

## Connecting Our Roots (COR) -- an independent, grass-roots initiative

Crescentia DeGoede  
December 5, 2015



On Saturday, December 5, 2015, eighteen Unificationist initiators ranging in age from 21 to 45 gathered at the Belvedere Training Center in Tarrytown, New York, for a one-day retreat organized by Connecting Our Roots (COR)—an independent, grass-roots initiative based on the teachings of True Parents and led by Crescentia DeGoede, Jin Kwon Kim, Tasnah Moyer and Kester and Jana Wilkening.



COR's mission is to provide a place for Unificationist young professionals to relax in nature, connect with others and deepen their relationship with God.



Saturday's attendees came from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland and New Jersey. Participants' backgrounds included ministry, engineering, education, life-coaching, real estate, business and the nonprofit sector.



Staff invited attendees to participate in this “think tank”-style event with the following objectives:

1. Build a spirit of trust
2. Create a space of clarity and commitment to God and True Parents
3. Explore the needs and opportunities for the young adults in their community
4. Identify action steps they can take together, using COR as a platform



The group began the day with a reading from “Who Am I?,” a speech given by True Father at this same location on Jan. 23, 1977. One of the first lines reads, “I would like to see someone running faster than I am, saying, ‘Father, just hold my hand, I will pull you.’ Are you going to be that kind of person?” It affirmed the participants’ connection to True Parents’ spirit and their hope for this generation.



The first of three main program sessions was a chance to connect on a deeper and more personal level with each other. This laid the foundation for an afternoon of engaging discussions centered on the needs felt by their demographic. The day concluded with planning several focused action steps to be spearheaded by the attendees present.



For Benjy Uyama, one of the participants, this final session was one of his highlights. “It was everything that the retreat needed to get real projects rolling,” he said.



Most meaningful to participant Andrew Love was the chance to “speak freely about beliefs. We were able to constructively talk openly about our faith and how we can apply it, regardless of where we are at.”



As described by another participant, the COR retreat served as a “platform for powerful local leadership” and those who came left feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, hopeful and happy. Here’s what some other participants had to say:



*“The most meaningful time was having the chance to share my story with my peers about my most meaningful experience with True Parents. I don’t think I usually get a chance to share that. In terms of impact, just gathering this group together and seeing this many people committed was reassuring and inspiring. These guys are movers and shakers, so even by the end of the meeting we had some next steps and projects which we were inspired to contribute.”*

*-Naokimi Ushiroda*

*“I couldn’t have imagined all of the connections and possibilities that were created during the event and how excited I am about the future we’re creating. I feel like God is wanting to create something amazing through us and He is accelerating our rate of connection and meeting each other. It’s beautiful.”*



### **Save the Date!**

COR’s next initiative will be the Spring 2016 COR Retreat, co-directed by Tasnah Moyer and Kester Wilkening, tentatively scheduled for **April 22-24, 2016**.

If you would like to receive dates and details in advance, please sign up for the COR listserv here: [www.ourcor.com/subscribe](http://www.ourcor.com/subscribe)

To learn more about COR, check out the website at [www.ourCOR.com](http://www.ourCOR.com).

