



21 Days at the Top Gun Workshop 2015: Raising the Future Generation

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I am sitting in the small lecture hall tonight with my brothers and sisters. We are watching via projector the SEIWA MUSIC FESTIVAL 2015 that took place a couple hours ago in Tokyo, Japan at the Olympus Hall. The concert was in honor of the Anniversary of One Victorious Day, when True Father was released from Danbury prison. Hyo Jin Moon's children were performing to his songs in honor for his memorial.



Seeing True Parents' grandchildren in the video got me reflecting throughout the day on the question of the future generations. Not just my own children, but even seven or eight generations down the line. This thought initially sparked today during morning Chanyang, our Holy Song session. We participated in a weekend workshop where there were many younger children and toddlers. The children were so adorable and made me realize that this is our future generation. As we move forward, how can we raise the future generation?



Our Divine Principle lecturer, Kevin Thompson, shared a dream he had yesterday night. He had two parts to his dream. In the first part, True Father, Rev. Thompson, and another individual were on an unsinkable boat in the ocean. Water was splashing into the boat and it felt like it was sinking. True Father kept saying, “Don’t worry. Don’t jump off the boat; it’s unsinkable!” However, the third individual jumped off the boat and tried to swim away. It was only True Father and Rev. Thompson that remained. In the second part of his dream, Rev. Thompson was in Alaska with True Father, fishing together. True Father was laughing in his direction and Rev. Thompson asked, “What are you laughing at?” and he turned around and saw a herd of rabbits coming across a lake. Rev. Thompson explained that the first dream meant that our movement has a strong foundation and we must hold on despite the turbulence. In the second dream, since rabbits produce offspring in large numbers, the herd of rabbits represented the greater blessings to come in our movement.



The Top Gun participants felt encouraged by this dream Rev. Thompson shared. Despite the chaos we find ourselves in, in this movement and in society, like this dream I truly believe we have the potential to overcome and welcome greater blessings. The future generation will be about learning to love through seeing the good in everyone. That is how True Father worked and how we can inherit his spirit. When

True Father moved forward with God's providence, he moved forward with a heart to see the good in others. I always wondered how he could meet many leaders around the world during his time and dissolve many persecutions against him in his heart. He poured out love and care for those who acted against him. He didn't just teach the Divine Principle to these people; he applied these teachings and channeled God's love to these leaders. That is what we are trying to do during this Divine Principle workshop week. As Top Gun participants we are not only learning it, but also applying it in our lives and toward others.



Uniting Into a Global Family August 15, 2015

Substantially the Divine Principle workshop began with emphasizing the importance of becoming a family. When we gathered for our second session of the Divine Principle we sat in clans, groups identified by color. Each different clan color sat in columns, and then each family, which are teams within each group color, had their own table. Every day we had a new family leader to facilitate discussions. With this structure it felt easier to intentionally connect with our new families.



Our lecturer, Gerry Servito, explained to us that True Mother wants Top Gun participants to become more genuinely connected as brothers and sisters. This was an important point, because although I wanted to thoroughly explore the Divine Principle, I saw the need to understand my international brothers and sisters. This workshop allowed us the opportunity to connect to our international brothers and sisters and build a basic foundation of faith together through highlighting key concepts of the Divine Principle together. Today my family leader challenged our team to discuss Divine Principle in pairs with someone who does not speak our language. The language barrier got even more challenging, as the Divine Principle isn't the easiest content to translate...

On the pilgrimage, it was easier to share simple information through small talk and hand gestures even though we couldn't necessarily speak the same language. However, now we are challenged to express matters of faith, which can be complex, in a language where our partner or our family needs to understand. For instance, during Divine Principle discussion I spoke with two Japanese participants.

While they would speak in Japanese, I challenged myself to also speak as much Japanese as possible. It was very difficult because I lacked the vocabulary for this discussion. I didn't know how to say words such as "life", "lecturer", and "offering" in Japanese.



We are learning that in order to becoming a genuine family, we first have to overcome the language barrier together. Sometimes it's easy to take for granted this global network or family we have. Prior to coming to this workshop, I had false preconceptions of Japanese and Korean Unificationists, and their culture in general. Coming here to this workshop, I learned that regardless of their nationality, these people are just like me. They are as human as me. They feel pain and suffering just as much as they feel happiness the way I do. Because of this, all I want to do is give them love and support moving forward.

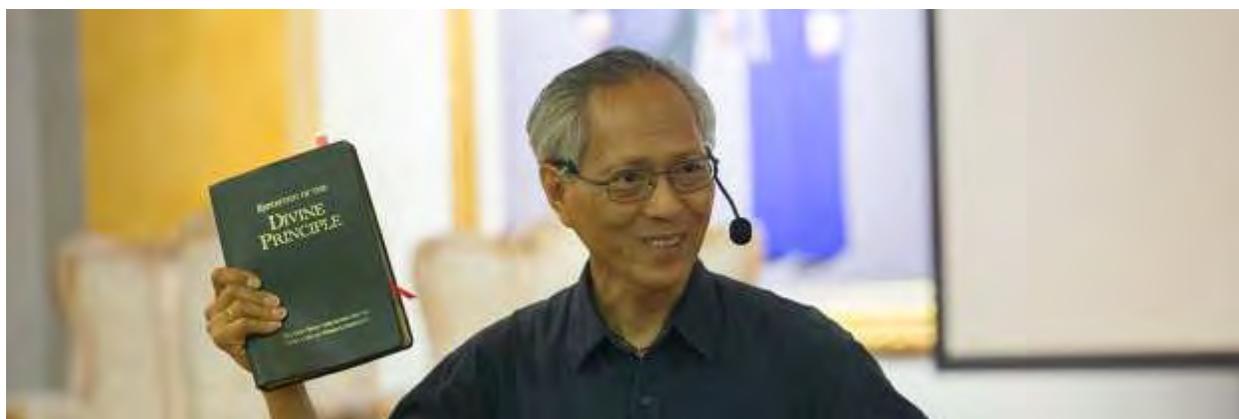


How can we become a global family and bring about God's kingdom? It's a question we've been pondering here and discovering the answer to through this global network. One aspect of becoming true owners of our experience is to be the best "servant leader", a leader who completely and unconditionally serves others. Here at Top Gun, this recently has come in the form of massaging each other, giving each other candy and taking initiative to help out with the workshop. We hope to build our young leadership

first and foremost with a heart of love. Where there is love, there is our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.



Despite feeling tired and many of us reaching exhaustion, the Top Gun participants are trying to go beyond it and be here for True Mother. While we are enjoying our time, we are also working very hard and focusing every part of ourselves to connect and learn. I am realizing that not only do we have so much that needs to be accomplished within our movement, but we also have many dedicated individuals striving and overcoming in order to move forward as a whole family.



Divine Principle Workshop Kick Off August 14, 2015

The demographic and geographical range of participants in this workshop is actually very diverse. I was under the impression prior to coming to this workshop that many attending would be single young adults in our movement. However, we have parents who have small children, married individuals, and married couples who came together to Chung Pyung. Even though all participants came from Korea, Japan, America and Europe, there are many participants with other nationalities. These include those with backgrounds from Brazil, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia and Africa. So we do emphasize the word global in “Global Top Gun Workshop”. Along with a diverse range of nationalities, we also have many in various leadership roles such as pastors, youth ministry staff, and Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) leaders.



This afternoon, started our workshop within a workshop: seven days of studying the Divine Principle. We were introduced to our Divine Principle “Top Cannon”, our three lecturers Gerry Servito, Kevin Thompson and Andrew Compton. They also lectured at the 7-day Divine Principle workshop in Las Vegas earlier this year, a workshop from which our current Divine Principle workshop format was derived. This new format encourages us to take ownership over our Divine Principle education and grow to understand it by eventually teaching it ourselves. After Gerry Servito offered a soothing song he wrote called “Barrytown”, we covered the introduction and the beginning of the Principle of Creation by reading the Divine Principle in small groups, receiving a short lecture, discussing in groups and submitting questions to the senior lecturers. Many adapted well to the new format and took initiative to engage themselves during discussions.



Following the Divine Principle lecture, we were honored to welcome the CEO of *Segye Times*, Jun Young Cha, to present a special lecture. His presentation expanded on the need to understand what is happening within our society today and to live a life where we do not compromise the future generation.

Two things stuck out to me today. My first highlight was that all the teams in the workshop had an

opportunity to show appreciation to one another by sitting in groups and sharing what we liked about each person. The workshop staff emphasized that we would be switching teams for this new week in order to meet new people. Many of us were sad to have to leave our team with which we've spent the last week, but looked forward to getting to know new Top Gunners a little better. We were told to change our concept about each other from team member to family member, and even change our vocabulary to use the words family, clan, or tribe. As a surprise, the workshop staff led us to walk to our new family with our eyes closed. When we opened our eyes, I actually remained in my same team! My team had a new addition: an awesome new English-Korean translator who we jokingly call our "language messiah" because of how much we've endured so far with the language barrier. Everyone was so happy and understood that from now on we would treat each other as a family. Shortly after the exercise, we sat together for lunch and took the opportunity to share family photos from our families back home. This was special to me because we got to know each other in terms of learning about the people who are closest to us.



My second highlight occurred after having been slightly drowsy throughout the day and I wanted to go out and buy a coffee. One sister insisted she should buy my coffee, because she wanted to pay the favor forward of another sister who bought her a drink. I gratefully accepted her offer and happily enjoyed my coffee. I had been reflecting through the workshop on how I can love my brothers and sisters more, and because this sister offered to buy me coffee, I am taking advantage of paying it forward and buying coffee for another sister!

We have been receiving immense fortune and blessing so far. I realized that with great blessing comes great responsibility. Many are offering gifts and taking care of us so that we may take ownership. We've been gradually seeing the significance of this workshop and it's great. However, I have been feeling restless and need to find a way to clear my mind from unnecessary thoughts. So, I immediately asked my musical husband at home in America if he could record himself singing "The Crown of Glory". I will be listening to this song every day to clear my mind and focus.



Walking in True Father's Shoes
August 13, 2015

We reached the end of our pilgrimage all around Korea today. I realized and was worried I may not have any keepsake to remind me of this pilgrimage. But I looked down and saw my shoes. They instantly became the most important object I had to represent the steps I took on this journey. I will cherish them and bring them back home to America. They will remind me when times get tough to remember True Father and the steps he took in his life.

We encountered many mountainous lands on our journey to the final Holy Ground site, Mun Kyeong Sae Jae. Mun Kyeong Sae Jae was where True Father, after his release from Hungnam Prison in 1951, carried Mr. Pak on his back across the 38th parallel. Our workshop staff emphasized that this path is very strenuous, high and steep. Due to time constraint, we could only walk to the first gate along the Holy Ground path.

The workshop staff incorporated a special activity into this specific Holy Ground. We got into groups of two, partnering with someone of similar height and weight. Then we were challenged to spend 7 minutes to carry our partner on the route where True Father had carried Mr. Pak on his back. All of the Top Gun participants accepted the challenge.



Like many of the other Top Gun participants, I never carried a person on my back for 7 minutes or ever attempted to. Between my partner and I, we decided I would carry my partner first. We had a group stretching session before starting our challenge.



I wasn't physically fit enough and struggled tremendously with the challenge. While many made it to 2 minutes or even 5 minutes straight holding their partner, I was far behind and had to take breaks at 30 second intervals. I thought deeply, how did True Father do this all by himself? Also, riding on my partner's back was another challenge. I tried to make it as easy as possible for her to carry me; however, it took a significant amount of leg and arm muscles to cling on to her. I appreciated the brothers and sisters who already reached the gate as they cheered for those who were approaching. It was very encouraging. By the end of the activity, I couldn't really lift my arms; they were so tired from the exercise.



We actually had a European sister who walked all the way to the gate without stopping to switch with her partner. She explained to all the participants, "It helped that I could see my goal: the gate when I was carrying my partner, but I don't know how True Father did this without seeing exactly where he would stop when carrying Mr. Pak."

With this in mind we concluded our pilgrimage with a unison prayer and Mansei (cheers) for successfully completing the pilgrimage. Many of the staff members who helped make this pilgrimage possible were acknowledged through loud cheers and applause.



On the way back to Chung Pyung my red bus team, along with other buses, had to prepare and practice a song to sing; we chose, "We are the World" by Michael Jackson. We added our own flair to it by adding hums and embedded messages. We were so excited to perform for everyone.

At Chung Pyung we were greeted by Rev. An. He welcomed the Top Gun participants and shared a clear message, pointing out that we need to have a clear destination and the right direction. He surprised everyone with numerous boxes of pizza and chicken offered by FFWPU International President, Sun Jin Moon. Participants were overjoyed and felt much love from receiving this food. To end the night, each group performed the song they prepared. The entertainment for the night was a competition among each group. We had judges to evaluate each performance. After assessing the acts, my team was excited to learn we won the singing competition! And to close the night Benjy Uyama announced that everyone would receive a newly designed Top Gun polo.



We are happy to be back at Chung Pyung and plan to rest very well tonight, because this next week we are going to have our 7-Day Divine Principle Workshop. A new chapter has opened in our Top Gun schedule and we're ready to take it head on.