

Revival Task Force Sets Goals for Church Growth

Michael Balcomb

October 2, 2013

Meeting of the Kodan Japanese American Outreach Team
Church Headquarters at 4 W. 43rd St in New York City



Kodan members pose for group photo on Oct. 2, 2013. Dr Michael Balcomb (pink tie) and Fumiko Balcomb are on second row, center. To his left is Mr. and Mrs. Hiroshi Inose.

Mr. Hiroshi Inose (chairman of Kodan) and I had an opportunity to attend the strategic conference for Vision 2020 in Korea, right after the first-year anniversary of True Father's Seonghwa. I was glad to have him there, together with other leaders from US Headquarters.

Reverend and Mrs. Inose are two of the great supporters for me in HQ. I admire Rev. Inose because he is an extremely positive person. Perhaps he is a little bit too serious sometimes. But the main thing is that he is very positive and courageous, and he is very supportive. I really want to appreciate Rev. and Mrs. Inose' support representing all of Kodan.

We were at the 2020 kick off workshop together with representatives of 43 nations: 20 providential nations and 20 strategic nations, as well as Korea, Japan, and the United States. America as an elder son nation has a special responsibility to set a good example of leadership.

True Mother often has said that the elder son has two main responsibilities, to support parents and to raise up younger siblings. One year ago, when I was appointed by True Mother, she reminded me of these two responsibilities and challenged me, asking "How is America doing in respect to these two key missions; supporting True Parents and raising up younger brothers and sisters?"

When we think about the important lessons from the Divine Principle, one of the most significant is that timing is very important in God's providence. To give one example: until the moment he met Jesus Christ, John the Baptist was the central figure of all Israel. In fact, according to the Principle, it was John the Baptist who made a foundation of faith, and the people who had to make a foundation of substance [loyalty to him] together with John. And they did.

Until that moment, John was doing very well. Then, he met Jesus and everything started going wrong. Instead of following Jesus as his number one disciple, he carried on with his own ministry. In the book of John, we read that one point Jesus' disciples were working on one side of the Jordan River, and John the Baptist's disciples were working on the other side. (John 3:26) And the disciples asked John:

That man you baptized, you testified, "he was a son of God." He is working on the other side of the river, and you are working on this side. What's going on? I think you all know that story, right? But how many of you have been to Israel? Not many? The Jordan River is actually rather small. It's not much wider than 43rd St.

Don't think it's like the Hudson River, miles wide in places. If Jesus and John the Baptist were on opposite sides of the Hudson River, they wouldn't see each other, right? But the Jordan River was so narrow, that they could easily see each other, and so could others. "Oh, there is Jesus. There is John the

Baptist.” But somehow, they were on different sides of the river. And because of that, God’s providence came to failure. John the Baptist died. And Jesus died as well.

But if they have been able to work together to unite, history could had been very different.



Dr. Balcomb shares his hopes and insights at the kickoff seminar for Japanese American activists.

The other day before Sunday service, we were watching Joel Osteen on TV before we went to Belvedere. I like his messages and often read a page before Hoon Dok Hae each day. Yet, I also feel a certain pain, thinking, “Why can’t these John the Baptists come to recognize True Parents? God’s providence would become so simple, if these major figures could attend True Parents!”

One time at a UPF conference I had an opportunity to challenge a mega-church pastor on this question directly. “Why don’t you work with Rev. Moon?” I asked. “You like the Divine Principle, and you think it has some great insights; and you like our members. You’ve heard Rev. Moon speak, but still you are running your own church. Why?”

He said “I will be very honest with you. It doesn’t look like your church is working. It doesn’t look like God is blessing your ministry, because your numbers are still small, and you don’t have many young people. If I am to bring my congregation, I need to convince them that I am bringing them to something better. They need to see it with their own eyes, not just hear it with their ears.”

I think this is Mother’s number-one concern today as we look forward toward 2020. God needs to see success. There are people who will join us, but they do need to see real result. As Mother mentioned while she was in Las Vegas just three weeks ago, this is the time “to bring result, not just to work hard, not just make conditions, not even just to pray hard, but to make an actual result.” And the most important of actual result she wants right now is for new people to come, to receive new life from True Parents.

I think this is not so difficult to do. But we tend to forget simple things, like the need to make a specific commitment. That’s why I am so inspired by this witnessing kick-off meeting this morning. You are here to make a commitment. Our church in Japan has done this, signing up almost 3,000 members who have pledged to go witnessing every day.

Here in the United States, we are starting with a specific commitment of witnessing five hours a week, or three hours a weekend. The details you can decide yourselves. The important point to realize is that without making commitment of actually witnessing, there can’t be any result. However much we make effort to create nice, Divine Principle lectures, or however much we invest in witnessing literature — or even the witnessing windows we have here at 43rd Street, none of that really matters if we don’t have actual witnessing time.

Think about this: if you did five hours witnessing a week that would be more than 250 hours per year. That’s more than six working weeks. If we really did that, don’t you think we could easily find 12 spiritual children in one year? Once God sees our commitment, then He can begin to send people.

I am really happy to report to you that we now have a growing number of young American people who are already committed to witnessing. This year, the Generation Peace Academy, with over 120 members, is including witnessing in its curriculum. Our new CARP President, Naokimi Ushiroda, who was handpicked by True Mother, is reviving our student movement, CARP. We have some exciting churches

where our young people are leading the service, including the music, the readings and the sermon. Just last week we saw Justin Okamoto give his first Sunday Sermon at Belvedere.

Whether we are young or just feel young, God is asking all of us to make a substantial commitment. I really appreciate Rev. Inose and Mrs. Inose for taking a lead on this and deciding that Kodan will lead the way in witnessing. We have been talking about this a long time. And we did a lot of preparatory work studying the Divine Principle, and many of you have learned to lecture yourselves, and that's all good. But now is the time of harvest. At harvest time, you have to go and pick the fruits and harvest the crops, and bring them into the storehouse. If you don't do it, the fruit will just fall down and rot on the ground.

Let's remember that the harvest time is right now. Today, of course, you will have some education and hold a determination meeting. But from tomorrow, I hope that actual harvest will begin!

Once again, thank you so much for being willing to take this first step, and please don't forget to give some good report to True Mother and to all of our members. Even though our group here today is small, we all need to know what's going on. I believe that around the country we will see many people join this Cheon Il Guk witnessing team.

In Japan, the witnessing members are being asked to sign serious pledges of commitment. The plan is that every three months, the team will be evaluated, and those people who are not serious might be asked to leave. I expect Rev. Inose will do that, too, so please don't get kicked off the team!

Once again, I want thank you and share my deep appreciation for your determination and your willingness to go out to bring God's word to the people. There are so many people waiting to join our church. Gambari ma shoo [Good fortune]!