

## Brunch at the Garden Inspires Young Adults

Michael Balcomb  
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Young adult Unificationists are itching to make a profound impact on the world, having inherited True Father's strong vision to create a peaceful and God-centered society. Two months ago, at the National Memorial Service for the second anniversary of True Father's Seonghwa, there was a young adult gathering to discuss how they would like to carry forward a piece of his legacy. The meeting inspired productive conversations on ways to improve our community with the tools we have at hand. The general consensus was that more opportunities to meet and brainstorm on these topics were needed.



Answering the call, the USA National Ministry Team organized "Brunch at the Garden" on November 1, 2014. This all-day event at East Garden was designed for young adult Unificationists to address concerns and hopes for the future of our church community. Demian Dunkley, Director of Evangelism for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU USA) facilitated ten tables of small group discussions over a delicious brunch. Each group brainstormed to find clear, tangible, and relevant ways to put our faith into action. Feedback was collected from every table and a live analysis of the discussion was projected on a screen for all to see.

Following these two discussion sessions, FFWPU USA President, Dr. Michael Balcomb shared about his own experiences at East Garden with True Father, and encouraged everyone to carry True Father's spirit with them during the meeting. "Find True Father as a real man," he said. "A man who faced difficulties

that we face, challenges that we face. Sometimes he stumbled but never fell, because God was so real to him. He knew, 'I can't stop. I can't give in, because God is relying on me.' I want you to have that kind of experience. ”



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Director of FFWPU North America, offered spiritual guidance and encouraged the young adult crowd to continue to share their great ideas.



“With True Parents’ ideals we have great hope to build a community that will be the hope of America and the hope of the world. I believe that you are here on that foundation, and that foundation has moved your heart to come here today for the sake of True Parents. With this kind of spirit, and with this kind of gathering, you can have the greatest ideas that we never heard before. This gathering can be the engine and moving force to change. For change to happen, we have to work together. If there is no change in one month, continue and share about your ideas and your prayer and your spiritual power to act. In the future you will see and feel a difference.”

East Garden's main room was packed with over 80 Unificationists between the ages of 18 and 40. The room was decorated to live up to its name, a garden of flowers on each table with pebbles and candlelight. The most vibrant and beautiful sights were the people gathered from near and far, hugging old friends and mingling with new ones. It was clear that the best and brightest in our midst, those truly passionate about making a difference in the same room where much of True Parents' ministry in America took place.



"I thought it was very powerful to discuss who we are as Unificationists, what we are standing for, where we want to go and what we are offering to the world," remarked I. C., who participated along with his family.

The discussion on hopes and future outlook in our community yielded three top responses: creating an attractive culture that guests would feel inspired by, having a significant impact on the world, and creating a solid and unified identity.



The second half of the day focused on providing opportunities to get involved in current ministries. Participants brainstormed and learned about initiatives presented by Demian Dunkley; Crescentia

DeGoede, Director of the Blessing & Family Ministry (BFM); Naokimi Ushiroda, President of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) and Kaeleigh Moffitt, Director of the National Youth Ministry.



The interactive feedback was productive and it empowered everyone to take a step forward in being an active creator of our culture.



“I know that more of this has to happen if we want move forward,” said Crescentia DeGoede. “More of this kind of connection, more of people stepping out of themselves and into relationships with each other and supporting one another. Being here today, I could really feel that it’s happening and we are going to make a difference. It’s not necessarily going to be huge right away, but it’s going to happen through relationships, interaction, and connection. I see little ripples growing into waves and impacting every community.”

More opportunities are planned for young adult involvement this December. There will be a conference on December 20 and 21, 2014 introducing the Cranes Club. This is a new networking and public service

initiative introduced by True Mother for young Unificationist working professionals. Participants can also join True Mother for a special worship service and Christmas Party on Sunday December 21, 2014.



If you are a young Unificationist looking to get involved, keep an eye out for more opportunities in the future, and best of luck with your local projects!

