

National Ministry Team in DC to plan 40th anniversary of Washington Monument

Michael Balcomb
August 6, 2016



On Saturday, August 6, the FFWPU USA National Ministry Team monthly meeting convened in the Arbor Ballroom of *The Washington Times* offices in Washington, D.C. Members of the National Ministry Team, local and district pastors, friends and community members gathered together to check in with one another after another eventful month and to begin formal preparations for the upcoming 40th anniversary celebration of the Washington Monument Rally on September 17.

Miilhan Stephens, Vice President of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU USA), served as the emcee for the event. After singing uplifting songs to set the spirit, Pastor Mark Abernathy of Connect Point Church in Atlanta, Georgia, was invited to offer a prayer to formally open the meeting.



Miilhan Stephens

District pastor of FFWPU USA District 2, Pastor Edner Pierre-Louis, then offered an impassioned reading from Book 6 of the Chambumo Gyeong, relaying an excerpt of True Father's reflections on the original Washington Monument Rally:

“At the Washington Monument Rally on September 18, 1976, I had the same seriousness as someone with a death sentence walking to the gallows. In preparation, there were many mornings I mistook for nights, and many nights I mistook for mornings. Only God and I know this. This was the turning point in history for me to offer the highest sincere devotion to God, a day of sacrifice for the sake of all people. God was waiting for this moment and I took the responsibility to be the officiator. I knew that the world would perish if, in place of the world and its many religions, I did not reach God's heart and pull His love down to this earth. We give gratitude to God, not to me, that on that day so many people gathered and everything proceeded smoothly without any incidents.” – Chambumo Gyeong (p. 669)



Rev. Edner Pierre-Louis

Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chairman of FFWPU North America, gave a presentation about the FFWPU USA strategic plan, a forward-looking and newly formulated strategy to empower the American movement to fulfill its goals in the years leading up to 2020. He touched upon a wide-ranging list of themes, including fiscal responsibility, improving education, and outreach, and encouraged everyone to think ahead on their personal contributions to Vision 2020.



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim

Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of FFWPU USA, offered brief remarks, inviting everyone to come to the

40th anniversary celebration of the Washington Monument Rally and the conclusion of Peace Road USA 2016, which will take place on the same day of the rally this September.

“You need to be there on September 17,” Dr. Balcomb exhorted. “Bring your sons and daughters, your neighbors, ministers, friends. People may not realize it, but September 18, 1976 is a more significant date than even July 4, 1776 because it was on that day that America received the commission from the Lord of the Second Advent to restore the world to God as a nation.”

Dr. Balcomb also read a passage from “America and God’s Will,” the speech offered by True Father at the original rally, to convey the seriousness and the revolutionary vision that True Parents have for America and the world.

“The United States of America, transcending race and nationality, is already a model of the unified world. The people of the United States must realize that the abundant blessings God has been pouring upon this land are not just for America but for all human beings throughout the world. Upon the foundation of world Christianity, America must exercise its responsibility as a world leader and the chosen nation of God.”

District 1: Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia

District Pastor Ernest Patton welcomed everyone in attendance to the Washington meeting and introduced each of the local pastors who serve in the Unification communities of District 1.

Dr. Achille Acolatse of the Washington Family Church spoke on behalf of his pastoral trinity, which includes Pastors Ndassi Yorkzarh and Rev. Jean-Pierre Sonna in addition to himself. Dr. Acolatse explained that the three pastors share different responsibilities and work together to support their community as well as the many different activities the community is currently involved in. Dr. Acolatse also reported that the Washington Family Church came together and offered the financial support to send six young Unificationists from their community to the current Global Top Gun Youth (GTGY) workshop in Korea.



Dr. Achille Acolatse

Pastor James Boothby, representing Pastor Andrew Love and the New Hope Family Church, discussed some of the recent highlights from his community as well as new directions and intentions that the New Hope Family Church hopes to pursue. In addition to developing church resources, Pastor Boothby shared that four more second-generation Unificationists have become Eagle Scouts, making for a total of 37 Eagle Scouts in 17 years. The New Hope Family Church is also working to develop a stronger civic engagement mentality and a culture impact team in order to create a positive and proactive influence on American culture.



Pastor James Boothby

Pastor Werner Seubert of the Northern Virginia or “NOVA” Family Church shared about the many different initiatives currently taking place in the NOVA community, including Divine Principle lectures and regular outreach activities, such as cooking classes and tea ceremonies that provide both a service to the community and a friendly environment to introduce people to the Divine Principle naturally.



Pastor Werner Seubert

Pastor James Stewart of the recently reestablished Baltimore Family Church spoke about how the Unification community in Baltimore is thriving despite being a rather small community. Working out of a restaurant the church owns in Fells Point, the Baltimore Family Church have had 300 people attend Divine Principle lectures in the past year as well welcomed a few new Unificationists to join their community. Through guidance and support received in prayer, the community has also been able to reconnect with some who have grown distant from the Unification movement over the years. Pastor Stewart concluded his remarks by challenging the stereotypical view of Baltimore as a city of racial violence and social tension and affirming that there is in the city not only room but a longing for the unconditional love that God and True Parents have to offer.

NOCP



James Jenkins

James Jenkins, Youth Pastor in Maryland, recently returned from this summer's National Ocean Challenge Program (NOCP). James described the experience as an amazing challenge and an opportunity to build both character and faith. He shared that his own purpose in attending the program was "to catch, even just a little bit, the heart that True Parents have for humanity and the world," which he found in the testimonies of the elder Unificationists who oversee NOCP and of Dr. Kim and Dr. Balcomb who joined them for a time; in the joy and growth of the young people who attended the program; and in the experiences they shared together out on the water, an integral part of God's beautiful creation.

National Youth Ministry



Kaeleigh Moffitt

Kaeleigh Moffitt, Director of the National Youth Ministry, gave an insightful update about the 2nd

Annual Youth Pastors' Retreat, which just concluded in Las Vegas, and the current realities of our youth ministry in America. According to Kaeleigh, the biggest takeaway from the Youth Pastors' Retreat was that the retreat provided an opportunity to express appreciation for and offer support to the young men and women who choose to create a space in their lives to share their time and hearts with their younger brothers and sisters, despite working or going to school full-time. Two new initiatives of the National Youth Ministry are a 10-week mentoring program to connect new and experienced youth pastors and a revised Il Shim program that will place more emphasis on incorporating the parent-child relationship into the Il Shim education, activities, and ceremony. In addition, the National Youth Ministry seeks to support the development of stronger relationships between youth pastors and local pastors as well as youth pastors and parents.

CARP

Hung Yoo and Koyu Kawasaki, student members of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), were attendees at CARP's Global Momentum Workshop and 50th Anniversary Celebration Banquet held at the International Peace Education Center in Las Vegas. The two friends spoke in turn about the details of the event and briefly shared about their own experiences there, thanking their families, especially, for supporting them financially to make the trip to Las Vegas.

BFM



Crescentia DeGoede

Crescentia DeGoede, Director of the Blessing and Family Ministry (BFM), shared about the significance of the Special Grace and Cheon Il Guk Holy Item Ceremonies that have begun to take place around the country, acknowledging and expressing gratitude to True Parents' for this invaluable opportunity to reflect, refresh, and to move forward freed from past mistakes. Crescentia also commented on the continuing efforts to host Marriage Blessing Ceremonies around the country and acknowledged two new additions to the BFM team, her husband Leighton DeGoede and veteran Unificationist Steve Honey.