

UK Council of Communities Meeting of the ten Communities around Britain

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The Council of Communities met last weekend at a Christian Conference Trust venue in Hertfordshire, with a lively balance of first and second (and two delightful young third!) generation members representing the ten communities around Britain.

The key focus topic of Education was initiated with talks by William Haines, as Education Director, and Sean Greaves, as a former HARP director and ESGD staff. Their reflections, on the standards of education and upbringing in Blessed families and the community generally, were frank and direct, recognising many of the limitations and shortcomings of the past and a way forward for the future.

William emphasised how central the task of education is in our tradition, from Abraham to True Father, but how little we have to show at the moment; we need to utilise the courses and training available publicly, for example in HTB ministries and build on solid research and success.

Sean reflected on the struggle for many 2nd generation being faced with a "package" of expectations from parents and church that only a few could take on, leaving others feeling defeated or looking elsewhere for acceptance. He described lessons he has learnt through his social work in dealing with youth who join gangs.

These talks were followed by a series of break-out groups, providing opportunities for more intimate discussion and feedback, each initiated by a keynote speaker:

On the question "How are we bringing up blessed children?", Natasha Huish gave a talk on her experience Raising a Blessed Family

On the question "How can we support teenagers in the challenges they face in Britain today?", Dawn Pollitt gave a presentation on the Il-Shim program being promoted in Bromley entitled Strengthening our Generations to Come

On the question "How can we create outward-facing programs of education for the wider community?", Dr James Baughman gave a talk on his seminar program of character education for young people, entitled Cultivating Character

On the question "What are we doing now to provide good internal education to our members and families?", William Haines explained some points about how he teaches Divine Principle under the title New Paradigms for Teaching the Principle

Each group discussion was reported back to the full meeting by a chairperson appointed to each group. Although there were some regrets that there was insufficient time to explore all these questions, the sessions were well appreciated and have laid the groundwork for some new plans and interlinked ideas between communities.

Further discussions were held in plenary sessions about the National Leader election process, establishing a timeline and working through details of how it can be carried out. Reamonn Bateman was introduced in his new role as coordinator for the Worship Ministry. Joanna Hartl gave a report about the Marionov family taking over management of Cleeve House; and a vote of thanks was unanimously supported for Miriam Zaccarelli, as well as Carlo and Barbara, for their dedicated efforts there over the past many years.

The idea of a "really BIG workshop" on March 1st in London was explained by Jonathan Hoyte as a follow-on from the GLOW event last year. These, and many other developments and events planned for 2020, were revealed and opinions were expressed, ending in action plans and proposals for our next meeting in January.

Please ask your CoC representatives for their take on all of this and get involved! The minutes need to be reviewed but will be made available by the end of next week.