

FFWPU USA District Pastors Leaders' Conference in Las Vegas

Ki Hoon Kim
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On April 13 – 15, 2015, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA district pastors and local representatives met in Las Vegas for a leaders' conference, an initiative of Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Chair of FFWPU North America, to follow up and reconnect after the Cheon Il Guk International Leaders' Assembly in Korea last month.

Sixty people, including district pastors, leaders of affiliate organizations and Itinerary Workers for the United States, met in the Las Vegas Family Church for two days of meeting sessions, question and answer opportunities and sharing of best practices. They also had the chance to sightsee at the Red Rock Canyon and go on a tour of the International Peace Education Center.



On Tuesday, April 14, 2015, Rev. Ken Doo, pastor of the Las Vegas Family Church, opened the first full day of the meeting in prayer, after which all of the attendants then gave a brief introduction. Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of FFWPU USA, brought the focus of the meeting to the national level, describing the purpose of their gathering as an opportunity to unite with True Mother before her arrival in Las Vegas in May. He encouraged everyone to open their eyes to new inspiration, clarity and focus about the top priorities for America, and recommit as representatives of this nation.



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim then gave an opening greeting and shared a message of guidance with the group. He began by thanking everyone for taking this opportunity to meet, and described True Mother's constant concern for the families of America. He encouraged the leaders to consider their own situation and ask themselves, "Do I have the inspiration and power to make a difference, or do I feel powerless?" He pointed out the today's technology allows for so much connection, but when we see each other face to face is when we really connect and change begins to happen.



The leaders' meeting presented many opportunities to ask questions and discuss, and as national Director of Evangelism, Demian Dunkley, said, the theme of the meeting was not about having a lot of

presentations, but looking for the story of God working in everyone's lives, and inspiring and teaching each other.

After the first question and answer session, during which questions were posed to Dr. Kim and Dr. Balcomb, itinerary Workers Richard Buessing, Larry Krishnek and Mr. Hiroshi Inose gave presentations and FFWPU Vice Presidents Miilhan Stephens and Mari Curry, as well as pastor of the Dallas Family Church, Rev. John Jackson, shared highlights and testimonies about the International Leaders' Assembly in Korea.



Rev. Jackson testified to the power of kindness, even in professional settings. "People from all over the world are still sending me 'thank you' notes," he shared, praising the idea and encouragement that he had received to connect with international leaders with small gestures of kindness, such as buying them a coffee or offering them souvenirs from America.

After these inspirational testimonies, local leaders shared their best practices in ministry, including their schedules, outreach efforts, Hoon Dok Hwe (scripture reading), preparation for sermons, communication, balancing leadership with family life, young adult and youth ministry, small groups and service.

Pastor Kevin Thomson of the Bay Area Family Church spoke about his system for organizing his ministry and his daily life. "Without having a system, you're probably spinning your wheels a lot," he shared. "You've got to have a system and do something to rejuvenate yourself."

"We establish clear goals, utilize our resident experts in our community, and persevere with love," outlined Rev. Ernest Patton of District 1 in his talk. Following these presentations, everyone split into small groups to discuss what they could use from these tips in their own ministry, and what their next steps would be to apply them.

On Wednesday, April 15, the meeting shifted gears to presentations by ministry and affiliate organizations. Demian Dunkley shared about the definition of ministry, Marjorie Buessing shared about the Marriage Blessing movement, and Kevin Thompson talked about ministry leadership. Presentations were given by Ricardo DeSena, Secretary General of the Universal Peace Federation in North America; Angelika Selle, President of the Women's Federation for World Peace; Tom Cutts, Director of the American Clergy Leadership Conference; and Naokimi Ushiroda, President of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles.

After concluding messages by Dr. Kim and Dr. Balcomb, the group was offered one last chance to reflect. There was a sense of shared goals and hopes as the leaders headed off to see the International Peace Education Center, the place where we will welcome True Mother when she returns to America next month.