

Ultimately Empowered: A 2nd Gen Brother's Testimony About Relating With God

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August 2004

Republished by FFWPU International Headquarters November 25 2024



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Throughout my involvement with public missions through STF and CARP, I was asked the question, "What keeps you going?" I always had trouble answering, because the answer that people expected wasn't in my heart. It wasn't God or True Parents; it was more like a vision, a vision to restore the world. This is what drove me; and until some recent experiences, I thought that this vision was enough to lead a public life. This testimony is about how my understanding of what drives me to continue to lead a public life grew.

Through the support of WCARP, WCARP USA, and the local full-time CARP Philadelphia team, what started out earlier this year as an idea ended up being realized as the first Forty-Day Collegiate Witnessing Leadership Training Program (CWLTP). The theme of the program was To embody the culture of heart and transform campus culture throughout America. It was the first student-initiated program to train second-generation members who are college students to witness on campus. It started on May 26 and ended on America's Independence Day, July 4. Sixteen participants attended the whole forty days and six others who attended part of the time. It started off with seven days of education through fundraising, followed by ten days of fundamental witnessing education, culminating in twenty-one days of pioneer witnessing, team by team on four separate campuses throughout Philadelphia.

During the ten days of core witnessing education, we had the chance to have a long prayer at the beach, during which I shared with God all the challenges that I was facing - everything from how to accomplish my goals to the long-unanswered question of what drove me to keep going. The answer came back very clearly: "I am the fruit of history. This is my mission and identity as a member of the second generation - to further God's providence." God asked me who would carry on my responsibility if I were to leave it. All the effort and sacrifices throughout history had been made so that I could stand in this position right now. I knew that this was part of my identity as a member of the second generation, and so I recommitted

myself to going this way.

My goal for this program was to successfully witness to one spiritual child and to learn to be a good mentor. During the twenty-one days of pioneer witnessing, I had the opportunity to do both. One of the members on my team became angry and refused to go witnessing. In order to accomplish my goals, I knew I had to deal with this situation, but I had no idea how to do so. As I reflected on the situation, I realized that I had had many experiences similar to this, where a sister on my team - especially one I had a very close relationship with - would end up resenting me with a passion. I seriously prayed for an answer to this problem, and I realized that my members were not feeling God's love through me. Because I was not motivated by God's love, they could not feel it either. Although as an individual I was able to keep going on the vision of fulfilling God's dream of creating an ideal world, as a mentor, vision alone was not effective at motivating my members. This was the limitation that I had had. In the past, I had been satisfied with my relationship with God, and that's why I had overlooked this limitation. I decided that my goal for the rest of the program was to develop a personal, heart-to-heart relationship with God.

Now that I knew that I needed to develop my relationship with God, the next question was "how?" I remembered that Mito-san, who was one of the main lecturers for the forty-day training course, once advised us that in order to develop our relationship with God, we needed to think about God constantly. So I tried to constantly think about God. During one of the team activities where we wrote down the Godly qualities that we saw in each other, I realized that I experience God whenever there is unity centered on Him. The four-position foundation that I'd heard about so many times before became much more real. However, it was only later that I realized how I experience God most powerfully.

Every night during the final twenty-one days of pioneer witnessing, one of the participants would give a testimony about how God had been working in his or her life. One night, it was my turn. Strangely enough, afterwards I felt very empty and dissatisfied. I realized it was because I had done a horrible job testifying to God. My testimony was all about what I had realized and what I done in my life, instead of what God had done. This forced me to think more deeply about when I had genuinely experienced God, and it dawned on me that it was at points in my life where I took a leap of faith, where I had to depend on God for something to happen.

So I decided to take a leap of faith by resolving to witness to someone who had a closer relationship to God than I do, and through that person, to develop a closer personal relationship with God. It was a very humble feeling because I knew that I could not do this on my own, that determination alone was not going to work. I put myself in a position where I had to leave room for God to work. On the last day of witnessing, I came back to the center disappointed that I hadn't been able to meet such a person. I was reflecting on my failure, when one sister, Hanako Ikeno, was sharing her testimony about how God had been working in her life. As I listened, two main lessons jumped out at me. The first was about having the attitude of including God in everything I do: Always asking God, "Can we do this together?" The second lesson was that her strongest motivational factor could be expressed as "It's about family." These two things were exactly what I felt I were missing. Hanako was the one that I was looking for, the person who had a more personal relationship with God. God was speaking to me through Hanako, telling me that I needed to invite Him to join me in everything I did and that I needed to feel that everyone around me is part of the same family that God wants to restore.

To sum up my forty-day experience, I would have to say that it was empowering. Not only was I reminded of my original drive for public life, which was a sense of mission to save this world, but God also revealed to me a more powerful source of inspiration: Feeling in my heart that it's about family and knowing that God wants to be included in everything that I do. By taking a leap of faith, I was shown these things, and I felt deeply in my heart that by keeping these things in mind, there was nothing I could not accomplish together with God.