

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Kazuki, Wendy and I could spend the past weekend in Cheong Pyeong attending the 16th special grace and forgiveness workshop. I think we did not realize how special an opportunity it was until we got there and found 11,600 other people!

As you know Cheong Pyeong is a harsh environment for the physical body, but a wonderful place for the spirit. Early on Saturday morning Kazuki and I climbed up to the Tree of Blessing and there we prayed for a successful workshop, but also conference. Over the three days we participated in 4 holy song sessions, many lectures, prayers, the Holy Burning Ceremony, and the Holy Wine Ceremony. At the very end we were lucky enough to have Rev. Kwak personally conduct the holy wine ceremony after testifying about the recent International Leadership Seminar in the USA and the meeting in St Lucia with the Prime Minister, our Ambassador for Peace. I think the members were amazed at the fast progress now taking place in the Providence. A few noted leaders we also attending this workshop such as Dr Bo Hi Pak, Sunjo Hwang, their families, and some of Rev. Kwak's staff from the Do Won Building. As you may know Rev. Peter and Mrs. Phyllis Kim are currently living in Silvertown and they graciously invited us for dinner on the night of our arrival. We really felt embraced and blessed by everyone and our overall experience.

I know many people have questions and concerns about this workshop, its meaning, significance, purpose, etc. I too had and still have some concerns. However, one thing I would like to mention to you is that somehow I realized there is a big difference between what my head can understand and comprehend, and what my heart needs and feels. No matter how odd our traditions may seem and how unusual our methods, at the end of this workshop I felt very good to have been able to pray under these circumstances, to be with brothers and sisters, and to place myself once again in a humble position in front of God. I hope each of you can do the same. Sometimes we do not know what we need, but God, our Heavenly Parent knows very well.

I think we need this.

Frank LaGrotteria

If we had become true Blessed Central Families, as we should have, then True Father did not need to do this. But because somehow we are stuck in our own world and cannot seem to move forward, True Father has to give us a jump-start. What I felt at the end of the ceremony was that once again I am given a chance to start again. In analogy it's like we are in a race to get to heaven. But somehow people are going the wrong way, others are getting stuck in mud, and others have a faulty engine that would not start. I felt this ceremony was like God taking everyone, putting them all on the same starting line and saying 'I cleaned you up and have given you a new car so try again...ok go!'

What I really understood from the Ceremony was that God's Love and Grace is unconditional and eternal. Like a parent who will not stop loving his children just because a mistake was made, God is always willing to forgive and let us try again. I used to have a concept that because of my sins and fallen natures, God must be angry or ashamed of me and that he will not interact with me. But in reality that was all my own thinking. God is always 24/7 reaching out to us no matter who we are. Even in hell the fact stands that we are His children and that a parent will never stop loving his children. I realized that this was not a special ceremony because God is going to forgive all our sins, but because this is a chance for us to stand in front of God and finally accept his love and grace that He had always given to us in the first place. I feel as though we are all standing on the same starting line and once again we can try to go ahead together as Blessed Central Families.

Kazuki Tomeda

Wendy's Experience

It always amazes me how, no matter where you go in the church, even though you do not know many people at an event, you somehow always can meet someone of a similar spirit with whom you can share the experience, even if it is just sharing a sleeping bag with some Japanese sisters for the night.

In attending the workshop I realized that we all come from many different directions some of us just humming along in our daily lives and not doing anything that we would call sinful, but as was explained in the workshop, when we are out driving in our cars we all pick up some dust and dirt on the way. Some of it is collective sin from our not accomplishing a providential course, or in other more severe cases, committing sin; whether it be misuse of money, hurting someone (and how easy is that to do) or in the extreme, having some type of Chapter Two problem. But the bottom line is by attending this ceremony we went through the car wash and we are all now sparkly clean, like new, thanks to the indemnity paid by Daemonim and Hyeung Jin Nim.

