

Unificationist Youth Leaders Urged to Learn from Generation Peace Academy

Victoria Roomet and Ariana Moon
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Trainees from the Generation Peace Academy, now recognized as an award-winning choir, visited Korea for what seemed "like a Unification Church pilgrimage."

The Generation Peace Academy (GPA) made such a splash at the 2012 CARP (the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles) World Assembly on January 26, 2012 that Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, International President of the Unification Church, recommended that youth leaders in Korea take cues from the GPA example.

“The president of CARP in Korea brought up the idea of developing a worldwide standard for a gap-year youth program to Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, who then encouraged that the CARP leader learn from and imitate the GPA program we have in the United States,” said Victoria Roomet, president of CARP USA. “I think that speaks volumes for the way GPA and other programs have been developing under Rev. In Jin Moon’s care and guidance. I also heard from a number of other CARP groups at the assembly that they enjoyed seeing how naturally the brothers and sisters on the GPA program related with each other.”

The 2012 World CARP Assembly was the first time in several years that groups of young Unificationists from around the world were able to convene, showcase their talents and exchange ideas. CARP USA, represented by GPA trainees and the Lovin’ Life Ministries team, had an opportunity to present its accomplishments in the last few years, as well as provide information about the LaunchPad and the GPA program.

Other countries represented by their youth groups were Korea, Japan, Brazil and Venezuela. After lectures by Kook Jin Moon, chairman of the Tongil Foundation, and Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, each of these groups performed cultural songs and dances in the *Cheon Bok Gung* church building. The GPA trainees from the USA exhibited the Waltz- and Chacha routines choreographed by Ariana Moon, thus showcasing the work of the Lovin’ Life ballroom ministry for the first time.

A debate pitching theism against atheism followed. Philip Takhar from the USA, a graduate of GPA and a current college student at University of California at Davis, argued on behalf of atheism.

“Rev. Hyung Jin Moon stresses that before believing in the ideals our church and realizing who True Parents are to us, we must believe in God,” explained Roomet. “And, considering that there is a rising trend among college students who consider themselves atheists, it is important for people who believe in

God to be able to articulate the reasons for the belief in an intellectual, rational, scientifically-proven way. A great way to practice this articulation of belief is through these debates.”

Following the debate, each CARP group gave a presentation on its initiatives and programs. Those at the Assembly then participated in a “brotherhood-sisterhood ceremony,” in which youth from different countries gathered together for the evening to mingle.

“There were quite a few people who approached me after CARP America’s presentation on what we have been accomplishing under In Jin Nim's leadership, curious to learn more,” said Roomet. “Similarly, I was very interested to learn what the other countries have been up to and what has been working for them in terms of supporting the development of college students. We had many opportunities to get to know young Unificationists from all over the world. Of course, we didn't always speak the same language, but we were always able to figure out ways to communicate with each other.”

Maintaining an International Dialogue

CARP leadership from the various countries met the day after the CARP Assembly to discuss how to better support each other and work together. Roomet said: “This type of leadership meeting has not happened in some years, so it was groundbreaking. The meeting only lasted a few hours, but the important thing is that we’ve started the dialogue and are working to keep that dialogue going.

“In addition to the CARP presidents, leadership from other aspects of youth development and education was present at the meeting. From the USA, Ministry-Team leader Thanh Le, Youth Pastor Jaga Gavin, GPA Director Roland Platt and Winston Seo, an administrative assistant of Rev. In Jin Moon, also attended. Under Rev. In Jin Moon’s leadership, we came as a team, understanding the importance of supporting and communicating well with each other to better serve the community.”

Roomet added: “I think the U.S. represents hope for many countries through the cohesiveness of our Headquarters team, our affiliations with ACLC (the American Clergy Leadership Conference), WFWP (the Women’s Federation for World Peace), UPF (the Universal Peace Federation), CARP, SAFE (Survivors Against Forced Exit), our increased sense of national unity due to our national broadcasts, the rise of women leadership, the vision of internal and external excellence, a tangible connection to True Parents through Rev. In Jin Moon, and much more. This trip opened my eyes to the reality of our worldwide community and encourages me to keep in touch so that we can all help each other along this journey of life and faith.

“This journey to Korea has been like a Unification Church pilgrimage for me, the Lovin’ Life team and GPA. We learned a great deal about our Korean roots. We celebrated the holidays with True Parents, paraded through Seoul to demonstrate our Unification Church pride, visited our first church headquarters in *Cheongpadong* and saw the floor boards over which True Father shed many tears, met members who have been following True Parents since the 1950s and heard their stories, bought awesome Unification Church hoodies designed by Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, visited Sun Moon University, watched the Little Angels perform, prayed at the *Cheon Jung Gung* Palace, visited the northernmost point of South Korea and looked across the river at North Korea... We also ate *kimchi* and rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner,” Roomet said with a smile.

Testimonies from Members of GPA

Yas Ishida, third-year trainee: "This past week in Korea has been an unforgettable experience. We had the precious opportunity to meet and hang out with CARP members from Korea, Japan and Brazil. The Assembly was a gateway for us on GPA to learn from other countries how we can raise and guide second-

generation and to share what we have accomplished in the past few years. It's been almost five years since STF, now known as GPA, has had such an international get-together, so it was most nostalgic and precious to have this kind of event. I couldn't have been any happier to see everyone enjoy each other's company. Despite the language barriers, we danced, performed magic tricks, exchanged emails, connected through Facebook and took many pictures. I was so inspired and moved to be around so many international brothers and sisters who you know are striving for the same goals."

Satoe Sakuma, first-year trainee: "At the *Cheong Bok Gung*, Kook Jin Nim spoke about a strong Abel. It was such a new aspect of peace that I was shocked and excited. He pointed out that if America valued its freedom, it should be willing to defend it. Most people want America to disarm, but I realized that they are waiting for an opportunity to pounce and thereby delay world peace and Providence once again. Kook Jin Nim's lecture really inspired me to be strong, which goes hand-in-hand with In Jin Nim's motto of achieving both internal and external excellence. We are facing the reality of the world, and we need to be smarter and stronger than those representing Cain. I believe the second-generation is fully capable. We have been given the training of heart."

Youngbok Gomez, second-year trainee: "At first, I didn't know what to think of everything that was going on, but as the events took place one by one, I felt the vision of bringing all the CARP groups together. Knowing that I was part of this vision was an eye-opening experience for me, especially because I had initially arrived in Korea with the mindset of simply representing a choir. I would never have experienced this without the hard work and investment of the True Parents, True Family and CARP."

"Hyung Jin Nim's speech at CARP Assembly helped me rethink my level of faith and where I truly stood in the eyes of God. Upon arriving in Korea, I was almost blinded by all the logistics, the schedule and the worry of making sure we performed well. I lost sight of how I was trying to develop through this experience. Hyung Jin Nim, talking so casually yet so firmly, inspired the hearts of everyone in the room and even jogged with us for more than an hour. He kept saying, "Don't stop moving! Keep moving!" and that made me think of how amazing True parents and the True Children are because they set that tradition of keeping the movement moving. Likewise, we young people need to spread the breaking news."

"At the brotherhood-sisterhood ceremony, I was overjoyed to have the opportunity to get to know better our international brothers and sisters, who share the same heart and vision and goal. I realized that all of us were trying to see where we fit in this puzzle, and I felt that we were able to communicate through our understanding of our mission. Now I have brothers and sisters I can support not just nationally but also globally!"