

CARP Los Angeles - an interview with Jermaine Bishop

Naoko Hiraki
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Jermaine Bishop joined the army when he was 20 years old. Afterwards he worked in the culinary industry but decided to go back to school to study something else, ending up in Los Angeles.

On his first day on the campus of Pasadena Community College, he met Naoko Hiraki, who asked him a series of deep questions like, “Why are we here on the earth?” and, “What’s the purpose of all things?”

Jermaine took the time to answer these questions and was invited to learn more by studying the Divine Principle and the autobiography of Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Jermaine came to appreciate this content and the sense of purpose that he felt from being around Naoko and her family.

“Before this, I had bounced around from city to city because I was looking for something and I found it in this group studying Divine Principle. Every single day we would sit together in the cafeteria and hang out together.”

A year later, Jermaine joined the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP)

and eventually became the Vice President. Next week, Jermaine will be joining the CARP Los Angeles chapter on a cultural exchange trip to Japan, and we took some time to get to know Jermaine and what this trip means to him.



CARP members at a service project.

How has your experience in CARP been so far?

I became way more involved than I ever thought I would be. I grew more and deepened my understanding of the purpose behind Rev. Moon’s message, and what truly made him ‘True Father.’ I came to understand what makes him special and stand out from other leaders. I took more ownership and responsibility. I felt a strong urge to share this with people, almost like an addiction. I saw so many people who are suffering and do not even know why they’re suffering. It wasn’t something I would do for me, but something for others. That’s how I began to appreciate my role in CARP.

What are you studying?

I am a biology student. I really love science and it's cool to understand the world. I can understand the harmony of the world and relate it back to God. Most people think that science disproves God. I like the way the Divine Principle looks at science and how it goes hand-in-hand with religion.

What inspired you to join this trip to Japan?

Actually, I wasn't supposed to go on this trip. I wanted to use my money to go home to visit my family because I had promised them that I would visit during the summer. I also had a summer class that I wanted to take. Naoko had asked me many times to go on the trip to Japan, but I said, "No, school is my priority." However, I ended up not being able to take the class. I was really sad but I knew Naoko would say, "This is from God. God wants you to go." So I ended up buying my ticket to Japan.



CARP Los Angeles members out on a hike in nature (Jermaine is pictured on the right).

I then told my mother that I would not be able to visit and she was really sad. But then I told her it was because I had decided to go to Japan with the CARP group and she was really happy for me. My family never really had the chance to travel and go to different places. She is really proud of me and the fact that I am being exposed to so many things. I told her I would just come home for Christmas instead. It all worked out.

Why do you think this exchange program is valuable to young people like yourself?

I think it is important because it expands your worldview. It is an opportunity to see that there are so many people in the world. There are so many ways in which we can approach things. The way we feel and the way we love can all be unique and different. However, it is also important to find the similarities and appreciate that as well.

What are you most excited about regarding this trip?

I'm excited to meet the Japanese CARP members and see how and why they joined. I also want to see how they do things differently. I want to see what Naoko went through when she was a part of CARP in Japan during her youth. Many of the CARP alumni talk about being members of CARP Japan during their youth and how intense and hardcore it was. I'm excited to see that in action. Other than that, I am excited to go to a tea shop. I really like Japanese tea. I also like the geography and the architecture.