

Days four and five at the IPEC 7-Day Divine Principle Workshop

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“No matter how long you’ve been studying it, we’re all students of the Divine Principle,” said Naokimi Ushiroda, director of the 7-Day Divine Principle Workshop in Las Vegas and president of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP).

There are so many more guests at the workshop than were expected, so many new to the Divine Principle, studying at this short getaway. Everyone is very much engaged, very much present and motivated.



As participants moved into day four, a routine had settled in and everyone was feeling right at home. The day flowed from study to discussion, to physical activity and an evening social activity in one endless seam. Rev. Kevin Thompson, Pastor of the Bay Area Family Church, who presented for two days, shared his impression of the workshop so far:

“What a wonderful group of people to teach Divine Principle to. In all of my years of teaching I don’t ever recall being asked for longer lectures. This is a highly motivated group who are thirsty to study and

digest what God's hope and expectation are for us in this age. The questions after the presentations were deep and insightful and the overall enthusiasm was refreshing.

“After one talk on the Fall of Man a long time student of the Divine Principle said that God revealed a new insight which she had never seen in almost 40 years of studying. She said, ‘and to think that I almost didn't come because I thought there was nothing new for me to learn.’

A new student said that he was deeply comforted to know that he didn't need to give up his love for Jesus in order to follow True Parents. “Wow, now I have Christ and True Parents; how much must God love us?”

Mari Stephens, Vice President of FFWPU USA, gave the introduction to Resurrection. Rev. Andrew Compton, Pastor of the West Rock Family Church in Tarrytown, New York, presented on Restoration, following the story of Noah, Moses, Abraham and Jacob, their failures and their victories.

In the evening, teams gathered to participate in a game called, “Savior.” Team members had different responsibilities to accomplish the goal of creating God's ideal, symbolized through a particular picture and arts and crafts supplies. However, representative of people's ignorance, team members were limited with handicaps such as not being able to talk, being blindfolded, etc. Although the activity had a fun and competitive nature to it to accomplish the goal within a certain time, it also had a very profound impact on the participants.



Teams discussed what this experience taught them; namely, it showed that although God has been trying to reach out to us and show us the ideal world, we are blocked in truly receiving God's Word. With these limitations, to really reach God, participants recognized the need to listen to God's Word to accomplish the goal together versus taking their own course. Again teams bonded even closer on the understanding of their relationship to God and how they can know what to do in their lives by reading God's Word.

Day 5 of the workshop was somewhere between warm and chill, the radical desert weather reflecting the transformations participants are experiencing through the Divine Principle each and every day. Starting off the morning right, they warmed up with martial arts and stretching.

Gerry Servito presented on the “heart of restoration,” explaining the heart overrides thinking, and it's crucial in our spiritual journey to know the heart of God. He asked participants, “Was there ever a time you felt so excited for something, so hopeful, and it didn't happen?” This exercise helped participants imagine God's utter frustration and despair when the world He created didn't become all He hoped for it to be.

Miilhan Stephens, Vice President of FFWPU, later arrived on scene and gave a lecture on Jesus and discussed the temptations he had to overcome. He asked the participants to remember a time they were tempted, whether they overcame or gave in, and what they learned. One participant shared a very personal experience of being tempted by an old relationship. She shared how close she came to falling to this temptation, but that at the very last second, she felt True Parents' and Heavenly Parent giving her

strength. She was pursued three more times, stood her ground, and became stronger and stronger. After lots of prayer, she was able to receive her wonderful husband and experience true love. The old boyfriend also began his search for a wife. The participant's strength helped the two of them heal in the long run. This sharing revealed that the Divine Principle is a set of core values that can guide us even in the darkest of times.



Andy Compton, District Pastor in the New York area, taught about Parallels of History, a perpetually fascinating topic for guests. He revealed that, "It is very difficult for Jesus to work with Christianity, because not one of his disciples walked with him the way of the cross. There is a gap, hence, corruption in the world today."

A well-deserved lunch break for all included beautiful pita pockets served with pineapple, cantaloupe and melon salad. Lunchtime also presented an opportunity for hiking, singing, and general snacking and relaxing.

The afternoon included further lectures and discussions, notably discussions on the second coming of Jesus, the concept of ancestor liberation, and the struggle of removing religious practice from government and public education.

Though the day was filled with loaded and somewhat heavy topics, participants closed Day 5 with a sense of wonder, aliveness and enlightened energy.

