

The Hoon Dok Family Church Breakthrough in Brazil

George Kazakos and Glenn Strait
July 28, 2014



“I want all of you to learn from the Brazilian [and Philippine] situation and take it with you back to your home. ...If you are willing to change, miracles can happen.”
—True Mother during the Foundation Day 2014 meetings (paraphrase)

Right now in Brazil many people are joining. Their strategy does not involve new individual ideas. We have heard most of the ideas and strategies before. What is distinctive is the way it is being done, not what’s being done. We Americans humbly need to learn from our brothers and sisters of FFWPU Brazil.

In the post-Foundation Day era of Cheon Il Guk when “True Parents have perfected, concluded, and

completed the providence of restoration [through indemnity] and have begun a new era” (True Mother, “Korea Global Joint Worship Service,” May 11, 2014), we can expect to discover new openings for personal and collective growth.

The Brazilian Hoon Dok Family Church model appears to demonstrate one such opening by integrating some of the functions of Inreach, Outreach, and Education into the mutually reinforcing components of Small Groups, Witnessing, and One-on-one *Divine Principle* Teaching.



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Within that model, revitalization of the church community, though profound in itself, is likely not as significant as the witnessing breakthrough that taps directly into the networks of new members. This development would be essential for achieving their growth pattern of starting slowly then later accelerating rapidly.

Small groups, witnessing, and one-on-one teaching of *Divine Principle* (DP) have been tried before, and most of the time each one of them has not worked. It may seem like there is nothing new here. But when we look closely at the Brazil

model, we notice that certain critical elements have been added to each of the three components. We also note that the three components are integrated into a single, harmonized whole that leads to synergies between the three aspects.

Small groups

Based on the experience in Brazil, we may say that small groups require five different features to be successful. If any of these is lacking, the small group will most likely dwindle away over time. If these five features are maintained, with one of them being most important, the small groups keep going. These features are:

1. *Prayer and singing* — a worship component;
2. *Social time* — for connection, becoming friends (eat, talk). Make it happen naturally, ideally based on common interests as well as on geography;
3. *Read God's word (Cheon Seong Gyeong or World Scripture II*)* — don't read a lot. This is not the focal point of the meeting, but it does provide essential support for each person to select an internal goal;
4. *Set a weekly internal goal* — the most important point and what made the breakthrough happen;
5. *Invite new people into the small group*. Don't have the people listen to DP first, rather invite them first into this type of small group.

The key characteristics of the small groups are:

- Most important: breakthroughs with God based on the weekly internal goals;
- Meet weekly;
- Discussion is longer than reading;
- Meet by location or by hobby or by friends.

Setting a weekly internal goal that challenges your fallen nature, your limitations, and then having the group hold you accountable and supporting you on this goal is what can lead us to meet God and keep us going, just as setting similar goals in an MFT situation led many of us to meet God in the past. Also, people in Brazil are having experiences of meeting God. If it isn't happening to one focal person, it is happening to someone else in the small group. This is the dynamic that makes the small groups electric — where people can have breakthroughs in their relationships, challenge their fallen nature, and bring out their original nature.

Within the Brazilian churches today, the *small groups are in the subject position*. This is where the fellowship happens, where people become true friends of faith, and the real bulk of the church experience is happening. We create a space where God can speak through everybody, and simultaneously create a powerful listening experience so people are heard and understood. Then naturally, the *Sunday service is in the object position*.

Guidelines for weekly goal setting

Have one person pick one of the five parts in *World Scripture II*, a second person pick a chapter within the chosen part, and a third person pick the section. Read the text together as a group, then “pair-share” about the reading by discussing “What in this area of my life is not working?” or “How have I been inauthentic in this area?” Based on that assessment of being less than ideal in one aspect of life, choose the opposite *positive state of being* as the internal goal, e.g., being loving, patient, etc. The external goal is an action that can be done during the week to manifest that state of being.



A video of the 4th Home Group Festival held in Brazil in November 2013.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnQEGBSGfMU>

Stand up and declare to the group, the internal and external goals plus an accountability commitment, “If I don't do this, I will....”

In the following meeting, each person reports about her or his efforts to achieve the goals, evaluating the effort on a scale of one to ten. Reports are received with positive, affirming responses regardless of the results.

One mother reports she is using this method at the family level with the parents and the teenage child each setting weekly goals. The child is setting goals and meeting them in ways that the child would never do when the parents gave the goal.

Witnessing

The necessary precondition for witnessing is that members are having their own internal breakthroughs in love. These breakthroughs arise as members set and apply the internal weekly goals with group members holding each other accountable so they can break negative habits of relationship or self-limiting beliefs or in other ways enhance their ability to give and receive love.

After the members have achieved such personal growth breakthroughs, then, in the Brazil model, they have the foundation for a breakthrough in witnessing because they have something to share: their own experience. Spiritual life is fresh and on that foundation it is easy to witness, as opposed to telling people “DP is good for you.” People are moved by the truth being applied, not just by a theory.

Standing on the foundation of their own personal growth breakthroughs, the Brazilian members have found that it is natural to unite their personal *church* world and their *public* world of school or work. By sharing with our public world of friends or people we know, our public world and our church world become one because of the breakthrough experiences with God we are having in the small group.

Guests are brought first to the small group where the guest can have his or her own experience with True Parents’ words in the warm environment of the small group, and the guest can even begin to experience personal growth breakthroughs by setting and meeting internal goals with the support of the group. Through such experience and over time the guest becomes fully ready to study *Divine Principle*.

Teaching: One-on-one *Divine Principle*

In the one-on-one teaching procedure, the new person and the member read alternate text units of *Divine Principle*, with the new person reading the red text and the member reading the blue text. During this reading process, the member and guest also engage in questions and answers, discussion, elaborations on life application, and internal guidance.

Distinctive features of this approach include:

1. There is no need for a star lecturer or a workshop site;
2. It can be done now;
3. The members become empowered to teach. They become excited with the realization, “I can do this. I don’t have to wait for the lecturer;”
4. New members naturally tap into their own networks to attract more people, because as students they have also been empowered and trained to teach. As soon as they finish DP— and it may take one to three months to do so — they repeat the process with their friends right away, sharing what inspired them.

After completing the one-on-one study of *Divine Principle*, new members in Brazil also attend a DP Life of Faith workshop to deepen their understanding of True Parents, the Unification movement, and Unification traditions.

Conclusion

The two primary challenges to the Brazil model are weekly internal goals and the “body count” mindset.

Mastering setting weekly internal goals may require small group leaders to share experiences and best practices for several months. Contrary to the body count mindset, successfully implementing the FFWPU Brazil model requires a willingness to sacrifice short-term membership growth for sustained and accelerating long-term membership growth undergirded by a reinvigorated membership base. Lacking clear commitment to such a long-term strategy, efforts to implement the Brazil model are likely to falter.

With a long-term outlook, everybody can do this. As True Mother said, “If you are willing to change, miracles can happen.” Let’s unite with her and learn from the model established by our brothers and sisters in Brazil.

**This book's full title is World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon.*

George Kazakos is Pastor of the Los Angeles Family Church. Glenn Strait has worked with the International Conferences on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS), The World & Imagination, UPF's World and I: Innovative Approaches to Peace magazine, and the New World Encyclopedia. The basis for this article is a video prepared by Rev. Kazakos after he interviewed Rev. Koichi Sasaki, who developed the Brazilian model.

Photo at top: The 3rd Home Group Festival held in Sao Paolo, Brazil, August 2012.