

Going Deep at BCSF

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Two teams (red and blue) unite for a group hug, showing their support for each other beyond team alliances. What a beautiful culture!

Over the last few days from August 10-14, over 500 young adults, families, and friends gathered for the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF) in Barrytown, New York. In its 12th year, BCSF has become much more than just a ‘sports festival.’ It has incorporated a myriad of culture events such as a fashion show, dance social, game nights, open mic, discussions, spiritual practices, and more.

CARP has become a major proponent of creating certain kind of culture: a *principled culture*.

What is a principled culture??

First off, a review of what “culture” really is: *“the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also : the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time” (Merriam Webster Dictionary).*

For CARP, creating a certain culture in the organization or group of young people it interacts with means having certain customs, values, and practices. These customs differentiate us from other youth organizations or environments. Why does it matter that we differentiate ourselves? Why should we adopt certain values over others?



We can easily get into a long conversation about this that can go long hours into the night (probably many of us do). Perhaps a good place to look at is what the results of our actions are. When we value honesty, what results come from that? When we value compassion, what results come from that? When we value justice, what results arise? By looking at the core motivation, we can understand a bit about how that value will be manifested.

Father Moon's teachings in "The Divine Principle" reveal the concept of internal nature and external form. The internal nature is what gives rise to the external expression (form). In science, this is evident in how the internal workings of DNA translate into the makeup of the physical body. It's the way an internal genotype gives the code for the external phenotype.

What code do we live by?

In the same way, each of us is guided by an internal code. What in our core (our values, beliefs, customs, practices, etc.) gets manifested in our actions? What's important to us?

These questions are important to consider, especially for young adults who are discovering themselves for the first time, away from their parents. At BCSF where young adults 16+ gather, this is a perfect place to discuss these important questions. Being clear about our values and principles gives us confidence and conviction in what we want to create with our lives, careers, education, relationships, etc.

At BCSF this year, CARP hosted two daily events: a morning spiritual practice and a World Cafe over lunch. Taka Sugawara, CARP's Administrator, coordinated the events and worked with local CARP members to facilitate the daily activities. The morning spiritual practices began at 6:30am each morning and gave participants a chance to read about the peace sport festivals hosted by Father and Mother Moon, world scripture perspectives on 'the Golden Rule,' and more. The morning sessions included reading, discussion, meditation, and setting personal intentions for the day. Participants expressed their enjoyment to have a chance to go deeper and have conversations that matter.

While the main focus at BCSF is sports, there is a culture of cheering on the sidelines. While that may sound like a simple cheerleading role, the support creates incredible positivity energy; there's no booing against a team, only encouragement. The aim is for good sportsmanship and of course for everyone to have fun.

For those that aren't actively involved in a team, it can feel a bit frustrating to just cheer and watch from the sidelines. CARP hosted 'World Cafe' discussions each day during lunch so participants could have the chance to be engaged in something. These sessions allowed them to get to know others from different communities and have deeper conversations on the topics of faith and community. CARP hopes to provide more opportunities in the future where young adults can mingle, getting to know more people on a deeper level.

This was just a start in supporting a principled culture...or as BCSF likes to call it, a *blessed culture*.