

FFWPU USA Personal Growth Committee Report 2014

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The Personal Growth Committee, consisting of Dr. David Burgess (chair), Poppy Richie and Rose Ann Kennett, discussed the potential for personal growth within the Unification Movement. It began by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the Unification Movement in terms of personal growth.

Unification Movement Strengths

- Divine Principle – Chapter 1: The Meaning of Life, Relationship with God, the Origin of Love, Original Mind and the Blueprint for Human Happiness, the Family as the School of Love
- True Father's words and teachings on mind-body unity, give and take action, the intoxicating love of God, the nature of true love
- A vision of community and community activism that is expressed in the behaviors and understanding of becoming Tribal Messiahs.
- Some institutional resources, such as the Blessed Family Association website; Heart to Heart and the Blessing and Family Ministry programs; curricula such as Choices and Real Love; some members who offer counseling services; some local programs and workshops aimed mostly at youth or families such as Shehaqua, One Heart, Agape and the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival.

Unification Movement Weaknesses

Materials

- There is no real development of True Father's ideas into training materials that can help people grow spiritually and develop their internal life. Despite the huge volume of True Father's words, the material is not organized into modules to address personal spiritual growth and development.
- Life of faith has been relegated to how successful a person is in fulfilling the direction of the leadership. We need to create people who have their own authentic life of faith and testimony of relationship with the power of God and God's love.
- We need a proactive "wellness" program, not just reactive services for when things are broken. What does the ideal look like and how do I fulfill it? How can my relationship with God lead to a happy, satisfying life? How can all our day's activities connect us to God and how we can live each moment in the presence of God?

Tribal Messiahship

- Many feel that witnessing is only about bringing members, not sharing a way of life and common experience. The emphasis is so much on sharing True Father's life that my own experience of God and how He is working in my life is largely ignored.
- Inviting 360 families to the Holy Marriage Blessing is not an adequate definition of Tribal Messiahship. When it comes to living our faith with our neighbors, our community, our brothers and sisters, we fall short. We need to define what that means and create the tools and support system to help people do it. This includes developing curricula for the individual, family and church.
- How do we promote honest dialogue between parents and children, adults and youth, about real issues of faith? We need honesty and integrity as a movement that allows for questions, but we also need materials and training about how to help parents and children, youth and elders to talk about issues of faith as they relate to real-life concerns.

Youth Engagement

- Organizational integrity is inadequate. The emphasis is on teaching the Principle, not living it. This leads to sloganeering and dogma, not the authentic experience of God and God's love. The original meaning of witnessing—to bear witness—is lost. This is a huge turnoff for young people.
- There is very little support for Unificationists in their 20s and 30s, including those who are no longer practicing Unificationists but remain connected in heart to their peers. There are no programs or activities to bring them closer in heart.

- There is no system to allow, support, trust and learn from young blessed families who express our faith in a way that makes sense to them. When a younger couple plants a church or steps into a leadership role, we need to be their biggest cheerleaders and supporters. One of the reasons many young people don't get involved in church leadership is because they've seen too many of their older brothers and sisters in similar positions get totally burned out, scrutinized, labeled, etc.

Future State

Clarify the Goal

- How does personal spiritual growth rank among Unification Movement organizational goals? There is a lot of emphasis on church growth, but there doesn't seem to be as much on personal growth. These two goals should be like hand in glove.
- What kind of resources do we have that are dedicated to achieving personal growth? There are some: Lead with Impact provides education and forum platforms (still being developed further), the Blessing and Family Ministry, and the online magazine DP Life. There are some other materials but nothing that's been systematized and correlated with True Father's words.
- How effective are we at promoting those resources? We can do a lot better.
- What is the satisfaction level of our membership with those resources? I suspect for many it is not very high. Many will not even be familiar with the materials available.

Clarify the Goal

What does it mean to:

- become a perfected individual, a completed man or woman?
- to become one with God?
- to fulfill my potential?
- to have mind-body unity?
- to be in touch with my original mind?
- to give in a way that does not leave the giver feeling completely sacrificed and "burned out," but rather energized and victorious?
- These need to be defined in a way that would make sense to your neighbor, friend at school, or work colleague.

Find the bright spots

- Rather than analyzing our failures, can we identify who is prospering and thriving and look to both promote and replicate their successes? Camp Shehaqua, the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival, the Maryland Youth Ministry, Sunday Brunch Club, etc.
- What are the specific behaviors that are responsible for the success? To become a karate black belt, you first must learn and master many forms. There is a step-by-step learning process. Spiritual life can be tackled in the same fashion.
- How can those be replicated? There is a list of competencies and behaviors for pastors and ministry leaders, but why not for everyone?

Script the critical moves

- Rather than analyze what is preventing members from feeling closer to God, experiencing success in their personal lives and a greater sense of joy, we need to find ways to support the behaviors and outcomes we want to see.
- A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. But what is that step? For example, to create a sense of unity of purpose why not create national study programs, daily inspirations, messaging? Every month we can focus on the different behaviors, lessons that we want to see lived. Bring the pastors together and have them help develop it?

- What small changes can we make that will have a big impact on how we grow and develop? We know we need to raise up younger leaders. The magic question is “How?” If younger people see their peers in leadership thriving and healthy, then it’s easier for them to want to mimic that in some way. We need to create some examples of success for others to emulate.

Grow Your People

- Individuals who are growing make better spouses and parents.
- They can serve as “tribal messiahs” to their spouse and their children.
- We need to explain how our growth as individuals can prepare us better for our roles as spouses and parents.
- Growing individuals help us realize the ideal of the family church.

Create a Narrative

- A church that helps its members to grow and develop as people has a real testimony to share with the world and attracts others who desire to grow as well.
- My own growth is an end in itself, not just a means toward a goal. It is the fulfillment of my own First Blessing. People are hungry for that.
- Giving people what they want creates greater satisfaction with the church. Personal growth and development can make our church a magnet to attract others. We are still in the very beginning of creating this lifestyle, but we can make that a feature of who we are.

Realizing the Vision: Transitional Steps

Clarify the Goal

Transitional Steps

- Identify the resources that are available to promote spiritual and personal growth.
- Do a “SWOT” analysis (of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). Where are we strong? Where are we weak?
- Identify the opportunity for development.
- Identify potential allies, product developers (assuming that there is no funding to bring on a full-time position.)
- Create a collaborative effort between Headquarters and product development.
- Promote the materials.

Find the Bright Spots

Transitional Steps

- Identify the practices and habits of those who are realizing their potential and are prospering.
- Analyze the successes for common behaviors that serve as models for success.
- While everyone is unique, create a profile of the common behaviors that will lead to greater success and satisfaction for everyone.

Script the Critical Moves

Transitional Steps

- Create a curriculum or other types of teaching aides to create the desired success.
- Identify the key behaviors (rather than ideas) that can lead people to experiencing success in their personal life and a greater sense of joy.

- Communicate the small changes we can make that will have a big impact on how we grow and develop.

Grow Your People

Transitional Steps

- Create training materials to help people to identify the steps for personal growth and development.
- Materials should include tools for people to use and benchmarks for measuring progress.
- Support training programs and seminars for achieving “the First Blessing.”

Create a Narrative

Transitional Steps

- HQ needs to promote programs and materials to our membership to demonstrate that personal growth is a priority.
- HQ needs to create a narrative of personal growth as a hallmark of our movement to those inside and outside our movement.
- HQ needs to promote the Unification Movement as the destination for those who want to achieve personal growth and fulfillment.