

FFWPU Japan: Relaunching a witnessing-centric system

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On October 7, an "Emergency Special Leaders' Meeting for Heavenly Japan to Bring Victory to Vision 2027" was held at Isshin Special Education Center in Urayasu City, Chiba Prefecture, welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Bang Sang-il, Regional Group President of the Heavenly Japan for the Heavenly Parent's Holy Community, which was attended by leaders and women representatives from across Japan. In his message, Bang Sang-il stated, "From today, the Family Federation will further strengthen its witnessing-centric system," and also encouraged those in attendance.

Time to turn our focus on members' families

Respected leaders and women representatives, good afternoon. I am happy that we are able to gather together for the first time in a long while.

True Mother knows that this meeting is taking place. This morning, I received a phone call from Yun Young-ho, Director-General of International Headquarters, and he told me that Mother is earnestly hoping that Japan will soon overcome this thorny issue. She is always concerned about Japan and continues to pray with all her heart.

I am sure that you are all sharing difficult moments with the members in the field. I have been writing to True Mother about what is going on in Japan, but since the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, things have changed drastically. It makes my heart dance when I write about the wonderful activities that the members and their families do. However, I cannot find anything that would please Mother now. These are very hard days. Yun Young-ho confided with me that he knows news in Japan will give her grief, and he always waits for the right time to tell her the sad news.

Japan, as the Mother Nation, has supported peace activities around the world. I am sure that all of you have worked diligently to promote many of these activities.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have come to the moment of change. We must turn our eyes to the situation in our members' families and in our own families. The future will not open up to us unless we reflect on the past, when we were so focused on the world that we failed to serve our families.

For fifty or sixty years, we have been appealing to people about the importance of the family. Yet, we have put off our own families. We have been pushing forward as hard as we can toward the fulfillment of God's will, but when we look back, we see that our husbands (and wives) and children have been left behind. Satan has not overlooked this point. He is taking advantage of this and is launching an all-out attack on the church leaders and members.

I am a competitive person. In fact, I would love to challenge those that criticize the church and argue with them. But that is not going to happen. We need to deal with this legally and proceed with caution.

The "Head Office for Promoting Church Reform" has been established and will be headed by Hideyuki Teshigawara. Two press conferences have already been held. I am sure that the heroic figure of General Director Teshigawara has been burned into the eyes of the Japanese people.

Cultivating human resources for the future is the key to church development

The July 8th incident should never have happened. But it is also true that we learned a lot from it. Why

did we fail to think about the second generation?

At the embarking ceremony on October 25, 2020, I announced five major policies. The first of these was "cultivating human resources for the future." The reason for this was that in my years as a leader in the field, the future of second generation was the issue I heard most frequently.

There are many second generation, Jacob's children, and young first generation that have been witnessed in Japan. If we had faced and carefully nurtured all those in the realm of second generation, the Family Federation in Japan would have developed tremendously.

Thirty years ago around the time of the 30,000-couple blessing, we fell into a situation similar to the present one, but the church system has not reformed sufficiently. What would happen if another 30 years pass without any reform? Many of the first generation will have departed to the spirit world. Even though half of the second generation are now connected to the church, it will be difficult for them to lead the church as it is now. That is why we must look to the families and nurture them.

If any of us is facing difficulties, let us all take the initiative to improve our marital or parent-child relationships. If we take interest and show love to our families, we can all return to the Heavenly Parent (God) and True Parents. Even though each family has different circumstances, it should not take much time if the Blessed Families and the members share their circumstances and feelings and support each other.

Every month I make the rounds to the 21-day workshop in Chiba, Japan. Here is a testimony I heard while I was there.

The parents of one of the participants desperately called on him to attend the workshop. They told him, "I want you to listen to our only request." They then bowed with respect to their son. They seated him and asked him to participate in the 21-day workshop. The son was surprised at his parents' behavior, which he had never seen before, and wondered why they would go to such lengths for him, since he had repeatedly rebelled against and clashed with them. When the son participated in the 21-day workshop where he studied the word and prayed diligently, he was moved because he realized his father and mother received the blessing after encountering the word.

Even if some of you talk to your children to get them to participate in the 21-day workshop by explaining how wonderful it is, they may not listen. Then, like these parents, you should seriously try everything.

In fact, my oldest son participated in the 21-day workshop in August. It had been twelve years since he studied the word at a workshop since middle and high school.

If the eldest son or daughter stands up, it's easier for the younger siblings to follow. My wife and I had been trying to persuade our son to join the 21-day workshop for some time, but we were unable to persuade him. So we decided to ask one of our son's closest friends, who is a second generation, to persuade him. Second generation members who do not come to church may be in a similar position and may have close ties with some second generation who do go to church. Those children are the key. We invited one of our son's friends over for dinner and asked him if he could talk to our son. He graciously accepted and led our son to the 21-day workshop.

After the 21-day workshop, my son told me that he couldn't believe it. He was deeply moved by the word. Then he asked his mother, "Mom, do you have the Cheon Seong Gyeong? If you do I'd like to read it." My wife replied, "I also have the Pyeong Hwa Gyeong and the Chambumo Gyeong," and he took all three with him. My son was completely changed. He said he wanted to bring his friends, who do not come to church, to the 21-day workshop, and three of them are already planning to go next month.

True Parents' tradition start with the word

I came to Japan in 1998 at True Parents' request. At that time, True Father instructed me on three things to do in Japan.

The first was to teach the traditions of True Parents.

True Father said that the traditions of True Parents begins with the word. Seventy years ago in 1952, Father finished writing the Original Text of the Divine Principle and began the struggle to restore the world with the heavenly weapon called the Principle. He created the present global foundation from literally nothing.

An important tradition of the Family Federation is to bring victory according to the word. Naturally, leaders must be able to give Divine Principle lectures. In the future, there will be more opportunities for district and church leaders to give lectures on the Divine Principle. They are to give the lectures

themselves and take the initiative in witnessing. Basically, churches operate on the basis of tithes from their members, so unless they witness and increase membership, they will not be able to sustain themselves. Of course, as a community of shimjung culture, churches may help each other, but even this may have its limits. Regardless of the size of the church, we hope church leaders take responsibility and become self-reliant.

Secondly, Father told me to bring Mindan (Korean Residents Union in Japan) and Chongryon (the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan) together.

True Father said, "There are two elected (Korean) groups in Japan, Mindan and Chongryon," and explained that when these two groups become one, the unification of North and South Korea will have been accomplished in Japan, the Mother Nation. This would be the foundation to open the way for unification of the Korean Peninsula.

For about three months, we have been suffering from the mainstream media calling us the "former Unification Church." However, the Koreans residing in Japan have suffered for a long time. We ask you to pay deeper attention to them than ever before

The third thing Father told me was to teach people the Korean language and share the Korean culture through it.

The Father Nation of Korea and the Mother Nation of Japan must become one culturally and with the Heavenly Parent as the center.

More than seven months have passed since the conflict between Ukraine and Russia started, which shows no signs of ending. Why do such conflicts occur in many parts of the world? True Father explained that it is because the Father Nation and Mother Nation are not united. Children become anxious and cause problems when their parents quarrel. Similarly, unless the Father and Mother Nations become one, there will be constant conflict between the children nations. Only when Korea and Japan become one will there be peace in the world.

I used to have a strong dislike for Japan. However, through True Parents' blessing, I was brought together with a Japanese partner and came to love Japan as I moved here and invested myself in God's will. True Father told the Korean leaders, who came to Japan, to be educated and reborn in Japan, the Mother Nation, before returning to Korea. The mainstream media reports that there is an anti-Japanese ideology in the teachings of the Family Federation, which is complete nonsense.

It is in difficult times that witnessing can move forward

Starting today, the Family Federation will further strengthen its witnessing-centric system. Takeshi Ishio, Director of the Witnessing Education Department, reports that there are places where there is progress in witnessing even under the circumstances we are in. He says that it is easier for people to share the word with their families in difficult times.

Recently, a Korean lady phoned me to share about what happened to her. She had been very distressed because she could not casually invite her friends, with whom she had been very close, to her home because of this recent incident. So, in order to check how her friends were doing, she asked six of them if they would like to come over to her house and that she would prepare lunch. She and her husband wondered if even two or three of them would show up, but when the day arrived, to their surprise, all six of them showed up. The friends even mentioned the reports from mainstream media and said there are no better people in the world (than UC members), so why do people on TV keep saying bad things about our members? She said her dinner party was very lively.

One poll showed that eighty-four percent of people have a bad impression of the Family Federation. Ladies and gentlemen, let us focus on the sixteen percent who say that we are not bad people. The entire population is not against us. What is one percent of the population of Japan? One million two hundred and fifty million. Ten percent is 12.5 million.

On September 4, I received a phone call from True Mother. She said, "Japan is going through a difficult and challenging time. We must overcome this." She encouraged me to educate the second and third generations and build a foundation ten times greater through witnessing. I took these words to mean that she wants us to be strong ourselves and to walk boldly. She gave us courage when she said that we could definitely expand tenfold.

Let me tell you a little about my family.

On July 17, President Tomihiro Tanaka spoke at a Sunday service, which was streamed nationwide on the internet. He gave a tearful prayer, and as my wife saw this, she made up her mind to offer 400 bows for

40 days. After a few days had passed, I asked her, "Are you sure you are okay?" My wife replied happily, "When I offer 400 bows and pray, I can pray deeply."

When she had completed this forty-day condition, our whole family was infected with covid. After four or five days, my children and I recovered, but my wife suffered severe symptoms for 21 days. She could hardly walk and spent most of the time huffing and puffing. She said it was more difficult than the pain of giving birth to six children. True Mother described the current situation in Japan as "labor pains." My wife must also be going through labor pains in her capacity as a representative of Japan. I think it was a noble condition to offer to Heaven so Japan could be blessed with a "gem of a child."

We walk this path because it is the path taken by the Heavenly Parent and True Parents

I will read the manuscript that I had prepared in advance. Please forgive me if I repeat some of the things I have already shared.

We have offered everything for the sake of the Heavenly Parent and True Parents' will. We have had no time to take care of our children, nor have we had time to take responsibility for our families. We invested ourselves, regardless, for the sake of our country and the world. However, no one understood the path we were taking. We were stoned, mocked, and condemned. It was a path of tears that only those of us, who knew God's will, could walk. So, why did we take this steep and thorny path? It is because it is the path taken by our beloved True Parents, whom we respect and admire.

After joining the Family Federation, we were not able to take even a day of rest. No one could have gone down this path if they only thought of their own glory. We have been beaten again and again. We have been beaten endlessly in our lives. Even in such a life, we were happy to have met True Parents.

True Parents always told us that we had to go the way of hardship. He taught us that those who have struggled are qualified to wear the crown of glory. It is also a blessing to endure this persecution and suffering. Even if people throw stones and whip us, we dare say a word of pain. This is because we are putting True Parents' teachings into practice.

Indemnity is a word filled with extreme blessings for us. Those who take on a lot of indemnity are the ones who receive the greatest of blessings, so we have endured and walked with patience no matter what kind of trials and tribulations we've had to go through. People in the world call us criminals and an antisocial organization.

God has been wandering for six thousand years in search of His lost children. Through all of history filled with suffering, He has endured this bitterness with blood, sweat, and tears. And those who were sought out were the True Parents. True Parents set God's liberation and the salvation of humankind as their goals, and they invested everything with the heart of a parent and the body of a servant. That is why we, their children, have walked proudly without avoiding the path of tears and persecution.

True Parents instructed us that hardship and persecution are not bad things, but are ways to inspire our descendants for generations to come. He did not tell us to rest in leisure. He said, "Satan is wise, so he doesn't go to places that are hard or difficult. The hardest places are the safest because that is where God is," and he instructed us to follow this path.

However, it is frustrating when the world says we are an antisocial group. It is so frustrating that I feel like shedding tears of blood. Yet, when I close my eyes and pray, God quietly visits me and says, "Forgive. Understand. And love." It is then that I know that this is the path taken by True Parents, and my tears flow endlessly. We have chosen this path of hardship in order to understand the Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Even though he was innocent, True Father went to prison six times. However, he never once asked for help or held onto resentment. No matter what kind of torture and persecution he was subjected to, he consoled God, telling Him not to worry.

True Parents loved Japan more than anyone else, even though it was an enemy nation. When Korea was liberated, he visited the Japanese officials who tortured him so that he could return safely to Japan. He was the first in the world to dispatch missionaries to Japan, and he risked his life in prayer and devotion. In this way, he taught us how to love our enemies.

True Mother said, "Be a magnet. Be more transparent than crystal. Be like pure water. Clean (your spirit)." Now is the time for us to reflect on the past and make a fresh start with a new vision. Only through reflection can we start anew and grow. We must gather all our strength and fulfill Heavenly Parent's dream and True Parents' dream.

Now is the golden age of our life, when True Parents are with us. We have been blessed by True Parents

and reborn as children of True Parents. The world's population is about eight billion, but who has received as many blessings as we have?

Three things to know as a leader

Now you know how important the current time is in the providence, so I would like to share with you three things to know to be a leader.

First, be leaders who are one with True Parents in heart and mind. True Parents are the source of our life. If True Parents leave our hearts, we will have nothing left.

Second, be leaders who love your members more than ever.

Third, take the initiative and be a role model for your members. All of you leaders here, please build happy families.

Lastly, I would like to confirm three points that the Church is trying to undertake.

First, we are strengthening our witnessing-centric system starting today. Church leaders are more important than ever before. Church leaders should keep in mind the three things I just mentioned to be a leader and work together with the members to build a strong church.

Second, we will push forward with reforms centered on the Head Office for Promoting Church Reform. Please comply with what General Director Teshigawara announced at his press conferences. Then, we will consider personnel assignments. Heaven is hoping to embark on a full-fledged second generation era by actively promoting second generation leaders. Therefore, we will select 20 second generation leaders and hold a 21-day training session.

Third, two hundred and ten days beginning today will be a special cheongseong period for the consecration of Cheon Won Gung and Cheon Il Sanctum. I ask all Blessed Families and members to make their own pledge and offer cheongseong. I also ask that you make every effort to increase the number of the 43 CheonBo families, restore members that have become distant from the Church, and develop the Blessing activities.

Let us walk boldly together with the Heavenly Parent, True Parents, and leaders at headquarters and in the field, so that the Family Federation can continue to develop.