

YAYAM USA: Race; Maturity and Integrity; and Faith and Career Development

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A popular new virtual retreat is back -- and diving into topics that impact us all. [Faith and Focus](#) brought together young Unificationists across the U.S. for its second jam-packed program on March 6 which addressed race; maturity and integrity; and faith and career development.

"Race is a topic where we need to get comfortable," said Chigo Ahunanya, a young black Unificationist from Malta who presented the session 'Talking About Race with Friends and Family.'

"I have a very multicultural family and talking about race is very prevalent," he said. "I talk about it with my in-laws, my wife, and my parents."

First [launched](#) in February, the retreat series organized by the Youth and Young Adult Ministry ([YAYAM](#)) of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) features guest speakers who share how to "practically and powerfully" apply faith in all areas of daily life.



Talking About Race

Ahunanya shared about his upbringing and receiving the Marriage Blessing with Honey Fong, an American of Korean-Chinese descent.

"Race has always been an important topic in the world for a long time, but why is the emphasis now?" he said. "I believe we all have to confront it because we've all been forced to be at home, and we're watching the news more... It made me more aware of racial issues and made many other people more aware of it, too."

Ahunanya said he eventually came to realize the value and importance of communication about race, especially involving cultural differences.

"Miscommunication and anger can dissipate with a single sentence," he said. "Communicating with your family and friends improves your relationship with them and makes you closer to them."

Ahunanya also discussed the concept of colorblindness, as well as diversity, inclusion, equality and equity.

"By saying that everyone is the same and teaching them to be colorblind, we are raising and training kids to love people who are like them, but what we should do is teach them to love people who are different, because that's really where being a true child of God lies."



Talking About Faith

Boone Gouger, a Unificationist from Houston who joined the movement in 2017, talked about balancing his faith and career as an engineer; handling fear and stress; and cultivating joy and fulfillment.

"I'm going to talk about signing up and showing up in life," he said. "Some of the best things I've done in my life involved fear and stress, but it brought the most joy and the most fulfillment. I think this is critical to success."

Gouger, who received the Marriage Blessing with Allison Boothby, said going to a seven-day Divine Principle workshop helped him progress in his life

with God. The Divine Principle is the core teachings of the Unification movement.

"I had a great experience, and now I have a better grasp of what life is about and knowing and understanding God," he said.

Gouger advised pushing beyond perceived limitations because overcoming hurdles reaps the greatest rewards.

"I chose a profession that had value to it, as well as being a challenge," he said. "I knew engineering would be difficult, but I also thought there would be a return for it and it would give me great skills to lean on."



Talking About Maturity and Integrity

Reverend Miyoung Eaton, secretary general of the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought ([RIIWT](#)), shared her insights on applying the Divine Principle and Unification Thought to everyday life.

"Beyond an intellectual grasp, there are so many dimensions of the Divine Principle that we need to understand," said Rev. Eaton. "The Three Great Blessings -- be fruitful, multiply, and have dominion -- are the purpose of life. I overlay that on top of my life, my relationships, my activities, my priorities, and look at what I see... When I first did this I realized there were gaps between what I said I wanted and who I said I wanted to be, and

how I was actually living... A lot of what I was doing left me feeling empty."

Rev. Eaton recommended consistency in self-reflection and looking at the details of your life to access and harness true insights into what to improve.

"We are responsible for our own growth; there's a part of it that only we can accomplish and do," she said. "There's inner work that no one else can take responsibility for, not even God. He wants us to succeed but we are responsible for our own perfection."

To learn more about YAYAM's upcoming retreats and activities, click [here](#).