

## 2017 Cheon Il Guk Missionary Testimony from the Dominican Republic

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I began a full-time job as soon as I graduated high school. After working for seven years, I began to feel the limits of my situation, which prevented me from doing as many church activities as I had hoped to do. While I was praying, the idea of doing missionary work came to me. That was before the Cheon Il Guk youth missionary providence began, and I thought that no program existed.

I then heard they were accepting applicants for the first class of Cheon Il Guk youth missionaries. The youth leaders and older church sisters suggested I go. After consulting with our church pastor, I made the decision to quit work and start to prepare for the second class of missionaries, so I would have a smooth transition. When the time came, for a year, from June 2014 to June 2015, I was in the Dominican Republic, a Caribbean nation in our Central America region, with four other missionaries.

### **Learning about True Father when circumstances prevented me from witnessing**

While in the Dominican Republic, I lived with a local family from the headquarters church, in the district of Gazcue, in the capital, Santo Domingo. At that time, one-on-one witnessing to friends and acquaintances was the norm in the Dominican Republic. Members did not witness on the street or on campuses.

The only Spanish the Japanese missionaries could speak were simple greetings; therefore, we could not do one-on-one witnessing, which requires lots of communication. Even though we wanted to witness, it did not seem as if they would send us out. I believe that the Dominican members were also a bit flustered, over what to do with these newly created Cheon Il Guk missionaries.

Since I came with the goal of spreading the truth about True Parents, I struggled deeply with myself over not being able to witness or do anything. Gradually, I came to struggle with the local Abel-figure. On many days, I could not stop crying. During that time, as I read Hoon Dok Hae the words "absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience" came up. Heavenly Parent had been guiding me with absolute love, but until that moment I had not been able to understand that. I thought of True Father, who in the position of a servant of servants, had lived for the sake of others better than anyone else had done, and I made the firm decision to live for the sake of others to the utmost.

I began to clean the headquarters church, prepare food, do laundry, help in the WFWP origami classes, give performances at events, and do anything that would help the local leader's faith in me grow. After two months, I heard about Global Youth Festival 2014, which the Japanese church organized. It involved members in any nation conducting a service project and then uploading photographs from it to the festival's Facebook page. It was a competition to see which project received the most "likes."

We proposed installing trashcans at a nearby school as a service project for the festival. We had been

cleaning the road every day, so we saw the need for trashcans. Many areas on campus had none. As we continued picking up the trash on the roads, we began to attract the interest of the community; garbage trucks even began to pick up the trash we'd collected. Hearing this piqued the local members' interest.

We even had an opportunity to participate in the monthly church leaders' meeting to give a presentation on the Facebook project. We received strong support from members. We were able to install trashcans in a local middle school and a high school. We had gained strength from the support of the entire church when on September 23, through a live video broadcast of the 2014 Global Youth Festival, we learned that our project received the most "likes."

The Dominican members were very happy to win first place, and I felt that the result of our working together with the local members was the most precious result. Directly after that, a special envoy sent from Korea suggested the Cheon Il Guk youth missionaries do street witnessing.



### **Hitting many walls**

Now, that we were able to begin witnessing, we went to the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo* (Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, UASD) campus, located around forty minutes away from the headquarters church and began witnessing using a survey.

Dominicans are kindhearted. Almost everyone we asked took the survey, promised to come to the center, and left their contact information. However, few actually came. Even if a student visited, most were only interested in Japanese animation or Japanese comics and came because they wanted to talk to someone Japanese.

What was most difficult was that even if we brought a guest, we had not synchronized it so that someone was always at the church who could give a Divine Principle lecture. We even began showing the guests videos prepared for two-day workshops. Having practiced reading the Divine Principle in Spanish during the time we had not been witnessing, we tried to convey the Principle somehow in a one-on-one manner. Nevertheless, getting a guest to listen to the Divine Principle all the way to the end was difficult.

In November, we received the mission of getting CARP certified at the university. Dominican Republic CARP did not then have many witnessing activities, so the special envoy had given us that mission, which we were happy to receive. If the university certified CARP, establishing a campus center and teaching students there would be possible. We thought it could become a driving force for developing youth witnessing.

At that time, in order for CARP to receive certification require 9,100 signatures from UASD students. [In 2014, UASD enrollment exceeded 400,000.] Four of us set off determined to succeed and gather those signatures in forty days on a form prepared by the national leader and special envoy.

### **The struggle to reach 9,100**

In the beginning, we would stop students walking around campus and get their signatures. However, we realized, though, that gathering so many signatures in little more than a month would be impossible in this way, so we changed our methods. We had learned that teachers tended to be late to class, so we seized on the opportunity of asking for students' signatures while they were in their classroom waiting for their teacher to arrive. The students would show interest when a Japanese person would all of a sudden walk into the classroom saying "*Hola!*" We would read aloud a script written in Spanish introducing CARP.

After we finished, we would pass around the signature form and receive signatures from the students. We split into teams of two and visited classes shortly before or after class. Using this method, we could introduce CARP to thirty to forty students at a time and get their signatures.

At first, we needed courage, but as we went to each classroom with pounding hearts and asked for signatures, getting them proved easier than we had thought. We were able to gain confidence through that. I think another factor was that we had gained courage from living in the Dominican Republic for six months. We worked very hard because we thought with seriousness that if we did not establish CARP here, assignments of Cheon Il Guk youth missionaries to the Dominican Republic might cease and no one from the third class of missionaries would come to the country. Sometimes teachers would see us and scold us but we were so enthusiastic that once we thought the teacher was gone we would go back.

After some time, the local second-generation students, the national leader, and the special envoy began helping us in our signature campaign. Up until that time, we had not worked together in witnessing or with the signature campaign. For the first time, I felt we had united centered on God's will. As a result, we were able to get the required number of signatures in forty days. This would not have been possible with only the strength of the missionaries. We were able to succeed because Heavenly Parent, True Parents and the local members were with us. Just as True Mother says, "We are one."



### **The guest God gave us**

On the foundation of the signature campaign, we began to hold CARP events on campus; though we did not yet have a center. At an event in February, we were able to exceed our goal of mobilizing a hundred students. After that, we changed the way we witnessed. We would approach students in pairs. We would introduce the Divine Principle and testify about True Parents. Using this method, we were able to meet guests interested in True Parents and the Divine Principle rather than students who liked Japanese people.

We also had a lecturer available to explain Divine Principle when we brought guests at the promised time. Through this method, the local members began to acknowledge us. Even now, if a missionary brings a guest a system is in place for a local member to give a Divine Principle lecture. Being the leader, some days I could not go out to witness, but I set many conditions -- a forty-day morning fast, a forty-day, forty-bow condition; and Hoon Dok Hae of the entire *Cheon Seong Gyeong* in forty days. In May, a month before I returned to Japan, I met a person who was very interested in the Divine Principle. On campus, I saw one of my contacts in the hallway and called out to her. Next to her was this male student who showed interest and asked many questions. When I explained the Divine Principle, he said, "This truth is amazing; I need to study it more!" and asked to listen to lectures. He was such a devout Christian that he always carried the Bible with him, and he studied the Divine Principle enthusiastically. For us he was special, the only person who studied the entire two-day content.

After I returned to Japan, the third class of Cheon Il Guk youth missionaries established CARP at UASD and the missionaries gained many spiritual children. When I heard that one of the spiritual children of a youth missionary from the Dominican Republic had participated in the Global Top Gun Youth Workshop I was surprised.

Now, I am actively working in the North Aichi District, Meijo Family Church, my hometown church, as a special trainee. I made the decision to live a public life because of that year of missionary work. I am truly grateful to Heavenly Parent, True Parents, and the local members who worked together with us missionaries. True Mother loves us with true love twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, which is why I will continue to work hard to become a filial child and be True Mother's light.