

## CARP & GPA: Culture War, Understanding the Historical Context of our Culture

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The Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) and the Special Task Force / Generation Peace Academy (STF/GPA) Alumni Association, two national organizations aimed at supporting young adults in the Unificationist community, have been working together to explore possible platforms for continued education for college students and working professionals.

A few months ago, Teresa Rischl, CARP's Program Director, and Tasnah Moyer, the Alumni Association's coordinator, met to brainstorm a way to utilize the vast knowledge and experience that exists within our movement to provide opportunities for our younger generation to deepen their understanding of the practical application and relevance of Divine Principle in this day and age.

The most recent project is the Masterclass seminar series, aimed at providing opportunities to specifically explore a Principled viewpoint of today's cultural and social issues.



For this first pilot seminar, CARP and STF GPA AA partnered with Joe Leonard and the local Young Unificationists Ministry (YUM) in New Jersey to explore "The Culture War: Understanding the Historical Context of the Culture We Live In." Though Communism has collapsed, the ideological struggle continues; this series aimed to highlight its influence on marriage, sexuality, media, and education.

On Saturday, September 24, over 40 young adults gathered in Clifton, New Jersey for a one-day seminar. The audience consisted of students and working professionals aged 17-29 from the tri-state area and a mix

of GO (“God’s Own” Youth Ministry in New Jersey) staff, CARP members, and STF/GPA alumni.

Each of the four interactive sessions included a presentation followed by question and answer and discussion. It was an honor to host three illustrious speakers to contribute their insights and experience.

#### **“Thought Currents” – Professor Gerry Servito**

The seminar began with “Thought Currents,” a presentation by Professor Gerry Servito. He presented the historical context of the Culture War: its formation, roots, and development over its 400-year history. He briefly introduced several of the key forming philosophies and ideologies that have shaped all areas of our current society – education, the ethics of love, sexuality and marriage, morality, and psychology.

*“It was a really nice refresher of the last 400 years and built a context for the rest of the program. It made me think about where all our beliefs come from and how most of them were thought of before we were born.”* – Justin Okamoto, 25

*“I find it useful to know the source of where all our ideas come from...philosophers had indeed provoked a lot of these secular ideas that the people are now dealing with today.”* – Female, 22

#### **“Sexuality, Marriage, and the Culture War: Snapshots from the Journey” – Mrs. Doug Wetzstein**

Following this introduction, Mrs. Doug Wetzstein spoke on the topic, “Sexuality, Marriage, and the Culture War: Snapshots from the Journey.” She highlighted Unwin’s research of the parallels of sexual morality and the success of nations, the Purity and Social Hygiene movements in the United States, and the powerful and destructive influence of Kinsey in shaping the sexual revolution. She also touched on the power and responsibility of the media to be a moral compass.

*“This session was mind blowing. I was shocked to see the effect of someone like Kinsey on our culture’s views and approach to sexuality and marriage. It brought so much clarity to the history and behind the scene struggle and deliberate unraveling of the moral fibers of our country. It was clear that what we’re experiencing today didn’t just ‘happen.’ It made me so much more confident to take a stand for family and for marriage.”* – Female, 27

*“Media and where we get our information in the world today is so relevant. I noticed people I know believe almost anything that’s posted on Facebook, Twitter ignorantly. I wish we could hear more about this information, especially in our young community.”* – Female, 26



#### **“Education and the Culture War” – Dr. Robert Beebe**

Dr. Robert Beebe then explored the area of education in relation to the Culture War, outlining the imbalance in society’s current education system. When education is only focused on the physical well being it neglects the need and value of educating the spirit and character of our young people.

Universities such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, he explained, were first created for the moral education of the nation’s future leaders. The focus has long shifted with so much of the Culture War now centered on the college campus where there remains a clear “fight against the degradation of values.”

*Lots of us have gone through several years of college, are currently attending, or are becoming educators. This dialogue was a great first step in acknowledging the issue our society faces when educating our young generation.” – Female, 24*

*“Education is extremely important and GO is a ministry that provides education to younger 2nd gen. It gave me more confidence and clarity in my plans for education for GO.” – Yasutaka Ozawa, 21*

### **“Our Role in the Culture War“ – Mrs. Doug Wetzstein and Professor Gerry Servito**

Mrs. Doug Wetzstein and Professor Servito closed the day with, “Our Role in the Culture War,” a call to action encouraging participants to take a stand *for* something rather than to be anti or against something. To do so, they encouraged participants to continue to study, solidify their worldview, and to be a model for the values they stand for as the life we live is often the greatest testament. Until our society experiences a shift in its approach to sexuality, marriage, and education, we are responsible for building healthy families and cultivating our moral education. Professor Servito highlighted the value of doing this out of love for the world we want to create for those we love.

### **What’s Next**

For many participants, this was a first opportunity to explore the Culture War, many expressing, “I’ve never heard this before.” For many, this seminar helped bring an awareness of the relevance and solutions offered through the Divine Principle and Unification Thought:

*“These sessions helped me to be aware that the DP has more power than just the theological aspect. It has the power to give people a happier life by looking more positively on life.” – Yasutaka Ozawa, 21.*

The seminar concluded in a spirit of discovery, desire to learn more, and to do our part to make a change.

*“I personally believe that our role in the Culture War is one you simply can’t ignore. We are living in an era where culture is rapidly changing and what we choose to create and change right now is what the next generation will inherit whether it’s good or bad.” – Male, 19*



*“I’m glad I came. I feel spiritually nourished.” – Hana Mansur, 21*

*“It was a great and thought-provoking event.” – Male, 18*

Rich in content, participants were left wanting to go deeper in many of the areas discussed and also learn about how the Culture War has touched religion, racism, politics, entertainment, the arts, etc.

This is only the first of many! If you are interested in hearing more or being part of the next educational event, send an email to [teresa@carplife.org](mailto:teresa@carplife.org) or [tasnah@stfgpalum.org](mailto:tasnah@stfgpalum.org).