

French Summer Camp Nurturing Faith in Brittany by the Sea

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Bretagne (in English, Brittany) is the name of France's northwestern peninsula, just southwest of Normandy. In ancient times, leaders that had roots in Britain controlled this territory and between the fourth and ninth centuries much of Brittany's population migrated from the southwestern British Isles. Thus, the term "Great Britain" came to be used to differentiate the large part of Britain in the sea from the smaller part of Britain then on the continent. Today Brittany is a region of the French Republic.

For young members of the French church, Brittany has been the location to head to each summer for the past six years to meet friends and to deepen their lives of faith through a summer camp experience. It has developed into a major summer event. Indeed, this sixth iteration of the summer camp brought together more than forty second-generation members. The theme of this year's get-together, which occurred August 8-16, was "the ocean providence."

A young Unificationist, Jonathan Burt, initially launched the summer camp project in 2009. It has continually improved year after year. The first year, it took place in a small field with only few Breton church members. The workshop then moved to a small campsite. Eventually, the organizers were able to hold it in a luxurious three-star campsite, near the Atlantic Ocean. This is where they held it this year.

What was once a small, local event for the Brittany church community has now reached the national level. Unificationist campers came from all parts of France. Two members of our second generation, sixteen-year-old Solange and seventeen-year-old Laurent organized this year's camp. These two teenagers dedicated much time to preparing the week-long program.

What motivated them to invest their time and effort? They expressed their feelings by saying, we know how concerned True Father was about the ocean providence, because he strongly emphasized the ocean's value. We feel deeply blessed to live near to the Atlantic Ocean, and it has been such a pleasure to hold this camp on the Breton shoreline. The Paris community does not have the chance to witness the beauty

of nature and the beauty of the sea. It is a great privilege to live our lives surrounded by such beautiful landscapes. We felt the need to share this blessing with the highest possible number of people.

Camping by the sea

This year's summer adventurers (ranging in age from nine to twenty-five) had the opportunity to participate in several activities such as beach volleyball, a challenge day and a treasure hunt. Both the young participants and the not-so-young ones seemed to appreciate these events. They suffered through a thunderstorm with heavy rainfall, but these seemed necessary to fully appreciate the sun's rays when they could feel them again.

They started off each day with a morning sport on the beach, the perfect way to enjoy the beauty of the rising sun. The morning sport sessions were followed by Hoon Dok Hae, reading about Father's hopes for and explanations of the ocean providence.

The teams prepared their own meals. Teams evaluated other teams, not only for the excellence of the food they prepared but for all activities, creating a competitive yet friendly atmosphere and reinforcing the quality of the workshop. At the end of each day, the teams would meet and their members would fill out a "souvenir booklet" with drawings symbolizing the day that had just passed. They would then conclude the day by playing card games or having a quiz. They enjoyed various activities, including testimonies from France-Pol and others and one by Jonathan on his trip to Korea. Parents provided a lot of support. In addition, the manager of the camp supplied equipment, such as tables and chairs and two refrigerators, free of charge.

Eventually, the sixth Brittany Summer Camp ended with a prayer vigil followed by the release of twenty red lanterns that floated on the surface of the sea, beneath the starry sky.