

Las Vegas Family Church: Compton's July 9th Birthday BBQ

Andrew Compton
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This month, the Compton's Birthday BBQ honored the birthdays of 2 children and 2 adults and the Anniversary of one couple. In total there were 21 adult guests and 10 children filling 3 tables and sitting on some additional chairs & the garden wall to enjoy a delicious BBQ and potluck dinner.

This time no LVFC members attended, so the returning guests had to help out. And they did: one couple took over the grill and took responsibility for preparing the buffet table and receiving the potluck dishes from other guests. Another couple took care of the children in the back yard---especially while their parents participated in an adult "check-in" and conversation inside the house--- and the husband also took pictures throughout the evening.

In addition, several of the guests brought potluck side dishes and desserts and others helped us clean up at the end of the evening.

Following the pattern of previous BBQs, before dinner Andy guided the guests to introduce themselves & offered a short prayer over the food, then after dinner he led the cake cutting, the Holy Juice toast and a group photo before the adults retired to the living room for further conversation and a check-in. The children stayed outside to play.

At the end of the check-in---in which each person is guided to share something about themselves that is important to them or talk about things that had happened in their lives since the previous BBQ--- Lydia introduced 2 projects for the neighborhood---a Neighborhood Yard Sale & an existing local website called Nextdoor Crony.com (on which they can find out about local happenings, do their own buying & selling and find out about local crime alerts, etc) She also kept alive the idea of speaking to the local police about setting up a "Neighborhood Crime Watch". And finally, she invited them to join ongoing weekly conversations in our home.

Andy then invited guests to join us on a Lake Mead boat adventure on the boat James Oberg restored. Up to 8 guests can come--- for \$50 total each trip---as families or together with other neighbors. Depending on the wind, one family will go out with us this week. Two others are waiting in line for a later trip.

The entire evening was fun filled and uplifting; the guests really had a good time getting to know each other, sharing their own stories and hearing about those of the others. One guest gave out a variety of small cards that he had made with interesting, uplifting and fun quotes on them. Everyone got one and shared them with each other in a spirit of joyful appreciation.

We set out clipboards for people to sign so that they could join any of the activities or the weekly conversation meetings. Andy closed the adult check-in with a brief tribute to Rev & Mrs Moon for giving us the inspiration for our activity in the neighborhood and offered a few words about our vision and introduced the upcoming LVFC BBQ and Blessing education program at CHG. Several of the guests took flyers for that event.

The children were then invited inside and everyone shared cake & ice cream. Goody bags and award ribbons were given to the younger children by an older child as the families left.

Finally, as in the previous events, several people stayed longer and continued to talk with us for an hour or more after the BBQ ended. One father and his daughter stayed until Andy had gone and come back from picking up our dog from his “babysitters”.

All in all, we are pleased with what is going on in our neighborhood. By making effort to do Tribal Messiah activity, our neighbors are getting to know each other and us. We firmly believe that Home church is a powerful tool for building Cheon Il Guk & bringing our brothers and sisters to the Blessing.

I would like to share something about the foundation on which our BBQ events have been grounded.

During the weeks since our last Birthday BBQ (May 12), Andy has been visiting our neighbors in a 20-block area surrounding our home. He went door-to-door in the evenings and weekends when he was free and gave invitations to those who opened their door.

Our neighborhood is culturally and racially mixed, made up largely of people who work in Casinos or hotels on “the Strip” or at McCarren Airport. Our neighbors are accustomed to unknown visitors because it is a popular witnessing area for Jehovah’s Witness and Latter Day Saints.

It has an elementary school, a public park with a swimming pool and 2 Casinos within walking distance of our home.

Some houses have “Do Not Solicit” signs in their yards and many don’t answer the door. In any case, Andy reports that his door-to-door experience here has been worth the investment of time. Despite the rejections, as long as you keep knocking on doors with the heart to bring people to True Parents, you eventually meet good people who are receptive.

Meanwhile, Lydia has been caring for our guests from previous BBQs and has been the hostess for 11 Small Group Conversations in our home. She prepared lunch or snacks for 3 people in each of 2 meetings each week. Most of those who are becoming “Conversation Club” members are ladies who had previously attended a BBQ event. They seem to have come to these conversations because they are interested to get together more often and want to learn more about our ideas. It seems that their ancestors are pushing them to connect with us.

At each of these gatherings, besides sharing lunch or a light snack, Lydia and the guests engage in free-flowing and open conversations about food and different languages mostly and watch one of a series of short videos that Andy made*.

Beginning with several “True Love” videos, Lydia has talked with her guests about the ideas each video presents. Since discussing ideas is new to them--- they don’t have many small group discussions in public schools--- Lydia asked questions and gave her own answers. Occasionally one of them would ask about something they hadn’t heard or express their own faith’s tenets. That God is both masculine and feminine was new to them, but not impossible to believe.

Lydia’s sense was that more of the ideas went into their minds and hearts than they were able to bring out in conversation. And, she could easily see that their attention was focused on each video. What was most inspiring to her about this part of the weekly meetings, was that the guests seemed to trust the answers they were receiving from her. She believes that they are understanding the videos and receiving the content sincerely. It is through this preparation that we hope to guide our neighbors to the Blessing and beyond. We are already beginning to see the fruit of our investment. The couples who helped with the BBQ were among those who attended the conversation meetings and are already becoming close friends.

We---Andy & Lydia Compton—are deeply grateful to Heavenly Parent and True Parents not only because they have been our inspiration to invest in Home Church, but also because they have guided us every step of the way.

*Andy’s website “Let’s Study the Divine Principle” introduces the Divine Principle through two video series’---one short (20 minutes each) and one very short (5 minutes each). It also has several videos about True Love, God, Rev Moon, Spiritual World or the Blessing.