

Building God's Kingdom, One Small Group at a Time

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Atsushi and Namiko Takino with their guests at the Clifton, New Jersey Family Church Sunday Service

Atsushi and Namiko Takino are from New Jersey and have spent the last seven years holding Hoondok Family Church small groups as a way to challenge themselves to grow God's Kingdom within their community. They share here how they did this.

We are always thinking of True Parents and praying for True Mother's good health and challenging ourselves to witness to and reach out to our community. With this in mind, we started the Hoondok (HD) Family Church.

I believe that HD Family Church is the base camp of God and True Parents' love. People who come to our small group feel the heart of family under God. We all experience the possibility of creating "one family under God," even though we are so very different in our skin color, culture and language. I believe that God and True Parents join us in spirit every time we hold this small group. Through it we have built deep, heartfelt connections with each other.



The Hoondok Family Church celebrates Mother's Day.

Sometimes HD Family Church participants invite their relatives to our gathering. They have wonderful experiences with the Unificationist families. We invited five guests, and two of them continue to come. This small initiative has set a strong foundation for multiplying a desire to care for one another, and we feel this is why it has lasted for so long.

We started out by distributing HD Family Church fliers and True Father's autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, in our neighborhood. This didn't generate a response, so we decided to go to the streets and reach out to people near the Clifton (NJ) Family Church every Saturday.

As a Japanese couple, we had difficulty at first communicating because of our cultural background and ability to speak in English, but since we began the HD Family Church, I feel this has gradually become a non-issue, naturally. Now six Unificationists spend their Saturdays with us, reaching out to our community. We brought nine more guests to the Clifton Family Church in one year, two of whom are continuing to study the Divine Principle, the core text of Unificationism.



The Hoondok Family Church spends a day with Generation Peace Academy participants.

Distributing 430 copies of True Father's autobiography was the turning point from our being hesitant to speak with others about Rev. and Mrs. Moon to speaking freely and openly with confidence. We repented when True Father went to the spirit world because we felt personally that, because of our hesitation, we had not done what we could have to contribute substantially to the building of God's heavenly kingdom on earth. We know that True Father is not resting, even in spirit world, but is working hard still to build God's kingdom on earth. We are determined to keep testifying about True Parents to every person we meet and to guide people toward receiving the Holy Marriage Blessing from God and True Parents, in order to create more blessed families. One by one we can build God's kingdom.

True Father appeared in a dream to us on the 99th day after his ascension. He had awakened in his dwelling within the Cheong Jeong Gung (Dwelling Place of Heavenly Righteousness). Everybody was delighted. He told us, "We have to take care of True Parents." We promised to do so.

Recently we were fortunate to spend a wonderful month with Generation Peace Academy (GPA) participants. They came to our HD Family Church gathering, and each of them offered a short testimony. They all have experienced the living God. They joined us on the streets, reaching out and witnessing. On one Saturday they brought two new guests, who since then have come twice to study Divine Principle and attend Sunday service.

The many successes we have experienced on a personal and intergenerational level inspire us to push further and harder so that we can say at True Father's 100th birthday, in the year 2020, that we have something we can offer toward the building of God's kingdom on earth. It is our sincere hope and our daily challenge to live and build Cheon Il Guk (God's heavenly kingdom) within our community, working together with the first, second and even third generation of Unificationists.