

Tribal Messiahship Best Practices

Naoko Hiraki
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Photo date and location unknown

Last week, we shared a message on Tribal Messiahship (building one's personal ministry) by Mrs. Naoko Hiraki given at the FFWPU National Leaders' Conference in Las Vegas in September, 2015. Here is the second installment of her message, which touches upon specific experiences during outreach activities, personal testimonies, and a Q&A section.

Our Japanese sisters are doing campus outreach in Los Angeles. We made a goal to have 80 consistent guests by August 30, 2015 and we got 81! Half of them already finished studying the Divine Principle and now consider themselves Unificationists, and the other half is still studying.

We started doing outreach activities at Pasadena City College in 2013, and that year, we only brought one guest back to study the Divine Principle. However, through that one person, the atmosphere changed. Now over 20 Japanese Unificationist sisters and seven young Unificationists are working together to witness, and we are working on four different campuses. We are using the college cafeteria, and we have a study group. We're just teaching the Divine Principle.

First of all, we are asking people to look at a questionnaire, asking which question is more important. Some of the questions on our questionnaire include: 'What is the purpose of life?' or 'Does God exist?' and 'What is the spiritual world?'

We just ask them to share their comments. They're thinking a lot. As most of our team consists of Japanese mothers, we cannot speak English well; that's why we can listen a lot. We get mostly African American or Spanish students, sometimes Chinese students. We hear that they are tired of going to church, but they don't lose their faith in God and Jesus Christ. Interestingly, we noticed that among Caucasian students many are very tired of church, and almost all are atheists. Anyway, according to these questions, I tell them, "We have a study group that addresses these questions, and we study a book called the Divine Principle."

On the spot, we show them some slides from a lecture book. We just ask them to read it, and the student reads it. Then I explain about True Father. I ask, "Have you heard of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon?" Nobody knows who he is. So then I share about Father Moon.

Then I ask, "Are you interested in studying with us?" And if they say 'yes', I say, "We have a study group at the cafeteria on campus." Then we make an appointment and they come by themselves. Using the whole Divine Principle, starting with the introduction, they read the red parts, and we read the blue parts.

We're reading with a lot of students now. Right now 81 students are attending our study sessions and reading the Divine Principle. We mark who is at which part. Then, when they finish, they write their names on the back of the book. Students kind of turn it into a competition, thinking, "Oh, this person is ahead of me! I want to come more and learn more. Who's ahead of me?"

We really make an effort to know the people and learn about their lives. For each student, we made a file. Each time they come, we write in detail in the file about what we talked about, everything. We write everything. I report everything and then keep it. What is his internal problem or what is his goal, things like that I write down.

And then, using a notebook, we keep track of who's coming. Almost 15 students are coming every day. We also have daily staff meetings.

It's been a very difficult course for those of us who witness on campus. Once they begin to witness with us, many members of our team seemed to be suddenly challenged in their personal lives. One sister's husband lost his job. Another sister's daughter had surgery. Another sister's brother died. Every member of staff had a problem, but they were determined never to give up.

And some had challenges within the outreach work itself, being unable to bring even one guest in the whole year. But their motivation changed. Every time we meet, I report about True Mother's heart. When they first came, they thought that they wanted to witness. But then they realized, it doesn't come from us. Once we changed our perspective, we wanted to do this to help True Mother, to give back joy to True Mother, and the spirit changed. Right after that, everyone began to meet good, curious students. Now everybody has brought several guests.

I have 16 "spiritual sons", including their families. They come as a family to Sunday service. Every student has some challenges coming from their families while they study Divine Principle, but we connect very strongly, so they very strongly stand up to their parents, and then bring their parents to church.

Comments from Pastor George Kazakos of the Los Angeles Family Church:

"I was teaching the first guest Divine Principle. That's how we first started using the technique to teach one-on-one. We taught to one person, and then it multiplied.

A couple points that I found important in making this effort successful... Number one: all the studying is in the cafeteria. So the cafeteria table became the Divine Principle church center; it became a social place, a place where they do homework, and everybody's always going to the cafeteria. So we always see our guests walk by, because we're right on the campus, in the cafeteria. There's also really no expense, either. They even bring their own tea and get free hot water. So there's no expense there!

Number two, when our Japanese team members talk about the Divine Principle, it's actually very wonderful that they have English as a second language; they naturally listen more. So they read, then listen. Read, and listen. The students are always engaged. When we were lecturing, they were kind of spaced out, but when they have to read it, they are always engaged.

Now we have seven levels of education, including the introduction, then an overview (these two are done before we invite them to the study group), then a red/blue/yellow kind of seven-day workshop content, and then after that, there is the study of True Father's autobiography, with 777-couple, Mr. Igarashi's, internal guidance. It's one of the best resources we have, and we're going to make it available online soon. The next level is Dong Woo Kim's Divine Principle study; we're going to start that, it's very interactive. And then the sixth level is a Holy Marriage Blessing education, which we haven't covered yet with anyone, and then the last level is the family pledge and tribal messiahship education. They haven't been there yet, either.

From there, they're going to witness and bring more students in. But now, like Naoko San said, they have started bringing their families to church. And one couple had a problem, so I went and helped that couple communicate a little more, so now we had the families coming to service. Before, one person joined and the families got negative. But now they're having families come regularly to Sunday service.

I think the main thing that distinguishes this style is that it's active learning, while lecturing is passive learning. And that's why it's sinking in. And it's incredibly low tech. There's no internet, there's no lecture board, there's no church center. Even this Divine Principle, Naoko San's daughter highlighted the whole book to save money. There are no expenses here. So if you're in Iowa, and you're one person, you can do this. Anyone can do this. That's what's beautiful about it.

Our whole team works really hard. They do an average of 180 introductions per month. You have to give a lot of introductions to get just a couple dozen of people."

Q&A with Naoko Hiraki

Q: How many years have you been working on this witnessing?

A: Since 2013, but we only had one guest. And then last year, each person brought at least one guest.

Q: No problem with campus security? You're not a student there, are you?

A: No, the security is going around, and college police are always around. But there is never a problem. The staff of the college can be very spiritual, too. One day, as we were reading Hoon Dok Hae, a staff member saw us from outside. That person came up to us, and told us, "The Holy Spirit is there! You're doing a good job. I received God's message. You are doing the right thing. Please go to all the students here and proclaim God's work."