

Generation Peace Academy Overseas: Zambia - Joy Through Service and Sharing Truth

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February 19, 2024



Mulibwanji!

After our adventures in Ndola, we finally went back to our "home base" for our time in Zambia: Barlastone Park in Lusaka! To start off our first full day back at Lusaka, we spent some time bonding as GPA brothers and sisters. We practiced our song and dance to prepare for any potential future performances. Following that, we played some team-bonding games with each other. Since the center we're staying at in Lusaka is located next to a school, we also spent time playing with some of the students. Overall, the morning was dedicated to connecting with each other and the local students.



Later in the day, we received a guidance about the value of witnessing. As second generation in this movement, we were able to gain a sense of gratitude for the values and beliefs we were raised with, and were inspired to share this blessing with others through witnessing.

On that day, a year-long youth leadership program called Cheon Il Guk Citizen Academy (CIGCA) had its opening ceremony, and GPA was invited to attend. We attended the ceremony and were able to meet some of the program members. We listened to a few congratulatory remarks from different church and youth leaders in Zambia. We also drew some parallels between GPA and CIGCA. We are both gap year programs for high school graduates for us to grow in our lives of faith. It was inspiring to see youth from the other side of the world also dedicate their time to their lives of faith and relationships with God.

Following the event, we listened to a guidance and testimony from some CIGYM (Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries, another branch of GPA) members about their witnessing experiences. These talks as well as the guidance from earlier today helped us prepare our hearts for witnessing for the next two days.

The next day, we officially began to witness! Half of us went out witnessing with the CIGYM members, and half of us worked on a service project at Barlastone Park.



As for witnessing, we began by setting intentions for what we wanted to achieve. This entailed both what we wanted to learn internally, and how many people we wanted to get in contact with. Then, we sang a few holy songs and held a prayer for us to prepare to go out. Going around the streets of Lusaka to witness was definitely a unique experience for many of us. We got to see for ourselves that Zambia is truly a Christian nation. Many of the locals we talked to openly expressed their faith, which is something we were not used to, having previously witnessed in America. Our aim as a group was to invite as many people as possible to a small workshop hosted by the CIG missionaries. "It was rough at first but through each interaction and inheriting the heart of those that were with me, I was slowly able to open my heart to others and have them reciprocate too. Witnessing is an amazing way to show your sincere investments." - Jakob Bijukovic, 1st year participant.

As for the service project at Barlastone Park, we were able to dig holes for construction purposes and set up mosquito nets on windows. While many things didn't go to plan and we couldn't see the final results of our efforts, we could still practice our sincerity by giving our full energy into our physical labor. Even though obstacles came up unexpectedly, we still invested into the service project knowing that our efforts were to serve the Zambian church members living at Barlastone. The service project taught us a lesson about continuing to invest for others even though results may not appear immediately.

Later in the evening, we heard the testimony of the first Unificationist missionary, Reverend Faber. He shared about his story of joining the movement and establishing the movement in Zambia. We learned about the various challenges and adventures he had in Zambia. While we are only in Zambia for 21 days, we were inspired by his pioneering spirit of wanting to leave a lasting, meaningful impact on Zambia.

The next day, we continued to witness and work on the service project. The previous witnessing group now worked on the service project, and the previous service group now went out witnessing.

The main event for the day occurred in the afternoon, where the CIG missionaries held a small workshop! Several of the people we invited while witnessing attended the event. We started off the workshop with a couple icebreakers to raise the spirit, as well as with a performance. We sang two Zambian songs: Tutole Lesa Wa Mweo and Anidoba. Music was a beautiful way we could connect and bond with the locals. After the songs, we listened to two Divine Principle lectures about two different chapters. One covered Introduction, and the second covered Principles of Creation. The lectures were especially engaging because they were catered for an audience of people not in this movement. At the end of the workshop, we could spend time bonding with the guests and getting to know them better not just as witnessing targets, but as people. Something we wanted to focus on was creating an environment of love at this event. As commonly quoted, people don't always remember what they were told, but they remember how they felt.

We concluded the day by playing a team-bonding game after dinner as GPA brothers and sisters. We shared fun, unique facts about ourselves and got to know each other better. Creating a joyful atmosphere within our group has always been a priority in our time in Zambia, especially to prepare for our future adventures in Lusaka!