

In GPA every day is a new opportunity

Roland Platt
May 14, 2014



Takanari giving a Divine Principle lecture to the guests

Hello Everyone! This week has been a busy week for us in New Jersey! But I will talk about few things that happened, which is witnessing and flower fundraising. During the week many guests have been coming to the church center to listen to the Divine Principle. An amazing thing about this is that one of the Japanese moms (David's mother) witnessed to this young man named Brian, and he was very interested in the teachings of the Divine Principle. The next day, Brian brought his friend, Jon, and they both started coming together to listen. Then the following day they brought two of their friends, Edwin and Ron. All of them come almost every day to the 7:00 pm DP Lecture. It is amazing to have the same guests coming in to listen to the Divine Principle. I feel happy to see them coming to the church center on their own, just like a parent feeling happy to see their own children. We are hoping that they will continue to come to fully understand the Principle and go deeper into it.

This Tuesday, Sayana and Takanari had a really good opportunity and experience. Both of them had a chance to give a lecture to the guest on the introduction to the Divine Principle. They both had prepared for a long time thinking about the guest, doing their best to make a easier understanding of the DP. I attended the DP lecture when Sayana and Takanari was giving the lecture, and listening to them I could tell they were speaking from their heart and it was very easy to understand what they were explaining about. Takanari said "It's been amazing to see how guests come to learn the DP recently. We had the chance to listen and also give DP lectures to them. It was both nerve-wracking and exciting to give it to the guests."

During the weekend, like all of you know, we had the chance to go out and do flower fundraising. Two of the members, Brandon and myself, went to Massachusetts because Roland oppa called Keimi unni saying that there is one spot for anyone in Massachusetts. The others stayed in New Jersey to fundraise in their designated spot. It was a good experience for everyone; most of them said they learned and gained a lot. One thing that I learned through this experience was to have faith. On the first day we did not do so well, so I got worried for the next 2 days, like what if we can't sell all the flowers and have so many left overs? Many questions and worries were in my head coming up over and over again. But on the next day people just came here and bought flowers, and in the end we only had few of 1 or 2 bouquets left. There were even people telling us that they saw us on Friday selling flowers or remembering the last year GPA members selling flowers and so they came by to buy flowers from us. Through this I learned to have faith in the foundation we are setting for the future, having faith in God, and be patient.



One more week until we leave New Jersey, so we want to make each day worth it!

**Witnessing in NYC
May 13, 2014**

Many exciting things have been happening in the New Jersey community this week, but today I'm going to tell you guys about the day we got to go out witnessing in NYC with Mr. Demian Dunkley. First, we all gathered at the New Yorker Hotel and met with Demian Dunkley and Shinyoung Chang, a 2nd gen older sister who works with Demian oppa and is also the editor of UC Magazine. We all introduced ourselves, and then Demian oppa talked more about his vision/future plan for DPLife, some of his recent experiences with witnessing, and some tips for when we go out on the frontline. After that, we got our bookmarks ready and rode a subway to Central Park. The weather was nice, the park was beautiful, and it was just a perfect day to be outside. With Demian oppa's guidance/advice, we went out with the bookmarks telling people that we were promoting the launch of a new website, and after that initial interaction, we would go with the flow, talking more about Father's quotes on the cards, sharing each other's beliefs, and trying to reach out to the people on a deeper level. For me, my experience that day changed my perspective on witnessing completely. Witnessing doesn't have to be something that you dread or something that you do out of obligation. It's really about opening up to people and sharing something significant with them which can possibly even change their lives. I was able to actually enjoy witnessing and meeting new people that day, so I was really grateful for that experience.



Demian-oppa giving us a short guidance before going out to witness



Getting ready to witness with bookmarks and cards

After our witnessing session, Demian oppa generously bought us all Halal food and ice cream for lunch. (Thank you Demian oppa!) Then we just walked around Central Park, enjoying the greenery and the beautiful weather. And once we got back to the New Yorker Hotel, we were given the opportunity to meet Dr. Balcomb and share our experiences of the day with him. He also challenged us to go out witnessing every day for the 11 days we had left, and pass out at least 3 bookmarks a day. Meeting 3 new people a day is something that we can all do, if we just put in that conscious effort every day. And I feel like through that, we can give back to God.

Serving Is Giving May 6, 2014

This Tuesday, in the evening we got the chance to listen to a testimony from one of the GPA member's father, Uncle Bruce (Grace's father). He spoke to us about himself, tithing, adoption, and family. Out of things he had talked about, what stood out to me the most was what he said, "Do the things that fear you the most." This really hit me because I realized ever since I got to New Jersey helping the community, I have been running away from my fears and not challenging myself. It's easy for us to run away from our own fears especially when you are at home there are a lot of opportunities for me and you to run away from my and your fears. So I noticed that I need to push myself to challenge myself and making it a good habit of mine before going back home if I don't do that now I know that I would be lazy. Uncle Burn had also talked about how we can build a Cheon Il Guk, which starts from our family. Cheon Il Guk doesn't mean fulfilling it on a specific day but it starts NOW. In order to become the owners of Cheong Il Guk we need to take initiative for it. Like what father said, written on the bookmarks "A family is the key to a peaceful world." I believe that is the most important thing right now to build the Kingdom of Heaven.

On Saturday, we had two different things happening, witnessing and service project. So we had separated into two groups, few of us went out to witness and others went to help out the gardening. For the few that went witnessing, before going out we had an hour DP study to give us spiritual energy and learn something about the DP. When we got out starting witnessing, we were still nervous but more excited than last time we went witnessing. After going out I talked to a first participant, Takanari, he said "It has been a good experience witnessing here in New Jersey. It's always nerve racking to go out there but seeing the older members working hard each day is really inspiring and gives me hope. They are dedicated and really willing to share. Witnessing has been challenging me more to see what I really stand for and to reach out to the people. Also being able to be on the witnessing group has a good opportunity to learn the DP more." It's always a challenging time to go out witnessing but in the end I always learn something and helps me to learn how to have a parental-heart. For the service project, the other half of the people did gardening outside around the church center. They pulled out weeds, planted new cute little flowers, and pored new soil on top. Personally, I wasn't involved in the service project but a first year sister had said "It was a good experience for me to talk to the 1st gen and 2nd gen and hang out with them, being able to know who they are. Also it felt nice helping out the New Jersey community in every way that I can."



Emiko and Satomi with the pastor's daughter Teresa helping out the gardening



Seishu and one of the church staff Onishi san partnered up to witness

More Fundraising!? **May 2, 2014**

This Monday, our New Jersey team was back on the frontline! This fundraiser was a project that our cafe team had been thinking about for a while. We wanted to raise funds to help out with the little cafe that the New Jersey church is planning to make in one of the rooms in the building. Oliver, who works with the youth ministry here and is in charge of the cafe, wants to provide a place where people can come to enjoy some tea and coffee, spend time together, display and share artwork, and become closer as a community. And we thought it'd be a great way to give back to the community by donating \$1000 to this awesome project. We also needed extra funds to pay for the activities we plan to do, like Camp Shehaqua. But we didn't want to just fundraise the way we've been doing all year; we wanted to do something different and have fun with it. So we decided to fundraise with home-made cookies with cute little baskets and aprons. So on Sunday, after hearing Uncle Gerry Servito's amazing sermon, we got right to work with the cookies. It literally took all day long to bake and wrap the 500 cookies we needed for the fundraiser. But for me, it was a lot of fun being able to work on something together as a whole NJ team, and as part of the

cafe team, I was really grateful for everyone's support.

The next morning, we all woke up at 6:30, did our usual morning routine, and we were back on the frontline again. We basically fundraised all day, but personally, it didn't even feel that long. Many of us were able to have a lot of fun fundraising with the cookies in our cute little outfits. And most importantly, we knew that by going out, we were making a huge contribution to the church that we came to serve. For me, it was a good reminder of what our purpose is during this community outreach. I really want to leave a lasting impact on the NJ community, and I feel that the fundraiser was a big step in accomplishing that goal. In the end, we raised a total of over \$3600, which we're going to donate to the cafe and other parts of ministry. Thank you NJ GPA team for all your hard work!



Witness and DP experience in NEW JERSEY April 29, 2014

Greetings everyone! This week has been an amazing week for us in New Jersey. We were all able to choose to do different projects depending on our interests or what we want to improve that we individuals are good at. For the projects we have an opportunity to choose from Witnessing/Dp study, helping out the cafe, sports, web designs, and ect. Then during this week we were able to have an opportunity to go out and witness with the Japanese mothers. Many of us were very nervous to go witnessing since it was our first time, even though we experienced fundraising. After everyone came back to the church center to gather back from witnessing, every single person said that they had a good time out there. Some members that went with the Japanese mothers said that the Japanese mothers are amazing and were able to learn to respect them more. I had the chance to go out with the Japanese mother who was seishu's mom, Miyazawa san, she had gave me a really good advice and it really helped me a lot. While I was out there with Miyazawa san there was a period of time where I constantly got same rejections. Miyazawa san saw that and told me that I should reflect upon that rejection and have a repentful heart towards that because the people that gave you the same rejections can reflect what you did. That helped to realize what I have been repeating something that I repent several times about which was being lazy.

On Friday, we had a one day workshop mainly for the guest that people had been witnessing to. It was for a whole day full of DP lectures on 4 chapters which were Principles of creation, The human Fall, The Purpose of the Messiah, and Restoration. It was lectured by three lecturers, Rev. Roghanian, Rev. Rogers, and Rev. Sato. They all made the content very clear for everyone to understand. So, I'm really grateful to have been able to attend the one day DP workshop. All the lecturer, lecturing the Divine Principle, who were Rev. Roghanian, Rev. Rogers, and Rev. Sato were all amazing. Through listening to the lecture about the Divine Principle I came to understand it more and became clear in my head. Especially about the Purpose of the Messiah and Restoration, the way they had lectured helped me to understand it more deeper. I realized how important the messiah is needed for us, humans, to connect to God and being able to know what God really want for this world to be. Also, realized how our responsibility towards restoring this world is a huge thing for us to do.

We are looking forward for the next week!



Seishu and Reiko writing down notes during the lecture about the Divine Principle



Rev. Roghanian giving a lecture on the Principle of Creation

Our New Home, New Jersey! April 22, 2014

Hi everyone. Our New Jersey team arrived here on Friday, and everyday has been pretty jam-packed with activities since day one. When we arrived, we were welcomed by Pastor Manoj Jacobs. He seemed so happy to see us, and he told us that the New Jersey community was excited to have us here. We definitely feel very welcomed by the community, and I'm really grateful for all the love and care we're receiving from them, especially our home-stay families. Also, some of our team members like Peter, Seishu, and Reiko, live or have lived here in New Jersey, so there was a lot of reuniting and catching up with family and friends, and I think that's part of the reason why we felt so welcomed here.

The next day, we met Oliver Noll, a 2nd gen older brother, who does a lot of work with the youth ministry. And later that afternoon, we helped out with GO, God's Own Youth Ministry, which is a youth program for middle and high school kids. Around 60-70 kids gathered that day, which was really

surprising for me. Back at home in my community, there's a large number of BC's, but it's always a struggle trying to get everyone to come to the youth programs. So I'm really impressed by how much involvement there is in the youth ministry here, and I could definitely take home some tips and methods on how they make these youth events so successful in NJ. Some of us are also learning basic audio visual skills from an older brother, Ryan, so we can help out with the band at the NJ church but also for our church services back at home.



Spending time with the NJ kids

One of my favorite experiences so far was going to the Hillsong service held at the Manhattan Center. I was really excited to go because I'd always wanted to see what Lovin' Life was like live. Of course, it was different from the real Lovin' Life, but I felt like I was able to experience what it was like even a little bit, so I was pretty excited for it. It was Easter Sunday so there were a lot of people lining up to get in, making it almost feel like we were going to a regular concert. It was inspiring to see how many young people were attending this service, and it made me realize again how powerful music ministry is. We all had an amazing experience there.



Hillsong Service at Manhattan Center

We're all really grateful for the loving, warm welcome we've received from this community so far. Hopefully our GPA team can leave a positive impact for our brothers and sisters in New Jersey throughout these next few weeks.