

Dr. Michael Balcomb Teaches Divine Principle in the Deep South

Gary Chidester
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Dr. Balcomb with the community in Mobile, Alabama

Vice President of the Unification Church USA Dr. Michael Balcomb visited Unificationists in District 5 [Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana] from February 1-3, 2013 to continue his national Divine Principle lecture training tour. District 5 is home to 12 locations at which a total of 189 Unificationist families gather. The cities with the most families are Miami, Florida (58 families), Atlanta, Georgia (50 families) and Mobile/Bayou Le Batre, Alabama (24 families), all of which Dr. Balcomb visited.

In Mobile, Alabama on February 1, 2013 Dr. Balcomb met over dinner with District 5 Pastor Gary Chidester, District 5 Council Chair Margret Orr, and Rev. Terry Yamane, State leader of Mississippi and Louisiana and approximately 40 local members, around 10 of which were second-generation Unificationists. According to Rev. Chidester, “The excitement of having Dr. Balcomb present was evident as Yamane and Orr shared their hopes and inspirations of their area. We were excited about teaching Divine Principle. The audience cheered on the lecturers who volunteered. Members felt renewed through practice of teaching the Divine Principle.”



Dr. Balcomb answers questions during a Q&A

Atlanta Visit

The next day, Dr. Balcomb participated in a luncheon meeting with local pastors Clifford and Tiffany Gaines, as well as representatives of Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in Georgia, the Blessed Family Department, the District 5 council, the Korean Evangelical Association (KEA) and Kodan in Atlanta, Georgia.

A total of 62 members, ten of which were second-generation, attended the meeting, surpassing the expected number of 30. “This showed a greater commitment to have a new beginning and commitment to teach the Divine Principle.” Youth Pastor Jaga Gavin, who was accompanying Dr. Balcomb, had come to Atlanta the day before to meet the young people, who all agreed that they had had a positive experience of renewal.

The following is a testimony from District 5 Council Member Jack Whedbee:

“Dr. Balcomb opened up his session with a very personal, honest testimony about his course over the past few months. His sense of humor in the midst of a serious church transition seemed to open the hearts of all members present. Listening to him speak I felt he is gifted, by God, with a capacity to think and feel

on a large complex issue, and then speak about it articulately and quickly. It was a pleasure to listen to.



Members listen and react to Dr. Balcomb's words

“We had heard, ahead of time, that after the new presentation, volunteers would have a chance to practice for a few minutes in front of the gathering. I had assumed that Dr. Balcomb would first lecture, and then the volunteers would take turns practicing. Instead, the volunteers came up to the podium one at a time to read the text for their portion of the slide show from the very beginning. This was a fresh, unique approach. The effect of this approach demonstrated that anyone can start teaching Divine Principle to a new guest without a long preparation time. The message I received was to go ahead and jump into witnessing, just read the material with your guests and go forward. The power-point presentation, itself, is still in the Beta version and is designed with a simple, modern look.

“After a short break, we all gathered in a circle to get acquainted and to ask questions. We were also very fortunate to have our District Pastor, Rev. Chidester in attendance. As usual, he took some time to meet personally with any member who requested an individual session with him. We were also pleased to see a large percentage of high-school and college-aged participants.



Approximately 40 members gathered to meet Dr. Balcomb, which was much more than expected

“As we approach ‘The Three Great Events’ – God’s Day, Cosmic Blessing and Foundation Day – Dr. Balcomb’s visit was well-timed. Any members in our district who feel inclined towards witnessing, and called to bring in new guests and members, especially in time for these Three Great Events, could easily use this new presentation to begin enlightening their neighbors.

After a full day, Dr. Balcomb and Rev. Chidester flew to Miami, Florida to attend Sunday Service the next day and to do a similar session with members of South Florida.

“I think that most members learned how simple it could be to introduce Divine Principle to more people. We have plenty of resources available to us, and the greatest resource to start with is our original minds.”

Miami Visit

The day after, on Sunday, February 3, 2013 Dr. Balcomb, Jaga Gavin and Rev. Chidester breakfasted with Pastors Richard and Mari Curry in Miami, Florida. The visit to Miami was special in that Dr. Balcomb had the opportunity to give the Sunday Service sermon, during which he called members to a new level of commitment to “rebuild the walls of the New Jerusalem” just as did the Hebrews of old, who answered the call of Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the Temple.

At least 75 members attended, approximately 20 of whom were second-generation, surpassing the expected count of 40. After Sunday Service, all participated to study the Divine Principle with the teaching strategy of Dr. Balcomb. During the Q&A part of the program, he handled the comments of members with authority, dignity, wisdom and clarity, encouraging people to prepare for Foundation Day and put aside a judgmental attitude toward the leadership.



Dr. Balcomb with the Miami church

“We look forward to Dr Balcomb’s next visit to our District on March 24, 2013 to visit Central and North Florida where members will gather to inherit the teaching instructions of Dr. Balcomb. We really appreciated his visit to our District 5.”