

## Developing Witnessing in Chicago

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*Unificationists in Chicago held a "World Caf " meeting to discuss witnessing and outreach strategies.*

After the 40-day National Summer Witnessing Campaign was announced, the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) Chicago Family church held a witnessing meeting at the Unification Church (UC) Schaumburg Center on Wednesday, June 19, 2013 in Chicago. During the meeting, around 30 active-church members shared their thoughts through "World Caf " style discussions on three topics: "What are the obstacles in witnessing?" "What do we need to breakthrough?" and "Ideas for Witnessing."

This "World Caf " helped us, the Chicago members and me, to find many good ideas and insights as well as to assess our current situation in order to establish a starting point. A couple of the most thought-provoking comments I heard were: "I am the obstacle" and "I am not motivated enough." Another comment was, "We don't have positive concepts of ourselves, therefore people will not accept what we say and believe."

It is obvious that we cannot inspire other people if we are not inspired. Similarly, we cannot convince others if we have no confidence ourselves. Also, many participants at the World Caf  meeting expressed the necessity of learning how to speak well and enthusiastically when introducing our faith and the church.



*Rather than feel nervous, unmotivated and anxious about witnessing, Chicago Unificationists practiced telling three-minute stories about how they joined to church, in order to confidently share it with co-workers or interested strangers and guests.*

If this 40-day witnessing campaign were a conventional one, we could just organize witnessing groups and give those groups and witnessing programs with numerical goals. Instead, we feel that we should start with more fundamental steps.

Accordingly, we decided to dedicate the first few weeks of the 40-day campaign to holding home meetings. Here we can practice speaking amongst Unificationist brothers and sisters and sharing: "Why I joined the Unification Church."

Suppose your friends and co-workers ask you that question, how will you reply? In this new home meeting we made a rule that each participant has three minutes to share his or her own story (since people

typically don't have patience to listen to a long story).

So far, three families have hosted a home meeting and a few more meetings will be held this week. At these meetings, many participants were a bit shy in the beginning, but such great stories were shared, and we learned how to improve from each other. Many participants told me that they were reminded once again of the excitement they felt when they first joined. They also realized how much God had worked to help people join our church.



*Unificationist families take turn opening up their homes to host home meetings to provide a space to practice lecturing educational materials.*

I hope that we can continue this kind of training and expand it to other topics such as the Divine Principle, True Parents, and so on.

Besides these home meetings, we are planning to provide opportunities for members to give lectures and familiarize themselves with the educational materials and tools we have on hand. By becoming more aware of whom we are and what our church offers, we can feel more inspired. On Saturdays, during this 40-day witnessing campaign, we will set up special training sessions for Unificationists, as well as offer regular Divine Principle lectures for new guests.

Although this approach is a bit different from conventional witnessing campaigns, I believe that this fundamental training will create future breakthroughs, since we need to dig deeper if we want to build a higher building.

For those out in the field, please consider this 40-day campaign as an opportunity to grow both internally in heart and externally in skills. Through the valuable, significant and joyful experiences we can have through witnessing, this 40-day campaign will become our stepping-stone for the future.

In addition to our witnessing campaign, the former pastors of the Chicago Church, Pastors Jario and Leena Vincenz-Gavin, will begin a new mission of planting a church together with two more families in Palatine, Illinois. On Sunday, June 30, the Chicago Church held a “send-off” Sunday Service for Pastors Vincenz-Gavin during which we offered our appreciation for their pastorship in Chicago and blessings for their new mission.