

European Second Generation Department's 2019 Summer Workshop Reflections

Michael Balcomb
October 16, 2019



How was ESGD summer 2019...

Looking back to the summer of workshops, we want to share some reflections about what was experienced and created together.

This year's summer motto was "Represent: Truth in Action". It was inspired by True Father's teaching:

"Whether you are destined for heaven or hell is not determined by your beliefs or thoughts. It is determined by your daily life. Just knowing in your head what is good, is not enough."

This summer's motto encouraged us to put our beliefs in practice and live a life rooted in truth and goodness. We wanted to provide an atmosphere and education, where we, as blessed children, could reflect on the values and teachings we represent, connected to our origins in the Principle, in True Parents and in our own parents. The content and activities encouraged participants to dive deeper and recognise that our life is bigger than ourselves; we represent more than just "me". And to fulfil that potential, each one of us needs to be courageous to be different and deeper, clear in who we are and what we represent beyond ourselves.



Amongst the Junior, Senior and ODP+ workshops this summer, there were over 250 participants and staff who joined. The Junior workshop was a total of 105 participants and staff from 15 countries. The Senior brought together 100 participants and staff from 18 countries. And the ODP+ consisted of 55 participants and staff from 13 countries. We are grateful to everyone for the experience we created, the lessons learned, and the friendships that were deepened. We also want to particularly thank the lecturers, team leaders, kitchen staff, core staff and all of the parents and families for your support.

Below are a selection of participant testimonies, taken from participants' written reflections.

"I would describe my internal journey as coming from feeling lost and devoid of hope, to finding Grace. I have reconnected to my identity, feeling hope again and strengthening my values. The content played the biggest part in this healing process for me; reminding me of God's providence and the ideal for all our lives. I am also very grateful for my team. We had the most deep and interesting debates and sharings. It

made the whole experience very spiritual for me and I really appreciated their critical minds, open hearts and passion for truth." [ODP+ participant]

"Internally, I think this workshop was similar to Armstrong's first step on the moon. Because until this workshop, I never really stepped out of my landing craft to put things I learned into action. Now, I feel I've finally put that first step into action and can begin exploring the depth of a genuine life of faith.

No matter what activity, the constant freedom to be myself, to open up and discuss my woes and joys with both God and the people around me was the biggest highlight of my ODP+ experience." [ODP+ participant]



"I came with lots of questions regarding what to prioritise in my daily life. I had a feeling that something was off and I need a change of perspective and attitude. Excited and nervous, I decided to look for answers full of energy, ready to challenge myself. It's been a beautiful journey, many healthy conversations, many beautiful moments as a team and most of all, the content I needed to hear. The lectures reminded me of what is important to me. It feels like my original mind is speaking much louder and guiding me to make some important, substantial steps. This workshop has been very meaningful to me and will make a big difference in what's to come in my life." [ODP+ participant]

"Recently, I have been having a very confusing and difficult time in life. It seems that I was on a way of giving up many of my values through the process of facing a harsh reality. This workshop has helped me by pointing out serious issues in my life and stirring my heart. Hearing from the staff members about their commitment to make a difference and love others, moved me. This experience has given me a lot of hope for the future. I want to be in tune with my inner self. On the second prayer evening, I realised I want God in my life more than I want anything. I want to strive to live more fully, to love more and help others more, to tirelessly make effort to fix my own flaws. I believe God is inside of me and is longing to come out." [ODP+ participant]

"After the first team meeting, I felt so relieved since the sharings were so beautiful. For the first time, I wasn't stressed about sharing but really enjoyed talking with my team. The whole workshop experience has moved my heart and I gained clarity about what my real goals in life are, what God's plan for me is and to set my priorities right again. Each lecture was a highlight in itself – I felt like a sponge that wanted to take everything in and never let it go." [ODP+ participant]

"One take away from this workshop, was reflecting on what it means to find God's perspective. It has always been difficult for me to make choices with a calm clarity that this is what God wants and not just my own personal leanings in the moment. I realised that getting in touch with God's perspective is not a revelatory moment of divine inspiration. Rather, it is making effort to discover a more mature perspective, a broader frame of mind, a deeper understanding. And that often comes from seeking more mature guidance and others' perspectives. Because sometimes we are limited by our own concepts if we stay within our own head and heart." [ODP+ participant]

"I gained so much in 10 days; the whole workshop was the highlight of my year. My personal understanding is deeper and my concepts have changed for the better. My team helped me understand myself a lot better. I learned a lot from them, from their experiences and the way they dealt with challenges. The support I received from them during challenge day and sharings was so strong and moving that it made me want to give them all my support back." [ODP+ participant]

"This workshop was different to the Junior. I had my clear personal goals and time to reflect, think, meditate and share. I learned I represent not only myself but also my family, our Church and God. I want to remember that without investing, there are no achievements and that we need to invest to love others. I can become a beautiful gift for God through investing in my purity. I want to remember to put "truth in action". I want to be more responsible for my life." [Senior participant]

"I really appreciated the hdh and lectures this week, and the prayer night and team time where we

reflected and shared. I was happy my team was always honest and real. We weren't the sportiest team, but we were really able to stay united during all the activities and naturally support each other. I learnt that it is not enough to believe certain things; these beliefs only become significant when they are acted upon." [Senior participant]

"Through this workshop, I could think a lot more about the things that are really important to me. I want to invest more in my family. I know it will be hard, but that's the priority I choose. And when something is a priority, you have to show it in practice." [Senior participant]

"On challenge day, I shared my deep secret that I struggle to connect with others. It was one of the biggest breakthroughs of my life. I was honest and I trusted in my team. I said it to start my journey of being more open and honest. I learned that I shouldn't base my life on my emotions. I have to use my conscience to analyse things and find the best option that will make me closest to God." [Senior participant]

"I had a very meaningful internal journey this week. I definitely feel the need to grow more spiritually. I really appreciated such a refreshing lecture on purity, why it is so important and why we shouldn't compromise on it at all. We need to take responsibility and become the children God can be proud of". [Senior participant]



"I think I have learnt a lot during the workshop. I liked the people very much and made many new friends. I hope I can apply what I learnt in my life. I want to be more honest, sincere and confident. I realized we have to trust God and our inner voice (conscience). I want to talk more about my problems with my parents and my siblings. I think I still have a long internal journey ahead, but I feel that I have grown up a little bit and I want to grow more." [Junior participant]

"It is very interesting how every year I can learn more about purity, God and True Parents, relationships with family and friends. And something I appreciated was that guidance was very honest and not sugar-coated. I think that is a good thing especially for teenagers because it brings much more clarity.

I could learn and realize how culture influences us and can affect us both ways. And also, how fear can play a big role in our life of faith and purity lifestyle; and how it can torment us and turn us away from the right direction." [Junior TL]



"At first I was a little bit afraid because of all those people coming from all around Europe. But after a few days I was thinking: OMG! ... there are so many BCs! We're such a big community! I enjoyed the experience of getting to know many BCs.

I liked Purity Day. The topic is important as we all are teenagers and need to deal with it. The way how the topic was spoken about was very good. I did not hear the concept of DOs instead of Nos before." [Junior participant]

"My highlights are: being surrounded by people who understand me, the whole schedule with all the activities and sports, time spent with the team – I really enjoyed it. I learnt that helping and encouraging others is important, you can always share the burden.

After the workshop I want to reflect more. I will not be afraid to be different, I will be more honest with myself and with others." [Junior participant]