’s side, I could cast God’s blessed

35 “그것은 새로운 시대로 넘어가는 역사의 전환 점이 되는 수입니다.”
36 Representing the link between the two blessings was the first non-Korean couple, Kuboki Osami (1931–1998) and Kuboki Tetsuko, ever blessed at the 430 Couples Blessing.
AUSTRIAN UNIFICATIONISTS MEET THEIR MESSIAH

anchor into another four [European] nations” (Mun 1986h: 292). Through the Essen Blessing, Mun ceremoniously signalled the first fruits of this new age. That is to say, even in a nation as historically burdened through Satan as Germany, Unificationism has now been able to create a spiritual beacon that radiates to other countries—in a first step to France (or Italy), the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Austria; that is, those countries whose national leaders received the blessing in Essen—bringing the proverbial (messianic) light lastingly into the (devilish) darkness. The eight couples body forth restoration. They are the first children of a global true family in Europe, a family that would branch out across the continent and beyond. Hence, additional blessings were required to ritually accompany this progress but also to meet further decisive providential items on the UM’s millenarian agenda, as previously indicated by the numerologically important number of the couples blessed. Austrian members were to be participating in almost all of them, the large and providentially more critical ones—such as the 777 Couples Blessing on October 21, 1970; the 1,800 Couples Blessing on February 8, 1975; the 6,000 Couples Blessing on October 14, 1982, all three taking place in Seoul; and the 6,700 Couples Blessing in Yongin, South Korea, on October 30, 1988—as well as the sometimes smaller or ‘private’ ones, whose providential meaning was attached to the larger above—such as the 35 Couples Blessing in Belvedere, United States, on July 1, 1976; the 74 Couples Blessing’ in New York on February 21, 1977; the 118 Couples Blessing in London on May 21, 1978; the 39 Couples Blessing in Hünstetten-Beuerbach, Germany, on June 13, 1981; the 2,100 Couples Blessing in New York on July 1, 1982; the 1,275 Couples Blessing in Yongin on January 12, 1989; and the 57 Couples Blessing and 138 Couples Blessing in New York on April 7, 1989.

37 “그리고 사탄편적 아담국가였던 독일을 중심삼고 4 대 국가에 하나님의 축복의 납을 내릴 수 있는 입장에 섰읍니다.”
38 Mun seemingly missed out one country.
39 The blessings listed below comprise most of those conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Participating Austrian members have been verified by internal listings of blessed families, interviews, and personal testimonies. As a matter of fact, the UM continued to organise blessing ceremonies, largely hosted in South Korea, throughout the 1990s, 2000s, and early 2010s, having now crossed into the post-Mun era.
3.2. The Essen Blessing and Surrounding Events

On Monday, March 24, 1969, Mun and his retinue arrived at Düsseldorf airport. Alongside his pregnant twenty-six years old wife, Han Hak-cha, Mun’s attendance included high-ranking dignitaries: then HSAUWC president Yu Hyo-wŏn; the first ever blessed non-Korean adherent, Kuboki Osami, who was a former leading member of Risshō Kōseikai 立正佼成会 and, following his conversion in 1962, the long-time president of the Japanese UM (1964–1991); Kim Yŏng-un; and Ch’oe Wŏn-bok (1916–2016), who for almost two decades was Mun’s closest aide (who attributed to her a key providential role) and motherly educator of Han (Pokorny 2017a: 218-219). Additionally, the party was escorted by a Washington, D.C.-based confidant of Kim Yŏng-un, Neil Winterbottom, who served as Mun’s bodyguard on the trip. The guests of honour were welcomed in the arrivals hall by some sixty members holding up banners written in German and Korean (see Figure 2). Whereas the latter read “Sincere congratulations our True Parents on their visit to Germany,” the German one kept a lower profile: “A cordial welcome, our dear guests to Germany.” An Austrian member reports in the Familien Nachrichten (FN4 1969: 2-3):

All our hands were raised in the air and the showers of joy, which came upon us, would not stop. The Master and the Mother were now in our midst and from the first moment on there was so much love and joy radiating from our true parents […]. The Master and the Mother now went to everyone of us shaking hands. Likewise, we were personally greeted by the true parents’ entourage […]. Everything was so simple and at the same majestic. Every

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40 Previous stops on their tour through Europe included Lisbon (Portugal) on March 16; Barcelona (Spain) on March 18; and London (United Kingdom) on March 20.

41 The son, Mun Hyŏn-jin ’Preston,’ was born on May 25, 1969 (April 10 according to the lunar calendar used by the UM).

42 “우리 참 부모님의 독일 방문을 진심으로 축하 합니다”.

43 “Ein herzliches Willkommen unserem lieben Besuch in Deutschland.” In later years, guidelines circulated in preparation for a visit by Mun, explicitly admonished to avoid public attention at the airport with no more than three people present. Generally, while the 1965 World Tour was executed on a very informal level—Werner and Koch, for example, drove Mun and his party across Europe in Werner’s Volkswagen bus (Pokorny and Steinbeiss 2012: 178)—and the 1969 World Tour was also still relatively low-key (albeit more formalised), Mun’s travelling arrangements from the mid-1970s became highly professionalised. Mun would reside in first-rate hotels, being guarded by up to eight or more security people during the heydays (i.e., the 1980s).
feeling was clear and pure. We saw that God has realised His ideal of creation in our true parents, and we could hardly grasp our joy because of this.\textsuperscript{44}

Mun and company were first taken to the Essen centre where they would be accommodated during their stay. Thereafter, they went to the blessing venue, where some eighty members and a couple of sympathisers (i.e., mostly member’s relatives) were present throughout the week. More than half of the members belonged to the Austrian family (ca. forty-five individuals) including the missionaries to Switzerland (Bernhard Maierhofer) and Czechoslovakia (Emilie Steberl). Around twenty members of the German family were in attendance. Additionally, four local Korean adherents joined the event. One of the them, Kim Kae-hwan (b. 1937), who came to Germany in 1962 to do his doctorate in Economics (Marburg University, 1973), acted as the main interpreter (Korean-German), while Kim and Ch’oe were occasionally also translating Mun’s words into English. Other international followers participating comprised a few members each from France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The first get-together in the Falkenheim started with a casual introduction of participants (name, age, ‘spiritual age,’ occupation, nationality, etc.), followed by joint singing—Mun himself gave a solo performance of the popular Korean folk song Arirang. The meeting concluded with a (consecutively interpreted) motivational lecture of Mun on basic Unificationist tenets (the Fall and its implications; the need for restoration and the role of the faithful; Jesus’ crucifixion) (see Figure 3); a lecture that was resumed the next day (Tuesday; 10:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:20 p.m. until evening) again stressing the imperative contribution of members, being “fighters on the frontline” (Kämpfer an der vordersten Frontlinie) and “soldiers of restoration” (Soldaten der Wiederherstellung) (Missionary Diary Ölzeltgasse 3: 117-118). The evening was collectively spent at the centre, engaging in questions and answers with the ‘Master’ and musical performances of the adherents. Not all of the members that were to be blessed in Essen had yet been selected except for the national leaders,\textsuperscript{45} among them Werner and Koch, who had agreed to receive the blessing when being asked by Kim Yŏng-un already some time before. Whereas the leader

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\textsuperscript{44} “Da waren alle unsere Hände in der Höhe und die Freudenschauer, die jetzt auf uns zukamen, wollten kein Ende nehmen. Der Meister und die Mutter standen jetzt mitten unter uns und vom ersten Moment an strahlte soviel Liebe und Freude von unseren wahren Eltern aus [...]. Der Meister und die Mutter gingen jetzt zu jedem von uns und reichten ihm die Hand. Ebenso wurden wir von der Begleitung unserer wahren Eltern persönlich begrüsst [...]. Alles war so einfach und zugleich majestätisch. Jedes Gefühl war klar und rein. Wir sahen, dass Gott sein Schöpfungsideal in unseren wahren Eltern verwirklichte und die Freude darüber konnten wir kaum fassen.”
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\textsuperscript{45} The other four representing France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.
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of the Spanish mission (Ursula Schuhmann) declined, the leaders of the Czechoslovak (Steberl) and Swiss mission (Maierhofer) were not considered. Hence, during the first days in Essen, Kim approached several of the members, informally enquiring about their potential willingness to partake in the blessing—some refused. Nominally, in order to be admitted to the blessing ceremony at the time, in principle various conditions had to be met. The candidate was required to be a member in good standing for at least three years; s/he had to have at least three ‘spiritual children’ (i.e., converts); and at least once a fasting period of seven days had to be endured. Most importantly, however, participation in the blessing was only granted upon ‘invitation.’ Yet, already at the Essen Blessing those requirements were not observed too strictly. For example, the only Austrian to be blessed in Essen, Romana Maierhofer (later Kunkel, b. 1937), an early-day member (joining in 1966) who willingly accepted Kim’s short-notice invitation, was two spiritual children short. A final, more mundane prerequisite was the candidate’s financial contribution to the so-called ‘indemnity fund,’ to which also those in attendance of the blessing ceremony were urged to donate. The contributions—$100 (€565 as of 2018) for those receiving the blessing and $30 for the spectators—could be made ex post and were jointly sent by the national leaders to Mun. Formally, the payments were meant to cover expenses related to the blessing.

The next day (Wednesday), Herta Goldfuß—the Austrian tailor—and two fellow members started to work on the blessing garments for Mun, Han, and the rest of the party (expect Winterbottom) as well as the True Parents’ headgear (FN4 1969: 6-7). They took measurements and attempted to copy the style of Mun and Han’s own 1960 blessing apparel based on a photograph. Before noon, everyone moved to the Essen Holy Ground (sŏngji) in the Stadtwald located south of the city centre, a spot of land sanctified by Mun four years earlier (August 5, 1965) during his First World Tour. According to Unification understanding, Holy Grounds represented divinely reclaimed territory in our Satanic World—a place where contact with God can be unimpeded by evil forces. In this respect, early-day members where exhorted during prayer to visualise the extension of a Holy Ground to embrace the whole world—a means to spiritually bolster kingdom-building. At the Stadtwald Holy Ground, following a joint prayer, representatives of the attendant nations performed songs. Subsequently, Mun instructed those present to enact the struggle between good and evil towards the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom (NAF5 1969: 6). Together with his interpreter Kim Kae-hwan, he demonstrated the ritual in which members had to pair up by sex, cross their arms while clasping the other’s hand, and try to pull each other away. Playfully and enthusiastically everyone did as advised (see Figure 4). Thereafter,
the party packed up and returned to the *Falkenheim* for another round of Mun’s discourses; this time the topic Mun elaborated upon was the significance of the blessing. For members at the time the blessing was a profound mystery also owing to its exclusive character. After lunch the lecture resumed with a brief questions and answers session before Mun retired to the Essen centre while the members continued with joint reading and discussion of the *Principle*. Deputising Mun, Kim Yŏng-un spent the rest of the day ‘interviewing’ each of the blessing candidates.

On Thursday (March 27), Kim Kae-hwan and Peter Koch took Mun and a party of some twenty male members including all Koreans on a tour to the local *Krupp* steel plant, then one of the largest in Germany (see Figure 5). Kim would later become the major figure behind the Unificationist business ventures in Germany.46 In the meanwhile, at the *Falkenheim* members indulged in prayer and further studies until the evening. Upon the party’s return to the Essen centre, Mun summoned all blessing candidates. Together with his wife as well as Kim Yŏng-un as interpreter, he interviewed them, eventually conducting the ‘engagement ceremony’ (*yakhonsik*) of the seven couples. The eighth couple—Romana Maierhofer and German Gerhard Kunkel (b. 1931) from the Hamburg Family—was selected at very short notice and engaged separate from the others later. With the engagement ceremony completed, Mun called in the national leaders (*Landesführer*), requesting updates on their branch activities. At the same time, at the *Falkenheim* final preparations for next day’s blessing commenced—the venue was rearranged and re-decorated and eight wedding cakes, one for every couple, were prepared. Back at the centre, after listening to the national leaders’ reports, Mun charged them with new instructions, largely reinforcing the need to intensify their proselytising activities for the Kingdom of Heaven was nigh.47 The most far-reaching decision communicated to those present was a change of leadership between Austria (Werner) and Germany (Koch) to take effect after forty days in May.48 Given Germany’s prominent providential role as well as the

46 In general, early on Mun recognised the need to expand into the economic realm. Already by 1963, he founded Tongil Group (*T’ongil kŭrup*), which was to evolve into a multi-billion-euro conglomerate, comprising, among others, heavy industry. During his visit Mun expressed to members his wish to build a *Krupp*-like steel mill in Germany.

47 For instance, Mun advised that the Austrian Family had to embark on missionary activities in Belgium, Denmark, and Luxembourg by the end of the year. Indeed, in December 1969, Austrian missionaries arrived in Belgium (Christine Schönenerberger), Denmark (Beate Paul), and Luxembourg (Robert Brandner). In addition, one missionary (Harald Unger; b. 1944) was sent to Turkey at the end of the year.

48 Interestingly, the change of leadership between Austria and Germany has also been noted in internal Korean UM records. Paul Werner appears as *P’aul Penŏ*, Peter Koch as *P’it’ŏ K’ohŭ*. 
relative success of the Austrian mission in contrast to the German one on the one hand,\(^49\) and Koch’s rather introverted character as well as his uneasy relationship with his Korean UM contacts, especially with Kim Yong-un, on the other, the switch seems to have been a logical step on Mun’s part. Mun deemed Werner a better fit due to his more extroverted disposition to carry on the important German mission. During his visit in Austria nine days later, for example, vis-à-vis members Mun portrayed Werner as a more aggressive type, a ‘hunter,’ whereas Koch he viewed as a more scholarly person, a ‘constructor.’ Their temper would be more in line with the disposition of their newly assigned homes. While Mun later gave a certain reasoning for the change of leadership, that evening he did not when—following another talk on the blessing and, specifically, its implications for the receivers—he formally proclaimed his decision at the Falkenheim in front of the members. To symbolically consummate the decision, the German family formally welcomed Werner to their midst, while the Austrian one received Koch. By all means, members of both countries were taken by great surprise as were Koch and Werner before. Nobody had expected this decision. Although it was generally not taken lightly—some Austrian members later even decided to follow Werner and his family to Germany—the report in the April issue of Familien Nachrichten stresses members’ allegiance (FN4 1969: 3):

The talks of the Master with the national leaders were historic for Europe. Much was regulated anew and discussed. Eventually, everything was settled harmoniously. The Master took his decisions with so much love and wisdom, so that everyone could feel our Heavenly Father being directly at work.\(^50\)

On the following day (March 28), the final preparations for the blessing, scheduled for 7:00 p.m., resumed. The Austrian Family was responsible for decorating the blessing venue including the drawing of some large-scale

\(^{49}\) According to Mun’s symbolism at the time, Germany was representing the ‘arch-angel’ (ch’ŏnsajang), that is, Nusiel, alongside the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the United States. South Korea was assigned the role of Adam, whereas Japan was the Eve-nation. The archangel nations were given a crucial providential significance, for all three embraced a Cain (evil)-Abel (good) duality. The PRC (Cain) had its Abel counterpart in the form of the Republic of China (Taiwan); the United States (Abel) stood in opposition to the Soviet Union (Cain); and Germany was divided into West (Abel) and East (Cain). Their unification, specifically the fall of Communism effected by this, he deemed decisive for realising the Heavenly Kingdom.

\(^{50}\) “Die Gespräche des Meisters mit den Landesführern waren für Europa historisch. Es wurde viel neu geregelt und besprochen. Alles ging schliesslich harmonisch seiner Lösung entgegen und die Entscheidungen des Meisters wurden mit so viel Liebe und Weisheit getroffen, dass jeder fühlen konnte, hier wirkte unser himmlischer Vater direkt.”
paintings. Mun stayed at the centre instructing the blessing candidates about the intricacies of the ritual. Werner was honoured by Mun for his special merits as a missionary to Austria. Mun was well aware that the Austrian group was the largest in Europe at the time, something he pinned to the leadership of Werner. Thanking Werner for his service to the joint cause, Mun handed him a badge as well as an honorary certificate. At 6:00 p.m., the ‘holy wine ceremony’ (sŏngjusik) was privately conducted at the centre. Other than the ceremonial vestment and the ‘holy salt’ (sŏngyŏm), Mun had taken the holy wine with him from South Korea. After the brief holy wine ceremony, the blessing party, all dressed up in their ritual robes, was taken by car to the Falkenheim, which was bustling with some seventy spectators flanking the centre of the main hall. Before Mun and Han solemnly entered the venue at circa 7:00 p.m., the holy salt was scattered by Yu Hyo-wŏn: “With such force and strength did he walk across the room. It was like all Satanic would drain away and the Gates to the Heavens [sic] were opened for the entrance of the Lord of glory” (FN4 1969: 4). Next, Kim Yŏng-un announced the ‘True Parents,’ recorded music started to play, and the actual ‘blessing ceremony’ (ch’ukpoksik) commenced. Wearing a copy of their own 1960 blessing gowns in white with gold, the two marched in side by side first, with their heads bowed and their eyes closed. “This glory of them appearing. Indescribably holy; […] Truly, King of Kings” (ibid.). They were followed closely by two of the Austrian tailors—Herta Goldfuß and Edeltraud Stimpfl (later Ebi, b. 1944)—holding silver cups of ‘holy water’ (sŏngsu) (see Figure 6). Mun and Han moved to the back of the hall first receiving red roses by two Korean adherents before getting seated on yellow wingback chairs next to a platform from where they were to officiate the blessing. The wall behind the platform was covered by a huge landscape painting (signifying the Kingdom of Heaven) with the sun (signifying God) glowing conspicuously at the horizon. While seated the music stopped and Kim Yŏng-un began a short prayer, after which Mun and Han stepped up the platform. The music started to play again and the first couple representing the English mission—American Doris Walder (later Orme, 1930–2016) and the Englishman Dennis Frederick Orme (b.

51 The holy salt is the UM’s traditional multi-purpose consecrating material, said to be first used by Mun in his own 1960 blessing (Pokorny 2018: 336).

52 “Mit solch einer Gewalt und Stärke schritt er durch den Raum. Es war, als würde alles Satanische weichen und die Tore der Himmel [sic] wurden geöffnet, für den Einzug des Herrn der Herrlichkeit.”

53 “Diese Herrlichkeit, mit der sie erschienen. Unbeschreiblich heilig; […] Wahrlich König aller Könige.”
1938)—marched in arm in arm and heads bowed. Every couple had to walk three times seven steps pausing with a bow between the intervals. Each series of seven steps were meant to symbolise 2,000 years of providential history, altogether 6,000 years since the Fall. The first represented the Old Testament period or ‘formation’ in the tripartite scheme of Unification soteriology. Next came the New Testament age or the ‘growth’ stage. Ultimately, the stage of ‘perfection’ was reached walking through the Completed Testament age. The bows signified the indemnification of these 6,000 years throughout which humankind lived under the yoke of Satan. The blessing meant their release from Satanic dominion. When the couple came to a halt beneath the officiators, they were sprinkled with holy water—Mun sprinkled the bride and Han the bridegroom—receiving the benediction. Walder and Orme stepped aside awaiting the next couple representing the Netherlands—Dutchman Theodorus ‘Teddy’ Verheyen (b. 1935) and American Pauline Phillips (later Verheyen, 1932–2008)—to come forward. The remaining six couples to follow included: the German national leader Peter Koch and Gertrud Güse (later Koch, b. 1935); Austria’s national leader Paul Werner and Christel Werner; Dutchman Johan van der Stok (b. 1937) and German Elke Klawiter (later van der Stok, b. 1941); German Reiner Vincenz, the national leader of the French mission (1966–1973) (b. 1939–2015), and Peter Koch’s sister Barbara (later Vincenz, 1930–2016); Englishman Martin Porter (1942–2013), the national leader of the Italian mission (1967–1977), and Italian Dawn Faroni (later Porter); and Gerhard Kunkel and Romana Maierhofer (later Kunkel). Once all the couples marched in they gathered in four rows in front of Mun and Han. While the couples were closing their eyes and bowing their hands, Mun addressed them with four blessing vows in Korean, which they

54 Walder had previously pioneered the Italian mission in 1965. She was the first convert in the West, joining the UM in 1959 under her spiritual mother, Kim Yŏng-un. Orme was a member of the Findhorn community before he was converted by Walder in 1968. The couple spearheaded the British branch until 1978. They left the UM in the late 1990s.

55 Verheyen launched the Dutch mission in 1965. Phillips started the San Francisco mission. Her spiritual children, John and Sandra Pinkerton, were the spiritual parents of Werner and his wife.

56 Vincenz led the German mission from 1978 to 1983 succeeding Werner.

57 Dawn Porter left the UM five years later in 1974 and the two divorced.

58 The succession of entrance was based on ‘spiritual age’ with two exceptions (Klawiter and Barbara Koch were put behind Werner): Walder was the earliest convert (1959), followed by her friend Phillips (also 1959), Peter Koch (January 1962), Werner (August 1963), Klawiter (June 1963), Barbara Koch (April 1963), Faroni (late 1965), Maierhofer (February 1966). The Werners were the only couple that was already formally married prior to the blessing. However, once they joined the UM in 1963, they chose sexual abstinence until their blessing.
affirmed. Thereafter, Mun went on to conduct an extempore prayer in Korean while he and his wife were holding their arms in the air (Mun’s right arm; Han’s left arm), symbolically embracing the blessed couples (see Figure 7). In his prayer, Mun reviewed basic Unification theological tenets concluding with the millenarian mission of which the blessed couples are the crucial vehicle. Subsequently, the couples positioned themselves in two columns and the blessing rings were exchanged between bridegroom and bride followed by another brief blessing prayer of Mun. With the main part of the ceremony complete, Mun and Han retired to their chairs and a succession of short congratulatory speeches began after a terse prayer by Kim Yŏng-un. The speakers included in succeeding order Kim, the Korea HSAUWC president Yu Hyo-wŏn, the Japan HSAUWC president Kuboki Osami (the only member of Mun’s party wearing a Western-style suit instead of a white blessing robe), the leader of the Spanish branch Ursula Schuhmann representing the European mission, and Neil Winterbottom representing the American mission. The main programme of the blessing ceremony concluded with three loud cheers of manse—a Korean term serving as a jubilatory, motivational, and self-assuring exclamation. In succession, the blessed couples gravely left the stage and returned more casually for the lengthy photo shooting with Mun, Han, and the other dignitaries (see Figure 8). Mun and his party redressed as did the blessed bridegrooms. Waiting for the guests of honour to return, the members and the blessed couples sat down on chairs or the floor starting to joyously play the guitar (Werner) and sing. Everyone raised upon the entrance of Mun and company. In the meanwhile, a banquet table was placed on the platform from where Mun and the others could face the crowd (see

59 The exact content of the four pledges could not be elicited. However, it might have been similar in tone to the blessing vows of the 74 couples blessing in February 1977 in New York: “1. As the restored sons and daughters of God, can you pledge that you will keep the unchanging heavenly law, becoming the ideal ancestors of goodness, the true Adams and Eves, and that you will be responsible for any errors you make from now on? 2. As the eternal true husbands and wives, you will create not only the ideal family of God, inheriting His blessing, forever, but also you will establish the authority and dignity of Heaven and God’s family. Do you pledge this? 3. As true parents, can you promise that you will raise your children as the obedient and loyal sons of goodness to be able to inherit the will of Heaven and to establish the law of Heaven? 4. As one of the central families of Heaven, you will become the center of the universe and through the offspring of your home, not only the family of goodness, but also the society of goodness, the nation of goodness, and finally the world of goodness will be established. Can you pledge this?” (Chryssides 1991: 139).

60 Mun, Yu, and Kuboki donned suits; Kim a Western-style evening gown; and Han and Ch’oe a traditional Korean dress, that is, a hanbok. The blessed men also put on suits, while the women only doffed the outer garments of the blessing apparel.
Collective singing ensued and Mun, after sipping from his coke, started to sway along with his hands like a conductor. After a while the eight wedding cakes were served and split among everyone in attendance. Chocolate writing had been put on each cake forming words of thanks when read together: “With great joy and gratitude to our heavenly father and our True Parents.”

Next, the Kochs presented the guests with small gifts, such as, for example, a black suitcase for Yu. Following the meal, a succession of music performances began smilingly eyed by Mun. First, each of the newly blessed couples were requested to sing, after which others performed a cappella or with the assistance of a guitar. In-between two female members in dirmdls performed a Schuhplattler. Finally, the guests of honour took turns—Yu, Kuboki, Kim, Ch’oe, Han, and, eventually, Han and Mun together. The joyous atmosphere led the two to start dancing to which the others on the table soon joined in. Now everyone in the hall joined hands and began to dance: “Finally our Father and Mother started singing and dancing, so pretty soon everyone joined hands and were dancing to the rhythm of our Leader. It was a wonderful and most enjoyable experience. The whole world seemed to join in this harmony, beauty, and laughter” (NAF5 1969: 7). Later Mun gave a solo performance followed by some more individual and group performances by the members. Shortly before midnight, the celebratory part of the evening came to a close and members had the opportunity to have their books signed by Mun, Han, and the other guests of honour. Whereas the ordinary members started to tidy up the blessing venue, under the auspices of Mun and his party the blessed couples made themselves ready for the third part of the wider blessing ceremony—the ‘indemnity stick ceremony’ (t’anggambong haengsa). While it later became common to strike the bride only symbolically, in the earlier blessings, as was the case in Essen, the bridegrooms hit with full force. The end of the indemnity stick ceremony set about the penultimate part of the wider blessing ritual, namely the forty-day separation period, which was the same time Werner and Koch were given by Mun to prepare their mutual relocation.

With little sleep, early next morning (March 29), around seventy members made their way to Düsseldorf airport to see Mun and his entourage off to Amsterdam. From there, True Parents’ tour would continue via Paris and

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61 Mun and Han, sitting to his left, were seated below the painted sun. On Mun’s right was Kim while Han was flanked by her chaperone, Ch’oe. Yu and Kuboki sat at the outer edge of the table. On the table in front of Mun and Han a bouquet was placed with a tall ‘holy candle’ (sŏngch’o), likely a simjŏngch’o—a candle symbolising True Parents and their hardships that sanctifies an area when burning—towering from the middle.

62 “In grosser Freude und Dankbarkeit unserem himmlischen Vater und unseren Wah- ren Eltern.”
Geneva to Vienna. Back at the Falkenheim, the members sought to bring the premises in order, digesting the many vivid feelings of the past days. As one member summarises in the Familien Nachrichten: “The impression was so overwhelming that it seems simply impossible to put everything into words. Here [in Essen] an international foundation for the restoration was ultimately laid and for the mission a new era has begun” (ibid.: 3). The next day (Sunday, March 30), the Austrian members returned home with the “aim, of course, to also give great pleasure to the Master while in Vienna” (Missionary Diary Ölzeltgasse 3: 121).

4. True Parents in Vienna and the Change of Leadership

Back home, the Austrian Family resumed ‘business as usual,’ that is, working day jobs, witnessing on the streets, and gathering in the centres in the evening to study the Divine Principle and, especially, recapitulating the manifold impressions of the Essen sojourn. In this respect, members attempted to jointly put down into writing what they could remember of Mun’s Essen sermons in order to create a complete account for further study and edification. On April 3, the designated national leader and his spouse, Peter and Gertrud Koch, arrived to join the imminent reunion with Mun and company, taking place on April 5 (Saturday). For the most part, the preparations for True Parents’ visit were already finished before the trip to Essen. In the remaining days prior to April 5, some cake and pastries were made, festoons were completed, and songs were rehearsed.

Finally, on Saturday in the late afternoon the visitors arrived at Vienna airport accompanied by Bernhard Maierhofer and joyously received by some forty members of the Austrian Family including the Kochs. The guests of honour were to be accommodated at the Austrian headquarters in

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63 While in Geneva, Mun and his party were attended by Bernhard Maierhofer, an early day Austrian adherent (unsuccessfully) pioneering the Swiss mission. Kim Yŏng-un left for Washington, D.C. Maierhofer’s account on the visit is documented in the Familien Nachrichten (FN5 1969: 16-17).

64 “Der Eindruck war so überwältigend, dass es einfach unmöglich scheint alles in Worte zu kleiden. Hier wurde nun endgültig ein internationales Fundament für die Wiederherstellung gelegt und für die Mission hat jetzt ein neuer Zeitabschnitt begonnen.”

65 “Jetzt ist es natürlich unser Bestreben, dem Meister auch in Wien ganz viel Freude zu bereiten.”

66 “Wie jeden Tag war es natürlich wieder das Wichtigste, Leute anzusprechen” (“As every day, the most important thing, of course, was to approach people”) (Missionary Diary Ölzeltgasse 3: 123).
Schlüsselgasse. Whereas Mun and Ch’oe had already sojourned in Vienna in August 1965, for the others—Han, Kuboki, and Yu—this was their first visit (Pokorny and Steinbeiss 2012: 177-178). A member sums up the evening activities in the Familien Nachrichten (FN5 1969: 2):

At the centre in Schlüsselgasse everything was ready. Swift hands were preparing dinner. Thereafter, we could introduce ourselves through music and singing. Under Paul’s lead everything worked out exquisitely. Mr. Eu, Mr. Kuboki, our Mother, and our Father sang for us. After that we were requested to sing. Once Father came to know us this way, he began to talk. He talked about the abilities of the European nations he had visited, and about the qualities of the leaders he appointed. He talked about new hopes and expectations as well as the tasks of each of the nations.  

Mun outlined highlights of the Korean mission, before casually introducing the audience to his providential ruminations concerning Western Europe. To Austria he assigned a very special role. Other than bigger countries, Austria—very much like the Netherlands—were more suitable to spread Unificationism. The French he deemed too proud and arrogant a people; Germany, albeit highly achieving in the sciences and its industrial development, would be feared by its neighbours. Similarly, Switzerland would give the impression of being money-driven. In contrast, Mun presented Austria as purer, more genuine, and innocent. A music- and art-loving, meditative people, introverted and thus not to be feared by others. Mun commended Austria as an ideal place capable of spreading his message at a global scale. Even though Mun raised some criticism against Germany, at the same time he pointed out its significance to educate less advanced countries as well as his future plans to render it a hub for Unificationist industrial ventures. Mun proceeded providing a rationale for the change of leadership, indicating that the two leaders’ personal qualities would now fit to what was thenceforth needed in their newly assigned countries. In the case of the Austrian Family, specifically, they would need to demonstrate that they could accommodate and


68 In fact, in the years to follow, large parts of the Austrian Family were sent overseas. Many did not return from their missions but stayed abroad, which lastingly drained the mission at home.
embrace difference. That is to say, different leadership qualities (first Werner, now Koch). Only then Mun deemed the Austrian Family able to flourish further. As another item in his vision for Austria’s contribution to the worldwide mission, Mun voiced his plan to set up a group of musicians, who would at some point travel the world also for the sake of proselytising—a vision that transpired ten years later.\(^{69}\) Additionally, Mun stressed the need to learn the Korean language, which he considered fairly easy to master, in order to appreciate the *Divine Principle* in the original. The evening programme was closed with a joint prayer under the guidance of Yu Hyo-wŏn.

Early morning on the following day (April 6), the Austrian members were introduced to a ritual novelty, which was henceforth to be included into members’ Sunday ritual routine as well as on every first day of the month. Together with Yu they gathered in the Master’s Chamber at 5:00 a.m. for the pledge prayer. Yu informed the Austrian Family that the pledge ritual was meant to simultaneously connect the global membership in their devotion to True Parents.\(^{70}\) The Sunday service commenced at 10:00 a.m. The sermon, delivered by Mun, discussed the life and ministry of Jesus comparing it to Mun’s own mission and achievements. After lunch, the guests of honour were taken on a tour by the Austrian family involving visits to the Holy Ground in Rathauspark, the UM’s second Vienna centre in Ölzeltgasse (see Figure 11), the UM nursery in Pyrkergasse, the Kahlenberg viewing platform in the nineteenth district, and, finally, the Donauturm in the twenty-second district. Back at the Schlüsselgasse centre, Mun, Han, and Ch’oe retired early and the evening was spent with Kuboki and Yu. Kuboki shared his personal testimony and gave a motivational account of the Japanese mission and its success.\(^{71}\) The get-together concluded once again with a collective prayer guided by Yu.

The next day (April 7), following a joint breakfast, it was now Yu who shared a personal testimony with the members, while Mun had a private talk with Koch and Werner. After lunch, Mun summarised the missionary tasks assigned to the national missions led by Koch, Werner, Steberl, and Maierhofer. For Austria, he emphasised his wish to expand the mission behind the Iron Curtain; something which was to come to fruition several years later under Austrian lead. In the afternoon, Mun and his party were escorted to the airport, from where their tour resumed to Rome, Athens (April 10), Egypt.

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69 In 1978, Mun launched the Go-World Brass Band in London. It consisted of several teams including a number of Austrian adherents, and echoed his early vision.

70 At the same time, a pledge service was conducted at the centre in Ölzeltgasse.

71 On a side note, Kuboki related his love for the movie “Sound of Music,” which he had supposedly watched five times by the time and which established his strong desire to more quickly get to know the Austrian Family.
Werner left Austria on the following day for a five-day ‘inspection tour’ through the German centres, a meet and greet with his ‘new brothers and sisters.’ Although the formal handover between Koch and Werner was laying still more than a month ahead, Werner already began to familiarise in detail with the state of the German Family, extensively travelling at the time. Accordingly, he was to return for another tour from April 24 to 30 as well as from May 9 to 15. In-between he also visited the centres in Linz and Graz. While Werner was busily preparing his relocation and the takeover of the German mission, the Austrian Family resumed its regular routine. The Sunday morning pledge service aside, new activities added at the time were a French as well as a Turkish language course in anticipation of future missionary engagements. In addition, the Vienna group intensified its proselytising at universities, including the organisation of talks in university premises, the handing out of pamphlets, regular witnessing, and also in the case of the University of Vienna following formal permission, the placing of billboards. The talks held at universities did not appear to be revolving about things religious. Instead the topics advertised concerned philosophical and social issues, such as ‘love and beauty,’ ‘good and evil,’ ‘positive and negative values,’ ‘contemporary challenges faced by society,’ and so forth—subjects, however, from which connections could be (and were) quickly made to the responses of Unification thought. Overall, the mission was increasingly successful due to a rising number of members getting involved in witnessing, and effected by this, a growing enthusiasm of the ‘recruiters’ spending considerable time on the streets—as one member wrote: “it is marvellous that we get to be those tools [i.e., of God’s providence leading the people to Him]” (Missionary Diary Ölzeltgasse 3: 132). Based on internal documents, it seems that one new member was drawn to the group every five to seven days. Yet, as becomes evident from the missionary diaries (Vienna, Graz, Linz), more often than not allegedly promising contacts (of which there were several every week) would eventually not commit. Even so, the missionary fervour generally remained unabated. It seems, however, that accelerated by the growing publicly visible missionary activities as well as the overall rising membership, bad press
(especially driven by the Catholic Church) was increasingly spreading so that more and more people on the streets shied away with explicit statements when being approached.

The highlight of UM community life was the Sunday 10:00 a.m. service. The 1969 June issue (covering activities conducted in May) of Familien Nachrichten provides lively insights into the structure and context (FN6 1969: 12-13) of a regular Sunday worship service at the time:

Every Sunday at 10 o’clock the service takes place in Schlüsselgasse 3. The preparations are made on Saturday evening. Suggestions come from everywhere, which creates marvellous teamwork. These services are already quite well-known. We have certainly attracted much attention, especially in the Catholic Church. The new centre is really a blessing for our work. Some time before the service we go out into the streets to invite people. The course of our service differs significantly from those generally known in Christendom. A quarter of an hour before the start of the event the whole Family gathers in the hall. Commonly, we listen to contemplative music putting on records; in this way we meditatively prepare for the service. For each of the services one of us is appointed as moderator and one as preacher. The moderator proposes the songs and announces them and twice we pray. Once after a few songs at the beginning and the second time quite at the end of the service. We make a lot of music, several of us play the guitar and Winfried [Schwarzl] plays pieces by different composers on the piano. A Korean song must never be missing. Spirituals and other English-language songs are always to be found on the programme. As a matter of course, German songs are also sung. Sometimes some of us play jointly on flutes, the piano, and the guitar, which proves very popular. We feel great joy and gratitude in our hearts for everyone who comes, and we also feel that God is happy, too. Truly, here reigns the spirit of God, divine peace, and true love. While the sermons may not be perfect, the heart is fully immersed and everyone strives to do his best. But the greatest and most beautiful thing about it is that we may proclaim the full truth for which humankind has been waiting for thousands of years. In the name of our True Parents.74

Polizeikomisariat [sic]. Meine Mutter hätte wieder Anzeige erstattet […].”) (Missionary Diary Ölzelgasse 3: 149). On Austrian first generation members’ conversion narratives, including the challenge of familial ostracism many had to face, see Pokorny 2016.

On May 9, 1969, Werner travelled to the Essen centre, where, two days later (May 11), attended by some twenty members, the German Family formally celebrated the takeover of the German mission by Werner. On May 15, Werner returned to Vienna. The informal farewell gathering took place two days later at the headquarters, with Werner reviewing his four years ministry pioneering the Austrian mission and thanking the Austrian Family for their continuous support. Finally, Werner and his wife handed over a little gift to three early-day members who had formed the first Austrian UM commune in May 1966 in the newly established centre in Zirkusgasse 37 in the second district (Pokorny and Steinbeiss 2012: 180)—Ingeborg Eisner (later van Win- den, b. 1938), Bernhard Maierhofer, and his sister Hildegard (later Blanchard, b. 1940). On the following day (May 18, Sunday), after Sunday service attended by some fifty adherents and lunch, exactly four years after Werner started his mission to Austria on May 18, 1965, he formally passed on the leadership in a brief ceremony to Koch (see Figure 12). At the time of Werner’s departure, the Austrian Family was the largest in Europe comprising of fifty-one members, of which six female adherents resided in the Graz centre (Hilmteichstraße 13) and four female followers in Linz (Volksfeststraße 12). Both Werner and Koch respectively gave a valedictory and an inaugural address, aligning members’ commitment towards intensified kingdom-building in the future. The past weeks, the Austrian members prepared a farewell present for Werner, namely a tape recording containing a message by every single member as well as a joint performance of Arirang in dedication of Werner’s achievements. In turn, Koch received a miniature version of St. Stephen’s cathedral meant to symbolise Koch’s spiritual appropriation of...
Austria qua new national leader. The event concluded with a mixed canon of *Hejo! Spann den Wagen an*,\(^75\) Koch’s plea to look for new horizons. Werner left for Germany the next day;\(^76\) his wife and son were to follow a few weeks later.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The first half of 1969 represents a twofold watershed for the Austrian UM. On the one hand, members could for the first time encounter their Messiah and experience the chief Unificationist initiation ritual (i.e., the blessing ceremony) first hand, which at the time, unlike later days, was shrouded in profound mystery. On the other hand, a decision set forth at the blessing event, the change of leadership heralded a new age for the Austrian group. As one contemporary member reflected (*FN6 1969: 3*):

> Nonetheless, this act of handing over [the leadership] is much more than a solely formal affair. The development of Europe concerning the Divine Principles now enters into an advanced stage, and from the Austrian perspective we have made the step from formation [*sosaeng*] into growth [*changsŏng*]— in the words of the Master—we have overcome the period of drinking milk and are henceforth able, under Peter’s leadership, to work based on a broader foundation.\(^77\)

Koch’s short-term vision for the Austrian UM outlined in his inaugural was optimistic: 120 members by the end of 1969 and a new centre with forty members in permanent residence. Koch knew that Mun had sent him to Austria because of the comparatively slow progress of the German mission under his lead. When arriving in Vienna he was thus resolved to demonstrate otherwise, that is, that he could make his new missionary area thrive even more. Animated by Mun’s growth protocol, from the onset Koch clearly expressed

\(^{75}\) Literally, “Hejo! Hitch up the carriage,” a popular old round.

\(^{76}\) Werner kept managing and funding Steberl’s Czechoslovak mission after taking over the German mission. Hence, the Germany Family became the new anchoring point for Steberl.

his aim to elevate the mission to new heights, even entering the economic and
the political realm (as Mun had commissioned the various national leaders to
do while in Essen). Koch would formally be in charge of the Austrian UM
until his passing in 1984. And indeed, in these fifteen years, notwithstanding
the increasing headwind (entailing, among others, the formal dissolution of
the registered association by the authorities in 1974), Koch managed to ren-
der his group into a most visible actor amid the international Unificationist
community as well as within Austria’s religious panorama. Koch was to suc-
cessfully expand Werner’s legacy, also adding sustainability to the Austrian
UM.
Appendix

Figure 1: Austrian Unificationists on their way to the Essen Blessing (March 22, 1969).

Figure 2: Reception of ‘True Parents’ and their retinue at Düsseldorf Airport. Mun Sŏn-myŏng stands at the centre flanked by Han Hak-cha (right) and Ch’oe Wŏn-bok (left). Behind Mun are Peter Koch (left) and Kim Yŏng-un (right). Paul Werner stands at the very left (March 24, 1969).
Figure 3: Mun Sŏn-myŏng and his German language interpreter, Kim Kae-hwan, during a Lecture in the Falkenheim (March 24, 1969).

Figure 4: Members enacting the struggle between good and evil towards the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom at the Holy Ground in Essen (March 26, 1969).
Figure 5: The guests of honour visiting the Krupp Steel Plant in Essen. From left to right: Kuboki Osami, Mun Sŏn-myŏng, Kim Kae-hwan, and Peter Koch. Yu Hyo-wŏn follows behind with a cane (March 27, 1969).

Figure 6: ‘True Parents’ solemnly marching into the blessing venue (March 28, 1969).
Figure 7: Mun Sŏn-myŏng conducting an extempore prayer with his wife, Han Hak-cha, at his side during the actual blessing ceremony. The eight couples are standing before them. Yu Hyo-wŏn (left) and Kuboki Osami (right) are flanking the ritual setting. Ch’oe Wŏn-bok (left; not visible on this photograph) and Kim Yŏng-un (right) are standing behind the ‘True Parents.’ Two Austrian members—Herta Goldfuß (left) and Edeltraud Stimpfl (right)—are carrying the silver cups of holy water bowing their heads (March 28, 1969).

Figure 8: Group photo of the blessed couples and the officiators. From left to right (rear): Yu Hyo-wŏn; Gerhard Kunkel and Romana Maierhofer; Dennis Orme and Doris Walder; Ch’oe Wŏn-bok; Mun Sŏn-myŏng and Han Hak-cha; Kim Yŏng-un; Theodorus Verheyen and Pauline Phillips; Martin Porter (his spouse, Dawn Faroni stands next to him, not visible in this photograph); (front): Johan van der Stok and Elke Klawiter; Paul and Christel Werner; Peter Koch and Gertrud Güse; Reiner Vincenz and Barbara Koch (March 28, 1969).
Figure 9: The guests of honour seated at the banquet table following the blessing ceremony. Doris Walder and Dennis Orme are sitting on the very left. Behind the table are visible (from left to right): Yu Hyo-wŏn; Kim Yŏng-un; Mun Sŏn-myŏng and Han Hak-cha; and Ch’oe Wŏn-bok (March 28, 1969).

Figure 10: Members facing the guests of honour, who are seated at the banquet table following the blessing ceremony (March 28, 1969).
Figure 11: Mun Sŏn-myŏng at the Ölzeltgasse centre in Vienna. The writing on the blackboard reads *Segye Kido T’ongil Sillyŏng [Hyŏphoe]* 世界基督統一神靈 [協會], which translates to Holy Spirit [Association] for the Unification of World Christianity (April 6, 1969).
Figure 12: The formal passing over of the Austrian leadership by Paul Werner (standing right) to Peter Koch (standing left) at the Vienna centre in Schlüsselgasse. Gertrud Koch (née Güse) is in the middle (May 18, 1969).
List of Abbreviations

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<td>BCE</td>
<td>Before Common Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Exodus</td>
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<tr>
<td>FFWPU</td>
<td>Family Federation for World Peace and Unification</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Familien Nachrichten</td>
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<tr>
<td>GVW</td>
<td>Gesellschaft zur Vereinigung des Weltchristentums</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSAUWC</td>
<td>Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
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<td>Rev</td>
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<td>NAF</td>
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<td>UM</td>
<td>Unification Movement</td>
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<td>WK</td>
<td>Wŏlli kangnon</td>
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### Glossary

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