

The International Witnessing Team in Las Vegas

Demian Dunkley

February 2015

FFWPU Director of Evangelism in the United States



True Mother invited thirty-six Unificationists from Korea to Las Vegas to participate in a fourteen-day witnessing leadership program. In the week before Mr. Dunkley wrote this, Mother had been personally guiding the team to lead the way in sharing their faith. The team members had been working closely with Las Vegas Japanese missionaries, local members and the US National Ministry Team, when thirteen young American members joined their witnessing effort.

True Mother is very closely involved in this witnessing initiative, watching and guiding us every day. For our American Unification family, joining in and reinforcing the Korean and Japanese brothers and sisters was a fine way to express their support for Mother.

They really have a strong determination to witness, and share True Parents' love. True Mother has asked each Unificationist to bring at least one spiritual child (or even ten).

Every morning and evening True Mother receives an update on our activities and gives suggestions on how to improve outreach efforts. She wants participants to understand True Parents' hearts toward the nation and people here. Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, president of the FFWPU North American region, said, "When I share with True Mother the team's witnessing experiences, she is very sincere and I feel her loving heart toward the brothers and sisters working so hard here. True Mother is happy to hear that CARP in America and our Unificationist-born youth are coming to join the witnessing team here."



Participants are reaffirming their resolution to succeed in their outreach efforts in Las Vegas. activity.

The witnessing begins

On the first day, six teams went witnessing in the area around the University of Las Vegas (UNLV)

campus and the new CARP Learning Center. At first, some were a little nervous about the language barrier, but our national ministry team had prepared materials for them, and that morning I gave a presentation about ways we can approach people, love and invite them.

That these Korean Unificationists are courageous and have a lot of love to share is the main thing. Mother has inspired them; they want to spread True Parents' love throughout Las Vegas.



Members are planning their witnessing

After just an hour of witnessing, one team brought a young man named Zachary. He is twenty-five and has a family, but lost his two-year old daughter two months ago. He spoke in tears and moved everyone with his deep heart of compassion. He is trying to use his family tragedy to learn how to love people more centered on God.

First, we played him the "Create a Life You Love" introductory Divine Principle

video. After some discussion, he listened to a one-hour lecture on the Principles of Creation. He agreed to come back the next to continue. He appeared to enjoy his time with us.

Mother listened to the report about the witnessing activity and especially about Zachary, who had come to the Carp Learning Center. This seemed to deeply move and please her. One comment she made was "It is harder to raise children than to give birth to them." She encouraged the team to keep making effort, because God is ready to back us.

Everyone on the witnessing teams met people and collected names and contact information. Throughout the week, as the next step in our outreach effort, we invited them either to come to the Learning Center or to join our food or cleaning service projects. Rev. Ken Doo, the local Las Vegas Family Church pastor; and Mr. Akira Watanabe, director of CARP Las Vegas; have been helping us.

On the morning of Day Two, Dr. Kim brought gifts expressive of encouragement and conducive to good health from Mother to the witnessing team. Dr. Kim opened the day with a prayer after sharing an inspiring report about the Las Vegas providence to the workshop members as they prepared to go out witnessing.

The cold weather and hectic schedule is effecting some of them physically. Some are catching colds and feeling somewhat weak, but they do not show it. They support one another wholeheartedly and feel determination to find the people whom God has prepared. They have spent every spare minute going through their name lists and contacting potential guests. They will only be here for such a short time, so every moment counts. Mother gave a beautiful cashmere scarf to each of them to help keep them warm.

America joins the team



Picking up trash around Lake Mead

On the third day, thirteen American Unificationists joined the witnessing workshop. These remarkable brothers and sisters dropped what they had been doing and came from all over the country to take part in Mother's witnessing workshop. I will divide the new team members among the teams, two per team, to help with witnessing and translation. As the Americans started arriving, the Korean and Japanese team members became extremely excited about working with

them. You can imagine their gratitude toward those that have come to help.

The next day, they began the Shine City Project, cleaning the area around Lake Mead. In the afternoon, they worked with the Food Is Love project to feed the homeless. One thing is certain: God is bringing a bunch of cool people together!

The following day, they spent time completing housekeeping errands and following up with guests such as Crystal, who was on her coffee break.

She only had a short time but they introduced our movement to her and invited her to the CARP center, where CARP members introduced her to the activities happening there. They then met up with Juanita, another guest, for coffee and discussion. She has already heard some of the teachings from the Divine Principle and met some of the local Unificationists. She feels good when she is with us. However, when

she saw Mother last weekend and heard her speak, she thought, "I think I should join this church."



True Mother joined the workshop participants for a meal.

By this time, what had previously been a witnessing team comprising thirty-six Korean and eighteen local Japanese missionaries was now the miracle team! The thirteen American Unificationists, most of whom are college-aged, officially joined the ranks via a humorous ceremony, emphasizing the love, good fellowship and close bonds already created among the Koreans, Japanese and Americans.

With the 2015 Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony just around the corner, news of a matching swiftly catches people's attention in our movement.

In light of this, the witnessing team decided to conduct a light-hearted "matching ceremony" at the team headquarters. Before dinner, the Americans that had come to offer their support lined up in a row facing the six team leaders to be "matched" to a team. Other team members came to cheer on and give a boost to the possible new recruits.



Prayer to begin the day

I had instructed the team leaders to pick which of the American recruits would best complete the team based on the recruits' fluency in Korean or Japanese, their enthusiasm, and other possible factors, like athletic performance (part of the fun behind the ceremony).

Each of the six teams chose two American recruits and celebrated over a special dinner.

Our intense schedule and the surprisingly cold weather in Las Vegas had caused several team members to

catch colds. Some were homesick. In response, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim and Dr. Michael Balcomb, the US FFWPU national leader, graciously sponsored a catered traditional Korean dinner to bolster and to thank our hard working members. The American team, in an act of camaraderie, beautifully decorated the dining area, even using lights to foster a warm atmosphere.

The language barriers mattered very little the rest of the night as each team bonded and continued to stay together even after the program ended. The beautiful harmony and companionship among all the team members brought forth a wave of determination as the newly engaged English-speakers became a cultural and linguistic bridge for the deep hearts of the Koreans and Japanese to communicate to the Las Vegas population.

Local Unificationist missionaries and other church members continued to stop by throughout the night, including Akira and Makiko Watanabe, directors of CARP Las Vegas; and local Unificationist Mimi Morse, who brought fresh fruit.

The energy here in Las Vegas is palpable.

We trace this directly to Mother, to our leaders and to all those that have prayed for thought deeply about the international witnessing team working that has been working hard in Las Vegas. Thank you for being part of our experience here in transforming Las Vegas into a mecca of forgiveness, love and unity.