

## Makiko & Akira Watanabe: Youth must focus on purity, sexual integrity, Blessing

Naokimi Ushiroda  
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"This has been a journey for us," says Makiko Watanabe, a Unificationist in Las Vegas.

A journey that began almost four years ago, in July 2017, when Makiko and her husband, Akira, attended the launch of [Peace Starts With Me](#) at Madison Square Garden in New York City. There, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), spoke during the rally -- a campaign for peace that would soon take the world by storm.

"At the event, at the very end, I don't know how many people heard it, but [Dr. Moon] said young people must focus on purity and sexual integrity and preparing for the Marriage Blessing," says Makiko. "So my husband took that very seriously."



The [Marriage Blessing](#) -- a movement initiated in the 1960s by Dr. Moon and her late husband, FFWPU co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon -- has, to date, blessed millions of couples in marriage from around the world, including the Watanabes.

"It's really expressing God's love and promoting God's providence through blessed couples and families centered on God," says Makiko. "We wanted to share this with the youth."

College campuses, a hub of young people from all backgrounds and walks of life, proved ideal. This inspired the Watanabes, co-directors of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles ([CARP](#)),

Las Vegas chapter, to start their '[Campus Talk](#)' series. It picked up steam over the years, and the latest Campus Talk episode, "The Honest Truth About Marriage," streamed live April 10 drawing nearly 400 viewers on YouTube.

"This virtual event was six hours, with six sessions, and a mix of experts and couples," says Makiko. "Some of them were Unificationist couples, and some of them were couples from different faiths."



The pair also enlisted Battle of the Sexes author Joe Malone, Ph.D; Medical Institute for Sexual Health President and CEO Lori Kuykendall; mental health advocate and Minister Kristyn Marshall; and professors from New York and Idaho, among others, to discuss topics such as "What makes marriage worthwhile?," "Is marriage and family for everyone?," and "Can a lifestyle of sexual integrity really change the world?"

"Sharing this message of sexual integrity has been a foundation to talk about the Marriage Blessing," says Akira.

"And consistency has been very important," adds Makiko. "Having consistent events to promote these values of marriage is necessary. We've talked about a variety of topics and really needed to be strategic with our events."

With a small CARP staff, partnering with other faith groups has strengthened their outreach efforts. Sharing a clear vision and plan for the Campus Talk series, along with reflections from past participants, has also been key to their success.

"From the very beginning, we had this vision to see college students and faculty members promoting a lifestyle of sexual integrity," says Makiko. "It's not about abstaining from sex just because it's a religious belief; it's about a lifestyle and addressing lack of sexual integrity as a social ill."

"We see how it leads to the breakdown of families," adds Akira, "so it's important to educate people and promote sexual integrity."

Today, some 38 percent of marriages in the U.S. are ending in divorce. This figure comes from the most recent census [data](#) in 2019, provided by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). And while there are a number of reasons that couples decide to call it quits, the Watanabes say sexual integrity -- a counter view to current trends and sexual education -- can help young people better navigate relationships.

"This is a lifestyle and we are the brand," says Makiko. "We believe sexual integrity is essential for ideal couples and families."

CARP was established in 1966 by Rev. and Dr. Moon and has dozens of campus chapters nationwide. You can find a chapter and learn more [here](#).



# Principles Worth Living

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Before I hope to master the universe, I must first master myself.

— Sun Myung Moon



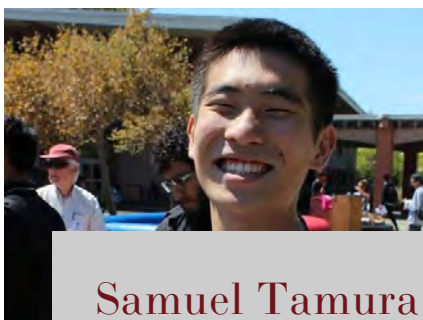
## A movement of students by students



**Mia Taguchi**

College of Southern Nevada, NV

“As my time in CARP progressed, I started to understand more and more that if I truly want to make a difference in the world, it starts with not just the individual, but the



**Samuel Tamura**

University of Davis, California, CA

“ I want everyone to see the Principle and the CARP culture and feel moved and inspired by it. I want to create a chapter that truly aims to bring a new



**Josue Kisile**

Grand Rapids Community College, MI

“ Transferring your vision and passion to others is probably the hardest part of leadership, but it takes you on a very needed

impact an individual has on the family. The impact our actions have encompasses a whole circle of people.

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perspective for all members and they can come out of CARP thinking that it made a positive change in their life. ”

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journey of patience and perseverance. I have grown so much as a leader through this journey.”

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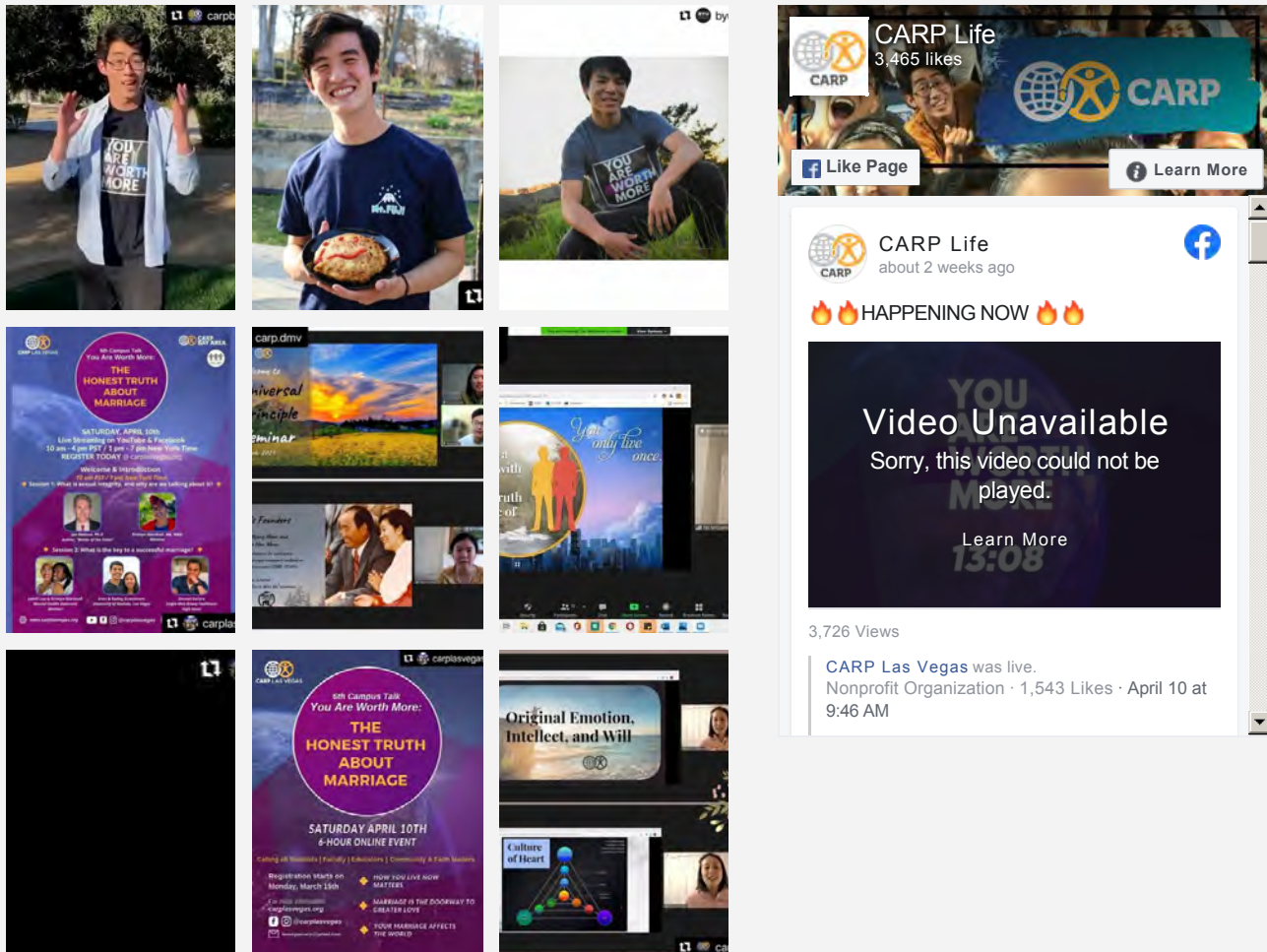


## Meet the Founders

Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

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