

The Spirit-Filled Community

New York UBF held a Summer Bible Conference from July 5-7 at the Spruce Lake Retreat Center in Pennsylvania. Around 120 people, including children, attended the conference. The conference theme was "The Spirit-Filled Community." In April 2024, God blessed our Spring Retreat with the theme "The Spirit-Filled Life." Therefore, we chose "The Spirit-Filled Community" as the theme of our Summer Bible Conference, hoping that the NY UBF Community would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Currently, we are studying the book of Acts, so this theme aligns well with the direction of our church. After praying about the specific meaning of the Spirit-Filled Community for us, we took three prayer topics. First, to become a community filled with the Holy Spirit; second, to become a community that forgives and loves one another; and third, to become a community that humbly respects and welcomes each other, united in serving God's mission.

Based on these prayer topics, we chose two passages as the main messages: "Wash One Another's Feet" (John 13:1-17, 34-35) and "We Are The Body Of Christ" (1 Cor 12:1-31). Msn. James S. Kim and Joseph Han Jr. were appointed messengers with God's guidance. Additionally, Grace Forbes was chosen to deliver a testimonial message based on Philippians 2:1-4. We realized that there were brothers and sisters who had already accepted Jesus but had not yet been baptized due to the pandemic. Therefore, we planned to hold a baptism ceremony during the Summer Bible Conference. The baptism candidates were Ana Seo, Becky Bae, Bertha Melikyan, Gail Lee, Hannah Seo, Jimmy Kim, Joel Kim, Joshua Bae, Lin Piao, Sarah Bae, and Sophia Kim, totaling 11 people. Before the conference, they studied fundamental Christian doctrines and Romans 6:1-14, learning about God the Creator, human sin, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, salvation through faith, the work of the Holy Spirit, the second coming and judgment of Jesus, the eternal Kingdom of God, and the spiritual meaning of water baptism. They also wrote their life testimonies. Our NY UBF members gathered on Fridays for three weeks to share Bible reflections and pray earnestly, preparing for the conference. Each Fellowship prepared special activities to present during the conference.

On the first day of the conference, some members had difficulties driving due to rain in the afternoon and evening, but by God's grace, everyone arrived safely. After having sandwiches and fruit for dinner, we had an icebreaker led by Jimmy Kim and a Praise & Worship time led by the Band Team. Afterward, Gail Lee, Jimmy Kim, Becky Bae, Ana Seo, Joshua Bae, and Hannah Seo shared their inspiring life testimonies. Born into missionary families, they shared their journeys and experiences of meeting and getting to know God, which greatly blessed us all.

On the morning of the second day, we had a Group Bible Study (GBS) on John 13:1-17, 34-35. Since one of the goals of this conference was to build unity within each Fellowship, the GBS was conducted by Fellowship groups. After the Bible study, Msn. James S. Kim delivered a graceful message titled "Wash One Another's Feet." He emphasized that we can become a Spirit-Filled Community when we forgive and love one another. He also publicly asked for forgiveness for any offenses he may have caused. Before his message, Samuel Choi's Fellowship dramatized the passage, depicting Jesus washing the disciples' feet. We prayed that this message would not just be theoretical but would be practiced in our daily lives. In the afternoon, we had time to write and share Bible reflections, followed by free time for activities like sports and dancing.

During the evening meeting, Grace Forbes delivered a heart-moving testimonial message, shedding tears as she spoke. Grace and her husband, Andrew, grew up in Washington UBF and have been fervently serving God. They moved to New York for Grace's medical studies and are now key leaders in New York UBF, serving God's work. After Grace's message, Samuel Lee's Fellowship sang a graceful hymn. Sarah Bae and Joel Kim then shared their touching life testimonies with tears. Following this, Joseph Han Jr.'s Fellowship, known as Living Hope Fellowship, recited 1 Peter 1. They also presented a very creative video to introduce their members. Lin Piao and Bertha Melikyan shared deeply moving and graceful life testimonies afterward. Jonathan Lee's Fellowship then performed a beautiful handbell piece, showcasing unity. The HBF members presented a fun skit, adding joy to the evening. Finally, the band team led us in a Praise & Worship Night. We praised God by singing and praying for the city, the restoration of the world, repentance and revival, and thanksgiving.

The baptism ceremony was held on the final day, Sunday morning at 9 AM. Under the guidance of Pastor Juan Seo, 11 brothers and sisters received water baptism and were welcomed as members of the household of God. Everyone celebrated and welcomed the newly baptized members with great joy. Afterward, Joseph Han Jr. delivered the Sunday worship service message. He graciously and engagingly preached on "We Are The Body Of Christ." He emphasized that we are all parts of one body, urging us to respect each other and serve God together humbly. He also thanked God for being a part of our church community. After the message, baptism certificates and gifts were presented to those who were baptized. We then took a group photo and concluded the conference.

During the Summer Bible Conference, BBF and CBF held their conference at the same retreat center with the theme "Jesus, the Light of the World." Thanks to the hard work of Msn. Abigail Lee and the BBF/CBF teachers, our young children had a valuable conference where they learned and grew. Our precious servants Guru Garlapati, Bertha Melikyan, Msn. Elijah Shin, and Msn. Samuel Lee served as speaker. We pray that God will bless our children so they can grow spiritually and physically well.

We thank God for allowing us to experience a joyful time of loving, forgiving, welcoming, and enjoying ourselves as one community through this conference. We are

especially grateful that many young people attended the conference and received Jesus' grace. We pray that we will continue to grow into a Spirit-filled community full of love and unity to carry out God's mission entrusted to us.

