

Second Generation International Workshop

IL Shim: choosing the path of the Principle

The trail we blaze

Glanow, Poland, 28. December – 3. January 2016



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This workshop was the continuation of the tradition of seminars prepared by Polish family for second generation during the holiday between Christmas and New Year.

We invited participants 13 - 18 years old. Finally 41 representatives of the second generation have joined the seminar, both as participants and staff. In addition to Polish teenagers, there were representatives of Switzerland, Lithuania, Czech republic, Austria, Germany, England, Korea and Japan.

In contrast to the previous years, this seminar was preceded by the II Shim

preparation program held in the local communities. The purpose of this preparation program and workshop was to provide the 2 Gen teenagers with an opportunity to make a conscious decision of choosing the path of the Principle in life through studying the **Divine Principle and Father's words**, getting more involved in the life of local communities, practicing the Principle in their daily life and keeping the life of purity. Back in September the future workshop participants were provided with II Shim preparation materials which not only included the study guide, but also explained in details the goals of the program and requirements that needed to be met in order to

participate in the II Shim ceremony which was to be held during the seminar. This guidance was based on the materials developed in the late 90ies in the New York Family Church by Brian Sabourin and Kathy Winings and later adaptation by Ashley and Susan Crosthwaite from the UK.

The workshop motto, "The Trail We Blaze", emphasized the necessity for each person to discover his/her own unique path in life based on the Principle.

All participants were organized into 5 teams that were led by older 2 generation: 3 of them came from Poland – **Ania Gałacka, ShinJin**



Dynowski and Kinga Porębska, and 2 from abroad - Rieko Tanaka from Germany and Soo Yong Gil from Korea (who is part of the European STF now). Lectures were given by Ashley Crosthwaite, and all the activities including the Challenge Day, were organized by Mary Brzyska. Several parents and older Polish 2 Gens were responsible for overall organization of the seminar, cooking, music, photography, etc.

The workshop started on the evening of Dec.28th with dinner and general orientation meeting. The basic schedule for next days consisted of educational session in the morning and different activities in the afternoon. We started every day with morning exercises followed by morning service/HDH prepared by one of either first or second generation staff members.



Educational sessions were usually held in the morning and consisted of 2 lectures followed by group activities. Lectures presented by Ashley Crosthwaite were dedicated to the application of the Principle in our life; special attention was given to the issues of purity and ways to use the Principle in serving others, making choices and solving various problems of everyday life. Participants were very moved by the presentations of Ashley Crosthwaite and expressed their deep appreciation of the lectures in their reflections. During group activities after lectures participants met in their teams for group discussions; they also made some art works, prepared performances or played games which helped to create team unity and get to know each other better. We also had several creative groups where participants could develop their talents: drawing, singing, dancing, baking. In addition to that, one of the creative groups concentrated on service projects, which included gathering and preparing the wood for



the fire on New Year night, bringing the coal for the workshop needs, etc. There was also some time for sport sessions, both in Glanow and in the sport hall in the local school.

On December 30th we had the Challenge day. The general theme of the Challenge Day was connected to the workshop motto – each team was supposed to blaze its own trail fulfilling various tasks (and make a map of their journey). Some of those tasks were physical challenges, others required cooperation, patience, development of trust in each other. Many participants (and staff) were really challenged, but all the teams managed to complete the Challenge day and it proved to be an important, joyful and memorable experience.

Evening programs included testimonies, various team activities, New Year celebration and finally the highlight of the seminar – the II Shim ceremony.

The testimonies were given by two 2 Gen representatives – Remi Hosaka (Japanese sister who now studies in

Kraków, Poland) and Soo Yong Gil. All the teens could relate to their experiences and learn something; everybody was moved by their sincerity. But the testimony of our lecturer, Ashley Crosthwaite, was especially deep and touched the heart of every single person. Ashley shared his life experiences of over 40 years of serving God and True Parents; he told the audience not only about the joyful or glorious moments, but also about the periods of struggle and suffering, about the difficult path of his Blessing and family life. He spoke about his experiences of being the missionary in different countries, about his very deep bond with God and True Parents, about the programs he initiated in Africa serving the local communities in whatever they needed the most. Through his testimony we could see the **fulfillment of Father's motto of relating to people "in the shoes of a servant with a heart of a father"**.

For the New Year Eve we first had the family night with various performances, then the time to write





reflections on the year 2015 and our wishes/prayers for the year 2016 which later were burnt in the fire and flew directly to our Heavenly Parent. We also had a midnight prayer by the Holy Ground and joyful celebration afterward.

The Il Shim ceremony on January 2nd was surely the highlight of the seminar. 21 teens participated in it, 8 of them receiving their purity rings for the first time, and 13 – rededicating themselves to the life of the Principle. In the beginning we listened to the a very moving and sincere testimony of Melanie Crosthwaite who was part of the Il Shim preparation program in England several years ago. Melanie shared, how this program has helped her to gain clarity about her own identity and determination to keep purity for her future blessed spouse. This talk was a very good preparation for the ceremony itself, which was conducted by our national leader couple, Christoph and Martha Krall who also shared some inspiring words with the youth.

We concluded the workshop on the evening of Jan.2nd with a banquet, reflection time and graduation ceremony. (It was a very special

surprise banquet with all the core staff serving as waiters for the participants celebrating the conclusion of the seminar in their teams.) In the morning of the next day all participants cleaned the workshop site and left for their homes.

Workshop was an intense but good experience both for participants and staff. The involvement of elder Polish second generation was bigger than ever, it was for the first time that they took responsibility for so many **functions. The workshop wouldn't have** been possible without the devotion of Mary Brzyska who became the core staff of the seminar investing all her heart in preparation of all the activities, morning sports and the challenge day. Other older Polish 2 Gens took on themselves various functions including those of team leaders, coordinators of creative groups, etc., and proved to be very responsible.

We could see the incredible spirit of unity and purity among participants. It was expressed by many teens in their reflections. It was also very moving to see how the older teens interacted with their younger siblings (even if they were not their physical brothers/sisters). The youngest

workshop participants were only 13 years old, it was their first experience of being at the international workshop, and prior to the seminar we somewhat worried about the way they would feel, **whether they won't feel excluded from** the older group of teens who've **known** each other for years. But we were very happy to see that the older participants really put some extra effort into caring for the younger ones, and they actively (and happily) participated in all the activities at the seminar. All of us, parents and 2 Gens alike, could really feel as part of one family brought together by God and our True Parents.

Finally we would like to express our gratitude for the help we obtained in conducting this workshop from many people and communities. Our special thanks go to Ashley Crosthwaite, Rieko Tanaka, Soo Yong Gil, Renata Li, Aram Karagezian, Dariusz Dukielski, Jacek & **MiKyung Czyszczon, and of course** Christoph & Martha Krall.

And here are some extracts from the reflections written by the participants:

"The most inspiring for me were surely the lectures. Uncle Ashley has really opened his heart to us. He gave me answers to questions I didn't even ask. Through his lectures I have realized what it means to really be a son of God. I am forever grateful to him for that."

"The most inspiring was being the team-leader and lectures by uncle Ashley."

"For me the most inspiring was uncle Ashley's testimony. It's really incredible to think about all the things that 1st Gen had to go through in order to create blessed families. It really helps to appreciate what we're given in life. All the things that uncle said, because of their authenticity are a wonderful way to inspire us all to do



something about our lives. I also really liked the lecture about purity, because I feel like for the past month or two it was really hard for me to stay connected to God and the values I want to pursue in life. That lecture really got me thinking about my everyday choices and about what I still have to do and change about myself.”

“During the challenge day I could feel free and joyful as never before after such a short time together in the team...”

“I saw many brothers and sisters, especially the youngsters, being really inspired by the lectures and also the atmosphere itself. What inspired me the most is I think uncle Ashley’s testimony. It shows that you can be happy without having too much money or a great university. Also that life is like a big adventure and that being rich doesn’t have to be a life goal.”

“Lectures were undoubtedly very deep, but I was most inspired by brothers and sisters. Their attitude and the general atmosphere created by them allowed me to feel the true love of God and True Parents. I will go back to this beautiful experience when I feel lack of strength, courage or love.”

“For me the most beautiful was the fact that so many people from different countries could meet and share love. This is one of the reasons why I think that our religion is true. Because people from different backgrounds, families, countries can meet and give love to each other.”

“What inspired me the most was the presentation of uncle Ashley about the IL Shim ceremony. During that presentation I could see that I can do more good and have great passion for life. I could see my own future from a

new perspective, and it gave me lots of energy and determination.”

“I’m so impressed by our atmosphere. We all could feel that God is so proud and happy to see us all united. We had a lot of new faces this year which made us even a bigger family with more strength and power. I really pray that we all can keep our high atmosphere at home. And that we really try to stay in touch. It’s just such a huge gift to have each other.”

“I think what inspired me most during this week was meeting all these amazing beautiful people. They have really inspired me to become a person who is worthy of God’s blessing... Now we all have to go home and really live the Principle and take what we learnt into our daily lives. I am ready for this and am going to try to live better.”

