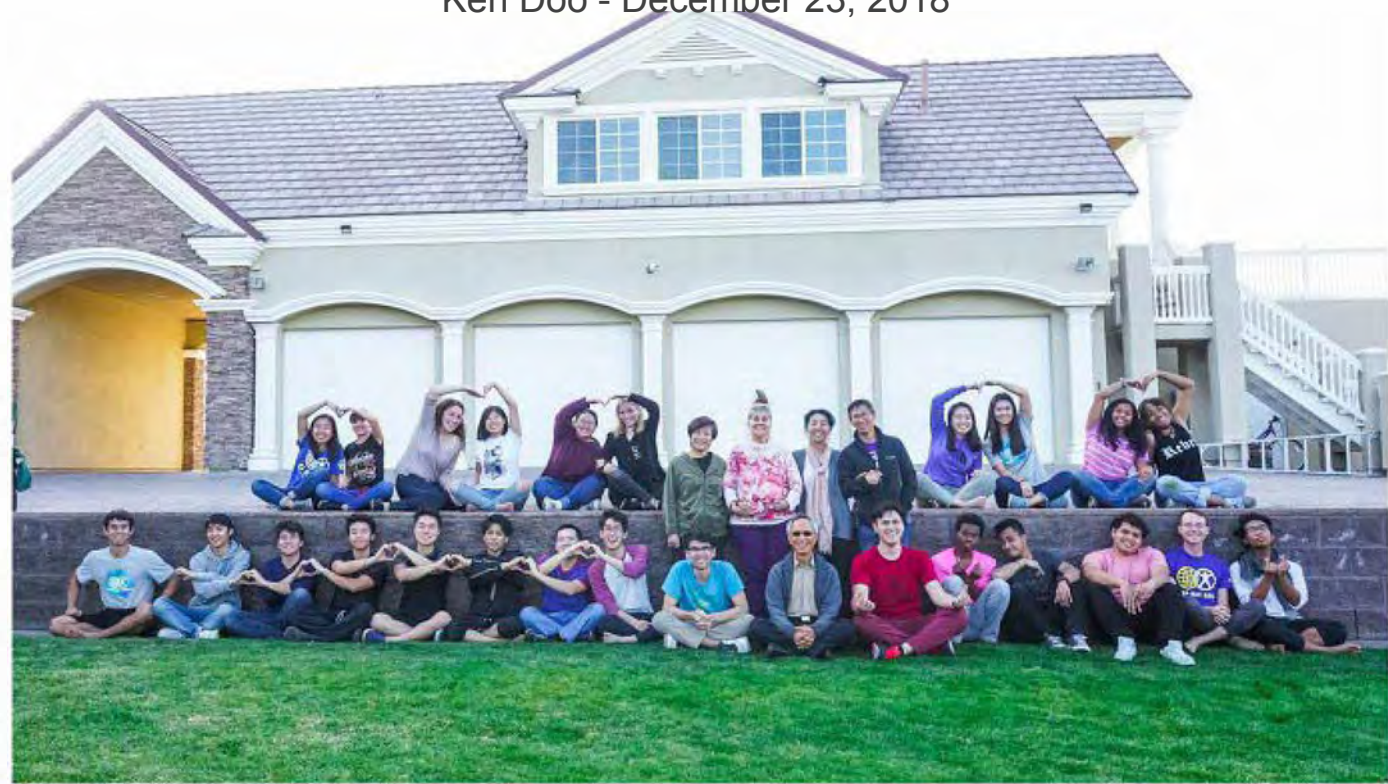


CARP Las Vegas December Seven-Day Retreat

Ken Doo - December 23, 2018



December 2018

From December 17th to the 23rd, CARP Las Vegas held their annual winter seven-day retreat. Gerry Servito, a well-known lecturer and one of the few Unification Thought (U.T.) teachers within the United States flew in from New Jersey to share his unique and refreshing take on the Divine Principle. Over twenty participants took part in this Divine Principle workshop, including four new guests and a second-gen that flew in all the way from Japan just to participate.

The first day started out with a big bang - participants were sent off to complete several tasks in a scavenger hunt competition. Teams headed off to a local outdoor shopping center to get out of their comfort zones and compete. While it was tiresome and scary for a few, the scavenger hunt kicked off the workshop in an exciting way, ensuring a bond and sense of familiarity with one another.

Following the scavenger hunt, the workshop was officially introduced and the theme of the workshop was revealed. The theme was "Understand God's Heart and Find My True Self," which the participants really resonated with. This year, we were given the special honor of not just receiving content on the Divine Principle itself, but as the only known Unification Thought lecturer, Uncle Gerry was also able to present incredible material on the Theory of Art and various other concepts shared within its philosophy. As he explained, UT presented an in-depth look on the first blessing - maturing the individual character - which practically the whole book is

dedicated upon. CAPP members were excited and blown away by the portrayal of the perspective the Divine Principle takes on so many subjects.

It wasn't just that Uncle Gerry was well-knowledgeable however, but also his unique expression of different points in the Principle. On occasion he would burst into an original song talking the subject at hand: sometimes the heart of God, or his love for his wife, or even his newfound understanding of Jesus.

"It wasn't intentional or accidental on how much I felt towards Jesus. I've never felt so much emotions toward what he's been through." - Denzel De Lara, joined September 2017

He didn't shy away from the impromptu wrestling or jumping on the table or slamming a hand on the desk to prove his points either. It was clear that Uncle Gerry was a man of heart and passion. One first-time guest mentioned that more than anything that is said or done in the lectures, they were touched by the conviction and heart that Uncle Gerry spoke with. She stated that although there may be parts she does not understand nor agree with, she couldn't deny the absolute certainty in his voice.

Additional to the exceptional lectures, there were also activities that gave participants an opportunity to experience God's deep, unconditional love. A variety of activities were done touching upon different aspects of God's love; through nature and beauty looking at the sunrise in the morning, or music and company by the amazing CAPP band that played before every session, or the chance to feel their concerns heard through a prayer wall activity. One activity in particular stood out to many of the students, which was "Grace Night." It was a moment in which participants got to reflect on a point that they had wanted to be forgiven of, and experience that forgiveness. The CAPP band played music and expressed God's love through the words as brothers and sisters were embraced by one another as representations of His grace. Afterward, members shared with one another what

they wanted to be forgiven of and what they experienced through the activity. Many testified to the overflowing amount of love they received which many hadn't felt before. Several participants shared that it was their first experience feeling unconditionally loved in their life. One person admitted that feeling so much love for the first time in many ways terrified her, scared that what she feels will soon go away as many things in her life had.



One participant realized through the activity: *"I am worth everything and I deserve the relationships I have made this semester."* - Michelle Benway, joined September 2018

In the final day of lectures, Rev. Andrew Compton was welcomed to present the final talks on True Parents' life course. He shared in detail of Father and Mother Moon's journey in discovering the Divine Principle, and also their story in building up the Unification Movement. The participants were blessed to hear some of Rev. Compton's personal experiences of working with True Parents and the early Unification Movement in America. Much of the curiosity was shown through the numerous questions that the participants asked. Rev. Compton answered all of them very transparently, yet gave clear answers to even some of the most toughest questions.

In the middle of the day, they also received another special testimonial from Mrs. Mimi Morse, who directly met the movement through Father Moon only a few years before his passing. Though she felt she had everything - a successful job at a hotel, a loving husband, and a loving family - Mrs. Morse shared how profoundly Father Moon impacted her life when he told her, "When you can put God as your priority, then you can you say believe in God." She shared how her life completely changed after that and conveyed to the young people to live with a higher purpose.

As the workshop came to a close with a talent and testimony night and its stellar performances, it was assured that the experiences and bonds that were created were ones that would last a lifetime. Testimony after testimony shared of their life-changing realizations and experiences they had during the workshop. Many were in direct credit to the amazing wisdom received through the Divine Principle lectures. There is no denying the experience of heart that was shared between all the brothers and sisters who joined this workshop. It was clear that the future of everyone remains as closely connected to CARP as possible, a place that has become home for all.



Participants' testimonies:

"My goal is to retriplate my efforts to redouble my effort in building the arts, media, and culture providence." - Marcus Fuller Jr., joined September 2016

"Unification Thought's point of view on the Divine Principle gave me insight about my pursuit on education... things make a lot more sense to put God in it." - Denzel De Lara, joined September 2017

"The Three Great Blessings are the most important to me because it is something that i want to strive for in my future family. At the beginning of this semester, I did not want to have children, but I realized that I should have one or two... I feel inspired to care more... I also want to create the 'perfect' family, where I can truly love a child of God. My kids will be the ones who also make the world a better place."

"I felt like it (the Blessing) was different from arranged marriage because arranged marriage can be a burden, while the Blessing ceremony is for people with faith and love." - Michelle Benway, joined September 2018

"I loved the realms of true love teaching. I really loved the differences of virtues, horizontal + vertical. I never thought about it that way. I hope to actually apply these to my day-to-day life."

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