

Clergy Feels God's Love at National ACLC Convocation in Las Vegas

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Participants interlocked arms to proclaim their determination.

“This was the most enjoyable and inspiring American Clergy Leadership Conference [ACLC] convention I’ve ever attended,” remarked Pastor T. L. Barrett of Chicago. The National ACLC Convocation was held in Las Vegas, Nevada from Tuesday, November 12th through Friday, November 15th, 2013.

Most of the 140 participants to the National Convocation shared Pastor Barrett’s sentiment. Many said they would come again, and next time they would bring their clergy colleagues.

In preparation for the Convocation, Archbishop Stallings set the national goal of 120 participants, and assigned goals to each local ACLC chapter. Across the country, the clergy leadership of the local chapters responded to Archbishop Stallings challenge, and not only fulfilled the goal, but exceeded it.

During the convocation, pastors from different denominations powerfully shared the Divine Principle. According to one minister, “They were not simply teaching the Word, but the Word came to life through their presentations.” Archbishop Stallings (a Catholic) spoke on “The Fall of Man” and “The Second Coming.” Bishop Michael Sykes (a Baptist) gave “The Mission of the Messiah” lecture and Rev. Dr. Luonne Abram Rouse (a United Methodist) spoke on “The Principle of Restoration.” To pique participant interest Rev. Levy Daugherty introduced the Divine Principle, not as a church doctrine, but as a principle for success. Rev. Dr. Michael Jenkins gave “The Principle of Creation” and “The Parallels of History” presentations



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim explains True Mother’s vision for FFWPU and ACLC at the National ACLC Convocation in Las Vegas from Nov. 12 -15, 2013.



Dr. Michael Balcomb, president of FFWPU-USA, explained how God wants to dwell within the Marriage and Family.

After hearing other Christian pastors teach the Divine Principle, several ministers said they wanted to give a presentation at the next convocation.

In past national meetings, a majority of participants were members of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU). But at this convocation there were nearly 100 (more than 70 percent) non-FFWPU participants. There were men and women, black and white and Latino, young and old, and a wide variety of denominations – including Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal, Mormon, Methodist and Presbyterian. One person even

commented that this convocation was better than her own denomination's assemblies, because the rich variety of backgrounds provided so many fresh ideas.

Another pastor said the most meaningful aspect of the convocation was the ACLC culture. "Everyone felt embraced, encouraged and valued. We felt God's love brought to earth." Pastors from different faith backgrounds were encouraging the growth of each others' ministries, because together the anointed men and women of God can influence the morality and direction of America.



The leadership of the National Chairman, Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, Jr., the Convocation represented a turning point for American Christianity



Mormon faith representatives, Elder Don and Sister Janet Garrick, offered suggestions from the Latter Day Saints church.

Over a dozen of the participants were new to ACLC, and heard about "True Parents" for the first time. Yet, with other ministers testifying so strongly about True Parents, there were no pulling back and all wanted to be included in future ACLC activities.

On Wednesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon a "Ministerial Tool Kit" was provided. Presenters shared ideas and experiences about increasing church membership, caring for and raising members, ministering to young people, and developing a women's ministry.

One welcomed aspect of the convocation was the attendance at every session. In past meetings, people would tend to slip out or start dozing in the late afternoon. But at this convocation, the room was filled at every session and everyone was attentive.

Unlike past national programs, where many participants had their transportation, meals and accommodations fully supported, for the first time participants for this convocation were required to find a way to provide their own travel, and conference registration fees. This gave participants a sense of greater ownership of the convocation.



Pastor Jason Bentley gave a talk about church growth



Pastor Jack Voss explained God's longing for his children

The opening banquet featured a keynote address by Rev. Kwon Jin Moon. He challenged the ministers to support True Mother, who along with her husband, were co-founders of the ACLC.

During the program, Archbishop Stallings officiated a Marriage Blessing, showing the pastors how they can bless their congregations. The next project of ACLC is providing Blessing Education to prepare congregations for the Blessing on Foundation Day 2014.

On the final morning of the convocation, the participants visited the building site of the Peace Palace, which represents True Father's legacy in Las Vegas and in America. With the foundation laid and the steel frame in place, pastors could get an idea of the size and function of the building. The facility will serve as a residence, a place of worship and a center for Divine Principle education. The ministers offered prayers for the Peace Palace and several said they felt the presence of True Father and True Mother. One bishop said, "The Lord told me, 'Take off your shoes. This is Holy Ground.'"

ACLC is especially grateful for the encouragement of Archbishop Ki Hoon Kim, the North American and Caribbean Chairman of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. Without his vision and financial support, the Convocation would not have happened. He addressed the Convocation on Thursday afternoon, and shared True Mother's

vision for America and her trust and expectation for the Christian ministers.

Without the help of many volunteers, the convocation could not have taken place. The Co-Chairmen and Executive Directors of the local ACLC chapters encouraged participants to attend. Special appreciation goes to Dr. Nicholas Benson and Minister Susan Munsell who brought 30 pastors from Los Angeles, and Archbishop Sulanch Lewis and Rev. Bruce Grodner who brought 20 pastors from New York. Mr. Gregg Smith of Las Vegas did a superb job with the audio-visual production, and Mr. Paul Moore of Los Angeles performed a great service shuttling VIPs to and from the airport. There was just over a month to prepare for this major event. The national staff, including Mrs. Margaret Herbers and Minister Reiko Jenkins, accomplished a monumental task preparing for the convocation.



Rev. Levy Daugherty and Rev. Blinky Williams led the congregation in Praise and Worship.



Archbishop Stallings officiated the Marriage Rededication and Blessing.

During the convocation the participants also heard from Dr. Mike Balcomb the President of the FFWPU – USA, and Mr. Naokimi Ushiroda, the President of CARP (Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles). Dr. Balcomb spoke strongly about the importance of marriage and family, and received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his talk. Mr. Ushiroda addressed the five life values and the five life skills that CARP is teaching young people on college campuses. After his talk, there was a long line of pastors waiting to speak with him.

Rev. Levy Daugherty was the Praise and Worship Leader with the help of Rev. Blinky Williams from Los Angeles. The uplifting and spirit-filled music was a crucial part of the Convocation. Wednesday night there was a special revival with a sermon by a Presbyterian pastor and music by the Men of Deliverance.

With the clergy taking the lead in ACLC and being more responsible for their travel and fees, American Christianity reached a turning point. When Christian pastors resonate with the Divine Principle and True Parents, we can fulfill Project 2020.

The American Clergy Leadership Conference is already planning National Convocation 2014, anticipating even larger participation from pastors and even more in-depth presentations. Watch for announcements after Foundation Day.