

Midwest region CARP gathered at Camp K.O.H.O.E. in Benton Harbor, Michigan

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From May 18th to 20th, CARP members from around the Midwest region gathered at Camp Kingdom of Heaven on Earth (Camp K.O.H.O.E.) in Benton Harbor, Michigan, for a retreat on Unification Principles. The purpose of the retreat was to provide an opportunity for CARP members to go in depth into the Unification Principles and experience the culture of true love that CARP champions.

There were twenty seven participants including two faculty members and two parental figures. Some participants were meeting for the first time, but they immediately felt like family and did not need icebreakers to engage in conversation and laugh together. One participant said, "Here at Camp K.O.H.O.E, we were able to create our small world of peace -- we created our own heaven."



Friday

We started the retreat getting to know each other, stating our intentions for the weekend, and learning about CARP and its founders. We watched a video on the life of founders Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon.

For those who were new, they were surprised that they had never heard about CARP's founders and their lifelong efforts to bring about a world of peace and harmony. Participants were inspired by the idea that we are all part of God's family regardless of race, religion, nationality, culture, and language.



Saturday

We dove into content on Saturday. We had four presentations: two in the morning and two in the afternoon. The two in the morning were presented by Mr. Gerry Servito, known lovingly as Uncle Gerry; the two morning sessions were based on Unification Thought, a companion book to the Divine Principle.



Uncle Gerry gives his presentations.

Through these presentations, the students discovered a different view of God -- a God of heart, logos, and creativity. Participants were very touched by this view of God. For many of them, it moved them to know that God thought about each one of them and invested His entire heart in creating each one of them to be His objects of love.

"I have always been mean and rude to my friends, but now I understand that I have to love them as God loves them," a student said.

"I found the idea that God had a complex plan for creation intriguing. I liked the description that everything [the creative process] wasn't accidental." ~V. Konan, Detroit



Dr. Beebe connects the principles to real-world issues.

The latter two presentations were done by Dr Robert Beebe, the first one on Education and the second on Love and Sexuality. In his presentation on education, Dr Beebe shared that the original purpose of education is to raise moral and ethical youths who are to be the future of the nation.

Participants learned that in order to build a moral and ethical society, we need to have moral and ethical individuals. After studying the history of the changes in the education system in America, participants came to realize that our education system has shied away from its responsibility.



In his presentation on Love and Sexuality, Dr Beebe addressed the "hookup culture" that is popular on many college campuses. He began by asking questions like: how do your peers talk about sex? What is the purpose of sex? What is the connection between sex and love?

He also explained the sexual revolution of the 1960's which led to the loss of traditional values. Participants learned the difference between casual sex and true love. He concluded his presentation by

inviting participants to join the new sexual revolution that CARP is leading on college campuses -- the absolute sex revolution.

Sunday



On Sunday morning, Uncle Gerry shared practicing living with God. He challenged the participants to always involve God in whatever they do. He shared that for him, even loving his wife is a form of attendance to God because he strongly believes that God gave her to him.

He explained that loving our family members and all the people around us is the best way to experience God's love. Participants were encouraged to live by such a high standard of true love.

"This retreat has taught me a lot of great lessons. One of them is to not wait until tomorrow to do a good thing even if there is lot of people trying to stop you. No matter how other treat you, Always treat them with love and respect. Peace starts within you. It was a great opportunity to take a break from our daily lives boring and stressful activities and to spend quality time with wonderful people appreciating our Father [God] for all He has given to us." ~K., Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC)



Through this retreat, the attendees discovered a deeper interest in Unification Principles. When the retreat began, many had the intention to meet new people and make new friends, but ended up finding a new family.

"I am sorry for my friends who could not come, they would have had a very good experience,"

Blessed Wonjah, President of Black African Student Union (BASU), said.

"The weekend was good, fun, inspiring and memorable to me. Having to understand God and to know how special each person is to God really inspired me to see everyone around me as a beloved child of God. Personally, within the three days we spent together, I felt love, I saw peace and I was moved by the care we showed for each other." ~ S., Core CARP member



"This was actually my first time participating formal CARP event, although I have heard of CARP for so long. It was amazingly inspiring to see people from different backgrounds come together to promote good values and morals and be the change in the world. The energy was great, I had fun and most importantly, I learned so much just in 3 days. Great workshop!" ~C. Konan, Detroit



"I was blessed to be a part of this retreat, to meet the wonderful young people and adults who were a part of this retreat and to be in the beautiful rural setting of Camp K.O.H.O.E near Benton Harbor, Michigan. The young people and adults I met on this retreat were from

Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and New Jersey. The gathering of these friends truly represented the diversity of CARP and its message of world peace. I particularly enjoyed beginning to understand Unification Principles and pondering how these principles could make a difference in my life and the lives of the young people who were present. It was refreshing and hopeful to see young people so enthused and enlivened by the discussion and consideration of ideas about living that really matter and to be moved by the importance of what they can contribute to the world in this phase of their life's journey. This experience went far beyond just 'doing good in the world'. It focused on changing the world through the living of our own lives: truly inspirational. I left this retreat a changed person. I am looking forward to my involvement as a faculty mentor for the Grand Rapids Community College CARP members not only for their sake, but for mine as well."

~ Dr Stephen Barton, faculty member at GRCC

Many others pledged to bring their friends next semester to experience the love that they found in CARP. It is with this event that we conclude this school year, and we will work to bring to campus this culture of true love in the Fall Semester.