



## HARP Winter Workshop

Nitra, Slovakia, December 28, 2019 – January 1, 2020

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At the end of the past year HARP members from Slovakia and Czech Republic gathered in the beautifully renovated center in Nitra to spend the last days of the year together. Like our winter workshop one year ago also this time the workshop was inspired by our country's past. While we had the anniversary of the arrival of the first missionary last time, in 2019 people remembered a fundamental historic change: 1989 saw the end of communism and Czechoslovakia becoming a free country.

This historic occasion became the source for ideas shaping the joint winter workshop organized by Slovak and Czech HARP. 18 participants followed the call and came to the workshop, coming quite evenly distributed from both countries.

Thirty years ago, people gained freedom in our lands, and freedom was the main topic of the first lectures. We learned that it is in our original nature as human beings to be free, and that is why regimes like to communist one in former Czechoslovakia are doomed to fail. However, the situations in our countries don't leave the impression that a "free" society is much better. The answer to the question why came in the second lecture, which explained that freedom is tightly bound to responsibility. Many people cannot handle freedom properly, and irresponsible choices create a bad environment like we know it. On the other hand, good and responsible choices help us grow internally. The importance of choices in our lives was the main topic of the lectures on the last day. On the middle day we took a brief look into history. It was time to realize how much True Parents contributed to us living and growing up in free countries. The participants could learn what a huge impact True Father had on the flow of history during the Cold War, not only spiritually, but also substantially through many organizations, initiatives and activities, the most prominent of them being the

Washington Times. Many participants were amazed by the new things they heard, what an important historic role True Father played in ending the Cold War and bringing down communism. Following that the youngsters enjoyed hearing a testimony from one of our elder members, about times when people were still oppressed in our country, how our members lived and met during that time, and how they came to the Blessing even though being quite isolated from the rest of our movement.

Apart from the lectures the program also offered many other activities. During ice breaking and team building activities participants could get to know each other and especially their team members better. There was time for games and also for preparing snacks. In the so-called 'Adventure' activity people came around the city of Nitra where they had to fulfill different tasks, sometimes having to leave their comfort zone. One evening we watched a movie which pictured the historic changes in the year 1989 in a very humorous way. The other evening participants took part in a role-playing discussion activity, where they could train to defend their standpoint. The first few rounds people were discussing about fun questions, later however one person had to stand up for their purity lifestyle in front of a group of people. It was a chance to understand more about connecting personal freedom to purity lifestyle.

In their teams the participants prepared a program for the family evening on the last day. We spent the last hours of the year 2019 with group games and also with time for sharing in the teams. After the midnight prayer we welcomed the new year while watching beautiful fireworks.

To everybody who contributed to making this workshop a great time for us, be it staff members or team leaders who took responsibility, or participants who joined in: Thank You very much!