

First GWPN Forum in 2021: What You Might Not Know About the Family

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Clockwise, from top left: President Selle, Dr. Ismail, Minister Smith and Lynn Walsh

WFWP's [Global Women's Peace Network](#) (GWPN) began the year with a new speaker series entitled "Women's Leadership in Reconciliation and Peacemaking," to continue providing hope, empowerment, and education in these challenging times. The session was held on February 15, 2021, on the topic of "What You Might Not Know About the Family" and featured two distinguished women leaders, Lynn Walsh and Dr. Suzy Ismail, as well as a commentary on the [Mother of Peace](#) memoir, presented by Minister Fannie Smith.

The speakers offered rich words on family relationships, love and faith. Participants were uplifted and had the opportunity to write comments and ask questions during this live virtual session.

Angelika Selle, president of WFWP USA, hosted the event and introduced the main topic: "We need to look at the smallest unit where we should find peace, refuge, [...] and a sense of belonging. The family is that unit; it should be our cornerstone for happiness." She shared that the session would bring light during these times of global crisis to how we can indeed make the family "a wonderful oasis of love, belonging, sharing, and freedom, where you can recharge, and get energy and strength to master the difficulties."



President Selle then explained the vision of GWPN, first launched in 2012. As a key network of leaders, organizations and governments, GWPN promotes the "values of spirituality, morals, and principles, and the simple philosophy of living for the sake of others and living by the logic of love."

Lynn Walsh, the director of [Universal Peace Federation's](#) Office of the Family, began the session with her presentation entitled "Family at the Crossroads". She addressed the issues of family breakdown, sharing statistics on the impact it has on individuals and the society. She emphasized that to perfect our love, "we need to go back to the creator of our life and understand God's purpose for life and family. [The late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon] said 'the purpose of our life is to perfect our love' and the Bible says 'God is love', so we need to live our life learning our love of each other and our love of God."

Lynn explained that marital commitment is powerful and the "best spiritual path to learn from God's perspective." She spoke on growing our sacrificial love in the family and how mothers and fathers play distinct but complementary roles in fostering a loving and safe environment. "Complementarity is what our children need and certainly what the world needs. Children learn what they are given. If they feel 'I am loved for who I am by my parents,' they are able to give that to the world and others." Her beautiful concluding words were that "family is the womb of society, where our Creator's purpose of creation, love, is embodied."

Below are some resources for marriage education shared by Lynn Walsh:

Gottman Institute - Marriage strengthening blog: gottman.com

PREP- Preparation and marriage education: prepinc.com/

The Marriage Course: themarriagecourse.org/

The second speaker was Dr. Suzy Ismail, the Director of [Cornerstone](#), who gave a message entitled "Is Love Really Love?" Dr. Ismail spoke of understanding the true meaning of love through the three F's of socio-emotional wellness -- faith, family and friends. Faith, the bedrock of human relationships, uplifts us and helps us to see beyond ourselves. Family is where faith is formed for many people and where we learn to love others and create friendships rooted in the giving of ourselves.

Dr. Ismail addressed the concept of self-love and how it differs from narcissism. Through connecting with friends and family we gain a better sense of who we are. "Many of us may be experiencing intense

loneliness right now, a sense of not being able to connect with anyone, and that chips away at our self-love because when we feel like we're not receiving love, it becomes really, really hard to give love," she shared. To change this paradigm, she emphasized the need to start with giving love, advising us "first and foremost [to] love God, love that which lifts you up, love that which is rooted in your faith and in that process learn to love yourself, knowing who you are." It is through finding a place of love that we can solve the issues of brokenness within our families and lives.

After these inspirational messages, the speakers had the opportunity to respond to some of the questions and comments sent in from the live audience.



Minister Fannie Smith, director of WFWP USA's Schools of Africa, concluded the event with a commentary on Mother of Peace, the memoir of WFWP Co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. She expressed that the memoir felt personal, oftentimes addressing the importance of love and family. She shared about how the Mother of Peace had touched her heart: "She was very faithful and as she went to Africa and spoke at the Door of No Return, that would stay in my heart always, particularly with this being

Black History Month. Mother Moon's memoir contains everything a person needs to navigate. She gives us hope, and she teaches us that we must love one another." Minister Smith encouraged the audience to read and share the memoir, as well as to share her love and understanding. "This is the greatest gift Mother could have ever given us."

Here are guest reflections from two young women:

"This discussion on how to really become a woman of truth and divinity is so relevant, especially for my generation. I felt so embraced, being surrounded by so many women (and a few men) who are really advocating for true love and true life. Mother [Moon] has really started, by example, something revolutionary and evolving, something that can slowly but surely shake this world."
- Y. Ang, New Jersey

"The content was digestible and relatable. I enjoyed Mrs. Lynn Walsh's presentation and her point on empathic listening, listening to understand rather than to respond. Also, Dr. Suzy spoke about ideas that not only were interesting but made logical sense, and she had so much energy to give to us [...] I am grateful to have been able to hear from these powerful ladies."
- T. Nakaza, Indiana

Participants expressed their deep gratitude to all the speakers, and are looking forward to the next session, which will be held on March 26, 2021.