

## Unificationists Gather for Parents Matching Convocation in New York

Crescentia DeGoede

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*“The convocation was amazing. I received so much hope from this program, as I knew I had to match my children but couldn’t ever imagine how. Now I have an image of how it will happen. There is a wonderful tried and true process and so much support for families. I am eager to return to my community in Atlanta and share this with everyone. I want to give other families hope. The Blessing tradition is alive and well. Our culture is developing. Thank you so much!” – Celeste*

On October, 24-26 2014, the National Blessing and Family Ministry (BFM) conducted a Matching Advisors (MA) Certification Training and Parents Matching Convocation (PMC) at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York. The purpose of the MA Training is to equip and certify individuals in guiding first generation Unificationists and Blessed Families through the Matching process. The purpose of the PMC is to help Unificationist parents learn about the Matching process, better equip themselves to match their children, and meet and network with other parents.

The MA Training and PMC were well attended, with 25 participants in the training and 70 participants in the PMC, many participating in a PMC for the first time. The majority of the participants came from New York and New Jersey, and others came from Georgia, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Colorado, and even some as far as Hawaii, Europe, and China.

Through the Matching Advisors Training, 25 new Matching Advisors were equipped and certified to support first generation Unificationists and Blessed Families through the Matching process. Trainees included Rev. Ricardo de Sena, UPF USA president; David Stuart, National Messiah to Venezuela; Dairo Ferraboli, former national leader of Brazil; and Abdou and Marra Gaye, co-pastors of the recently planted Unification Church, Kingston Family Church. The training consisted of a several different presentations given by Crescentia DeGoede and Leighton DeGoede, as well as Matching Advisor Coordinators, Anne-Marie Mylar and Marjorie Buessing about the Matching process, the role of a Matching advisor, and how to utilize Matching tools and resources.



During the Parents Matching Convocation, participants listened to presentations from BFM Director, Crescentia DeGoede, on “Inheriting a God-Centered Matching Tradition”; BFM Consultant, Debby Gullery on the “Matching Process Guidelines” and “Deepening the Parent-Child Relationship”; and BFM Tech Support, Leighton DeGoede, on “Online Matching Tools and Resources.” Participants were also fortunate to listen to testimonies from young Blessed Couples about the process by which they were matched, experienced Matching advisors about how they have helped families in the Matching process, and parents who shared their trials and errors while matching their own children. Participants also had the opportunity to discuss in small groups their questions, concerns, and challenges regarding the Matching process with one another, as well as provide support for each other. Parents with children of Matching age (18 years and older) also had the opportunity to view profiles of eligible candidates for the Matching from around the country and world.

#### **Testimonies from participants of the Parents Matching Convocation:**

“I was amazed and awestruck by the heart, investment and professionalism of the workshop team. The context was excellent and clearly communicated. The testimonies were amazing. I feel more confident to move forward so that my husband and I can respond to our son’s wishes and create a clear plan with him.”

“The PMC presents extremely valuable information for any parent who is considering a Matching for their son or daughter.”

“It was a very good experience for me, a very different experience from 7 years ago. The presentations by young staff members were awesome and it gives me a lot of hope in the Matching process. I would recommend to all parents Matching their children to attend a convocation.”



“I gained great, great information and wisdom on how to approach the Matching and Blessing. It is very good to see how the process has evolved and that we have learned from mistakes made in the past. It was a WORKshop with lots of ideas on how to grow myself, my marriage, and how to better prepare for the Matching of my children.”



“It was reassuring and calmed my fears of making a mistake in the process. I learned that I need to change my point of view and accept and see my child from a more open point of view. I can say that the point was clear that we have to be aware of how much our own concepts get in the way.”

“Testimonies from both 1st and 2nd gen gave great insight into the ‘dos’ and ‘don’t’s’ of building trust between parents and children and between two families. Content related to giving our children ownership was helpful. Also, the breadth of experiences and variety of ‘methods’ through which successful Matchings happened was liberating.”

“I really felt how much God loves all of us and our children. He wants us to be happy and wants to give blessing to all our children.”

“The testimonies from parents who have matched their children was renewing for my spirit. God is working so clearly in our lives.”



#### **Testimonies from MA Training participants:**

“I am totally grateful to God, True Parents and each member of the BFM for accepting me as a Matching Advisor. I was filled with very impressive information and loving give and take with my dear brothers and sisters.” – Rev. Ricardo de Sena

“A great amount of material was communicated in a short time and the printed material was very well prepared. I was surprised by the depth of the support system that has already developed and realized the importance of my own complete commitment to those I may serve in the future.” – David Stewart

“I learned about the Heavenly standards, the sacred mission of parents, and the importance of respecting our children’s insights” – Abdou Gaye



“I felt there was a tremendous amount of information presented in a short time. I really appreciate the complete sincerity of the staff and their enthusiasm for this ‘ministry.’ I also appreciated the unity of the generations. Thank you, thank you!” Caren Samen

“I learned that the Matching advisor and parents needs to pay more attention to children’s words, desires, and inspirations in the effort to find an ideal spouse.” Aldo Sensini

“Awesome! Very very impressed by how much we can do to help, and how important it is for our brothers and sisters to feel that there is a huge group all around the world for support and guidance in the biggest goal in life – the Blessing.” – Monica Vallejo

“It was very helpful to understand how to approach the Matching using teamwork at the same time having the candidate take more responsibility and ownership.” – Rev. Abayomi Oladipo

“I learned that as Matching Advisors we can support, not push, the candidates by listening to their preferences in the Matching process.” – Kerryn Gontijo





