

Inter-Generational Leaders hold Phoenix Summit in East Garden

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July 10, 2016



The Phoenix Summit was held over the weekend of July 8 – 10 at East Garden. The Phoenix team of inter-generational leaders formed in Judge Mark and Lucia Anderson's home this January. It included a number of senior and younger Top Gun alumni. The group formed a staff that created Project Phoenix at IPEC this April and this new program, the Phoenix Summit. The entire staff would like to express their gratitude to True Parents, FFWPU North America Continental Chairman Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, FFWPU USA President Dr. Michael Balcomb, and the East Garden staff for their hospitality in welcoming us to East Garden, a place that has been central to True Parents' ministry in America. It was incredibly significant for us to be able to hold this event there.

The Phoenix Summit built on the success of Project Phoenix. Project Phoenix aims to unite the generations in the larger Unificationist community and revitalize our experience of God's love through uncovering and recognizing the beauty, joy and goodness that God has invested into each generation. Fifty-five participants, 30 of whom are young people in their 20s and 30s, participated together with a group of senior members. These included representatives from FFWPU, the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), the Blessing & Family Ministry and the Universal Peace Federation (UPF-USA) as well as community leaders from Boston, Bridgeport, West Rock, New Jersey and Maryland. The purpose of this weekend event was to share personal testimonies of our lives of faith across the generations and connect to our roots.



On Friday, participants spent some time interacting and getting to know one another and forming families to share the experiences of the weekend. David Young's presentation, *Take Your Life On*, introduced everyone to examining how our fallen nature prevents us from realizing our potential as sons and daughters of God, and also how we can recognize this and take real responsibility for our lives and choices. Each night closed with prayer trinities, as groups of three or four would join together in sharing prayers with one another.

On Saturday morning, Dr. Kim joined our breakfast. He shared some of his childhood experiences with us at the breakfast table and then welcomed the group to East Garden. The morning was filled with rich sharing. In the session called "Honoring the Generations," the group split into younger and elder groups and came up with a list of the qualities and attributes of the other generation and what we wish the other generation understood better about us. After completing this exercise, the whole group came back together and shared their responses with each other.



This created an atmosphere of sharing that was followed by deep personal testimonies, as second-generation Unificationists Jin Kwon Kim and Tasnah Moyer and first-generation Unificationists Catherine Ono and Tom McDevitt shared some of their experiences in their lives of faith. The opportunity to hear each other's deep sorrows and joys was a profound moment of recognition of how God has been working through our lives and through our movement. This was followed by the sharing of testimonies within each group. There were few dry eyes in the room as participants cried and celebrated our joys and sorrows together.

In the afternoon, the East Garden staff took participants on a tour of the grounds. The main house is now a museum dedicated to the life and ministry of True Parents in America, and the staff was more than happy to be able to show us around and explain the significance of this place. We also had the chance to go to the Holy Rock where True Parents prayed so many times.

Over dinner, Dr. Balcomb joined the meeting and shared a word of greeting and his own personal testimony of being with True Father at East Garden. Dr. Thomas J. Ward, Dean of the College of Public and International Affairs at the University of Bridgeport, was the dinner keynote speaker. He shared a testimony of his work with CAUSA and as part of an early delegation to the People's Republic of North Korea. After dinner, there was time for fun, games and relaxation, but the staff, sensing that perhaps we did not want to squander the opportunity, invited a number of our senior leaders to a strategy session to begin the summit portion of the program that was scheduled for Sunday.

The hope of the Phoenix Summit was to initiate discussions about how we could expand the scope of Project Phoenix by connecting our work through inter-generational partnerships to the significant providential work that is being done by FFWPU and many of its affiliated organizations. What ensued was a rich discussion of goals and objectives, program design and most of all, of the heart to embrace and love God by energizing teams of people to follow their passion and serve their community in their own areas of interest.

On Sunday morning, groups formed around common interests to discuss areas of cooperation and to begin planning. There were six different table discussions ranging from holding Project Phoenix events in local communities, to groups focused on topics of personal interest, to a leadership group to address the creation of American Leadership Conference-style programs. The meeting closed with lunch, however everyone continued to discuss over lunch and well into the afternoon, as people were energized to explore how to partner and connect.