

FFWPU USA Church Growth Committee Report 2014

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February 14, 2014

Identifying the obstacles to growth of the Unification Church and proposing solutions to those obstacles were the tasks taken on by the Church Growth Committee.

The committee consists of National Council delegates Kevin Thompson, Bryan Lancaster, Rickey Schnorr and Dr. Tyler Hendricks, who is the committee head.

The committee started by making “SWOT” lists (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

Under Strengths, they compiled the following:

- Divine Principle
- There are many young adults throughout the nation.
- These young adults have become high-level professionals.
- Our young adults have a deep love and respect for the other young adults in our movement.
- Our young adults have a deep love for God and True Parents.
- Our young adults in general have a sound moral sense.

Under “Weaknesses” the following were found:

- Movement activities cost an exorbitant amount. Young adults who are able to attend events are usually from the larger churches, which pay their fees and traveling expenses, leaving out the many who cannot afford to attend. It is usually the same people who attend.
- Members cannot see the return on investment of the movement’s finances.
- Members feel guilt because 1,500 American families do not give as much as 30,000 Japanese families. This diminishes American members’ self-esteem.
- “God’s Hope for America” as opposed to “God’s Hope Is”
- The movement does not have programs invested in giving to the community for the sake of goodness.
- Young adult programs are not supported and even are sometimes opposed by longtime members’ obstructionist behavior.
- Young adults in positions of authority in the movement are usually those who will unite with the non-productive policies of the status quo.
- Longtime members have little interest in spiritual growth.
- The movement does not acknowledge the individual’s 5 percent portion of responsibility, as stated in the Divine Principle, and negates members’ efforts to have an opinion. This eliminates freedom and creativity.
- Young adults who do not attend Sunday Service or mandated activities are viewed as faithless. Nothing could be further from the truth.
- Many older members have become penniless, which is a burden on the young adults.
- Longtime members who blame the Church for personal problems in marriage and finance sometimes complain to guests and clergy.
- The mixing of international funds and U.S. Church funds creates a lack of accountability and transparency. It also obscures the U.S. Church’s efforts to meet the 2020 Vision goals.
- The lack of a U.S. Church budget allows little input from the National Council on how to achieve 2020 Vision goals.
- Love for True Parents is defined by Headquarters as a monetary offering.
- 2020 Vision has a vague definition of the goals and objectives in terms of numbers. Who is our target audience? How are we counting?
- Some members feel that the National Council delegates are not making enough effort to find out the thoughts and opinions of members in their district or to report back what the National Council is doing.

Under the heading of Opportunities, the committee listed the following:

- Church grants provide opportunities for church growth.
- We have the opportunity to designate a percentage of grant money to be administered by young adults.
- We have the opportunity to create personal ministries in the community that help people in their path to spiritual growth and self-improvement.
- We have the opportunity to support young adults, perhaps with grant money, by paying for transportation costs and fees to national events.
- We have the opportunity to invest in and support our young adults in activities that will attract

many young adults throughout the nation. One second generation young adult has the potential to bring many new members.

- Motivate 500 young adults, and we meet the 2020 Vision goals. Invest in programs that inspire young adults and enable them to meet their friends where they are at.
- We have the opportunity to make a statement about the need for members to take care of themselves. Father said this to us directly.
- Create a U.S. Church budget that has transparency and accountability.

Under the heading of “Threats” the committee came up with the following:

- Continuing our present policies.
- Continuing expensive programs that young adults cannot afford.
- Having little concern about the welfare of the members and their families.
- Not having a budget for the proper allocation of funds. Spending money on programs for which we see no return.
- Resistance to change and new ideas.
- Theology as a method of control.
- Lack of initiatives in which people want to participate.

To address these circumstances the committee made the following recommendations:

Venues that can promote growth:

- National Council
- HSA Headquarters
- Unification Theological Seminary

National Council

Possible Contributions: Marketing

Recommendations:

- Develop marketable products that meet people where they are at.
- Expand network through organizing grant awards that enlarge our market base.

The National Council has a role to play in contributing to Church growth, especially in the areas of marketing and funding. In marketing, the National Council should hold accountable those responsible for making our products marketable. It should also work to expand our market base through grant awards.

Marketing

Current State: Guests do not return for continuing lectures and/or the Conclusion of the Divine Principle.

Future State:

- Focus of Introductory Lecture includes personal growth, marriage and family
- Introductory Witnessing Lecture includes the Conclusion of Divine Principle
- Salvific Message is included in the Introductory Lecture

Transitional Steps:

- Product development
- Identify personnel and funding resources available to upgrade products

Local ministries have said that while guests may come to an Introductory Lecture, very few return to hear the rest of the Divine Principle. Our suggestion would be to have Headquarters resources develop an Introductory Lecture that includes the Conclusion, the benefits and the resources. This would give all guests the opportunity to know the importance of this time in history.

Grants

Make capacity-building grants available that expand the movement’s base and get membership involved in serving the community and networking, thereby developing relationships.

Recommendations:

- Encourage independent startup ministries such as the Creative Community Project of Northern

California.

- Ministries should focus on providing education about spiritual and personal growth.
- Ministries use grants for 501c3 non-profit start-ups.
- Ministries use grants for training in areas of spiritual and personal growth.
- Ministries look to outside resources for funding.

The National Council should continue to make grants available to develop successful witnessing models. One way to do this would be to facilitate the awarding of capacity-building grants to ministries that could be involved in local communities.

Many have noted that the Conclusion to the Divine Principle and the salvific message are abstract ideas in the marketplace of ideas, allowing little headway in witnessing.

However, personal growth, spiritual growth and family development are the mainstays of solving problems that we are facing locally, especially in education. If we promote independent startup ministries through our membership, we would be giving them the tools to do tribal messiahship and give them ownership over the direction given by True Parents.

Creating relationships is the foundation for being able to share a more profound content. This was the foundation for the witnessing in Northern California which was known as the Creative Community Project.

Current State: First-time grants have been awarded to fund model witnessing projects that will meet the 2020 Vision goals.

Future State: Successful model witnessing projects can be duplicated throughout the Church.

Transitional State: Expand grants to include capacity-building grants for new 501 C3 startups that are focused on personal and spiritual growth.

Promote capacity-building grants as an important component of building our witnessing base.

The Church Executive Board and the National Council should be commended for initiating the development of our Church's grant awards process. Our goal is for these projects to lead the way in meeting our 2020 Vision goals. Hopefully we will be able to duplicate the successful projects by those members invigorated throughout the Church.

HSA Headquarters

Possible Contributions:

- Coordinate with the Executive Board to approve funding for witnessing grants.
- Coordinate with the Executive Board for UTS support for local witnessing efforts.
- Coordinate with the Executive Board for "Lead with Impact" support for educational classes and certificates in online leadership training.
- Formulate a U.S. Church budget that is transparent and accountable.

Our thanks are extended to our Headquarters staff for the remarkable job they have done in promoting the National Council and interfacing with the Church Executive Board. We hope this effort will result in Headquarters departments and UTS leading the way toward achieving our goals in witnessing.

Unification Theological Seminary

Possible Contributions: Become a resource for local witnessing

Recommendations:

- Provide continuing education for new and old members
- Work with new church plants
- Create classes on leading witnessing
- Create classes on organizing and holding workshops and retreats
- Send UTS students to the field for experience in missionary work
- Offer UTS scholarships to graduates of Generation Peace Academy
- Offer witnessing classes to Generation Peace Academy

The obvious reward for UTS in providing more support for the abovementioned efforts would be students from the local areas attending UTS. Hopefully, students at UTS could come to the field for missionary work and invigorate the relationship between Headquarters, UTS and the local communities.

Developing an Introduction to the Divine Principle with the Conclusion Up Front

- Revelation from Jesus
- Revealed the root cause of humankind's problems
- Father saw the suffering of the Korean people and his own family, which propelled him to ask God, "Why is there suffering?"
- Discovered that God is suffering and cannot solve the problem Himself
- Discovered the course to subjugate Satan
- Discovered the original model that God intended for humankind and the way to accomplish that model (the Blessing, world peace through ideal families)
- Teaches clearly the path of growth and development for individuals and the way of peace for humankind

Development of Liturgy Based on the Blessing

- Establishing True Parents' authority
- Salvation through marriage
- Removing Satan's claim on marriage and family
- Second Advent message is an endless fountain of truth (our gospel and teaching tool).
- Salvation gives us a family based on True Parents' lineage.

Development of the Blessing Sacraments

- Honoring True Parents
- Recommitting to the Blessing
- Recommitting to spiritual growth
- Recommitting to family

Updating True Family Values

- Value of the Blessing
- Committing to spiritual growth
- Establishing a medium of outreach
- Creating small-group programs as a family

Goals and Objectives

- Mission: We create, grow, sustain and share friendship and family life by ministering the Blessing, teaching Divine Principle, mentoring, and sharing joyful and care-giving lives.
- Market: Our market is good people seeking a family lifestyle.
- What does the customer value? People value family and friends—family and friends who listen, have fun and regularly fellowship. They want to learn how to create, sustain, grow and share this experience.
- What is our plan? We will create, grow, sustain and share friendship and family life by ministering the Blessing, teaching, mentoring, having fun and sharing our lives.