

## 27 attend Oceania's 4th Annual Retreat for Blessed Children, 18 years and older

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Building on the foundation of the previous 3 retreats, this year the 4th Annual Retreat for Blessed Children, 18 years and older, was held from 13th-22nd January.

The retreat weekend kicked off Friday 13th evening in the serene camping grounds at Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Victoria. Over the weekend, around 27 BC's gathered to spend time re-connecting and relaxing together whilst surrounded by beautiful Oceanside nature. Despite having some rainfall, on Saturday we enjoyed a scenic hike within Wilson's Promontory National Park, offering a very windy, yet stunning reward at the peak. In the evening, we settled down to a great campfire cooked dinner and a peaceful night under the stars. In the morning we packed up our camping gear and headed to the beach for some surf, fish n chips and soccer, and unfortunately for some, a bit of sunburn too.

Concluding the retreat weekend, as a convoy we made our way to our dear Belgrave Heights site for a 7 day workshop, revolving around the theme 'Leadership and Community Building'.

The workshop offered participants the space to hear new content from a variety of speakers, spend time sharing with one another, time to reflect and an opportunity to gain inspiration for the year ahead. We began each day by listening to morning service offered by different 2nd gen, sharing lessons from their own experiences. The main educational content was divided between 2 guest speakers travelling from opposite ends of the world, William Haines from London and Frank Kaufmann from New York. Each speaker brought an entirely unique and distinct way of teaching, blessing us with a great source of 'spiritual food' to absorb.

Uncle William explored the great value of stories as an integral element to community building, re-enforcing the principle "If you want to change the world, you have to change the stories we tell," through his own stories and analysing those of significant historical figures, such as Moses. He shared his experiences observing the leadership in the movement in England and offered his insights on good, sustainable leadership.

Uncle Frank chose to focus on answering the questions "Why are we here? And what brought us here?" drawing on the group of older 2nd gen present at the workshop. He delved deep into our principled desires for freedom, peace, unity and happiness; elaborating on each in detail. Speaking from his personal involvement with the True Family and Unification Church, it was refreshing to hear his thoughts on various matters in the movement and where that leaves us. He also unravelled the Family Pledge and other texts, to help us understand and relate to them naturally.

For the duration of the workshop, we had teams consisting of members ranging between the ages of 18 to 28, holding numerous team discussions to support our understanding of the content. Our schedule included various sports sessions, a sharing walk carried out in pairs, an evening of matching and blessing testimonies, a succinct discussion in our community groups, as well as an exciting games night with

karaoke. The ASGI gave a short presentation on the structure of its committee, clarifying their goals and inviting any enthusiastic contributors.



The workshop was brought to an end with a very enjoyable and high spirited closing program. Saturday evening consisted of workshop reflections, closing remarks, quality skit performances by each team and memorable performances offered by talented individuals. Following the end of the workshop, the next day, Sunday service was held with the community and a lovely BBQ prepared for all.

There were a number of people and groups that contributed to the smooth running of events for both the retreat weekend and the workshop. Thank you to all those that contributed, whether through staffing, organizing, cooking, speaking, cleaning, driving, financing, participating or through any other means.

With a very special thanks to the core staff group, William Saver, Julia McInerheney & Sarah Boyd, for making this workshop a reality.