

7-day Going Deeper Divine Principle workshop young adults at IPEC

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From January 2-9, 48 Unificationists from all over the country and Canada gathered at the International Peace Education Center (IPEC) in Las Vegas for a 7-day Divine Principle retreat designed especially for young adults, "Going Deeper."

The intention of the retreat was to explore practical applications of the Divine Principle in one's life, the current culture, and the providence at large, and to cultivate a heart of hyojeong through understanding True Parents' life course.

Tasnah Moyer, program coordinator for the national Young Adult Ministry (YAM), co-directed the retreat with local young adult ministry leader S. Ogden of Chicago. Regarding the purpose of the workshop, Tasnah explained, "We wanted create a platform for young adults to come together and explore their faith, both as individuals and as a community. We wanted people to gain a sense of the foundation we stand on and what we can contribute at this time as a generation. Many of us, it's been a while since we've had such an experience of coming together with peers to nourish ourselves and connect as a community."

True to this purpose, the week started off with a series of lectures on the Divine Principle and the lives of True Parents by Rev. Andrew Compton, director of education at IPEC. Rev. Compton taught each of the lectures from the perspective of heart of God, inviting participants to pray and reflect on their own relationship with God. Dr. Andrew Wilson of the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) and Angelika Selle, president of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) USA, were also invited to share about True Mother's current efforts to lead and fulfill the vision of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification worldwide and conveyed the value and importance of connecting in heart with True Mother and the feminine heart of God.

"I learned how much we can really truly expand our hearts for others, and how God can expand His heart even further, as the Parent He is. His love is just unbelievable, so unconditional." –A. Olson

"Everything in the Divine Principle and life comes from the heart. God is waiting for us to act upon this Heart we're gifted to make our experiences joyous." –Anonymous

"My main takeaways are that: I need to cultivate my personal relationship with God, and I can do that by creating small, measurable goals of different habits of faith. I have value in God's eyes, and I need to understand that to truly believe in myself and live for the sake of others. I need to take more of an effort to look at situations with God's eyes and perspective." –Anonymous

During the second half of the week, the focus of the retreat shifted from pure principles to principles in practice. Crescentia DeGoede, director of the national Blessing and Family Ministry (BFM), facilitated several sessions on the value and meaning of the Marriage Blessing and led a panel of Unificationists, married and single, in answering participant questions on that topic. Akira and Makiko Watanabe, directors of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) in Las Vegas, Naokimi Ushiroda, director of the national Youth and Young Adult Ministry (YAYAM), and Tasnah joined Crescentia on that panel.



The education for the week concluded with several sessions facilitated by Naokimi on the topic of applying the Divine Principle through reflection and goal-setting, as well as the storytelling principles behind sharing about one's experiences well with others. Between sessions, the retreatants had opportunities to hike in Red Rock Canyon and to visit the Hoover Dam and Lake Mead to learn more about True Parents' appreciation for both sites and their wider ministry in Las Vegas. They also had opportunities to pray and reflect on their faith, their relationships with God, True Parents, and their own families throughout the retreat.

Many of the attendees expressed their appreciation for being able to start the new year in this way, having ample time to check in with themselves, with one another, and with God and True Parents.

"The day devoted to learning about the Marriage Blessing really helped me to understand where I stand with regard to the Blessing." –Anonymous

"My main takeaways were the goals that I was able to set for this coming year and a renewed desire to convey the heart and love behind the Divine Principle to my younger brothers and sisters of faith back in my community." –Anonymous

Reflecting on the significance of the retreat in hindsight, Tasnah commented, "'Going Deeper' was the first of its kind at IPEC, and it was great to have gathered so many young adults who wanted to go deeper with their faith. There was an added value, too, to gathering together at the new year, seeking to understand True Mother's heart and hope for us at the same time that True Mother had gathered world leaders together in Korea. Participants testified to leaving the retreat with a renewed hope and clarity about how they can move forward in their lives of faith."

The mission of the national Young Adult Ministry is to equip and empower young adult Unificationists to take ownership to manifest God and True Parent's love and truth in this world by providing a national network of collaboration and support and supplying resources for young adults to build lives and communities of faith. The retreat was, in many ways, a valuable step toward this goal, involving all three of the national ministries, YAYAM, BFM, and the Witnessing and Education Ministry, as the retreat host, in support of that goal.

Mi Young Eaton, education coordinator under the Witnessing and Education Ministry, also shared at the conclusion of the retreat, "I was very moved by one of Tasnah's opening statements at the retreat. She expressed how although a lot of us might feel that we've already learned everything there is to know about the Divine Principle, as we get older, we actually bring to our study of the Principle a greater depth of heart and spiritual maturity. We're not the same people we were ten years ago, and there's probably so much more that God is freed to teach us when we invest in deepening our understanding of the Principle over time. It was a really humbling and inspiring insight."