

## The Unificationist matching and marriage of Denthew Learey and Iasmin Lumibao

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*Couples in the Unification Movement attended a mass blessing ceremony in late August at the Cheongshim Peace World Center in Gapyeong, South Korea. Credit Ahn Young-Joon/Associated Press*

It was January 2017 when Denthew Learey asked his parents to meet for dinner at Hacienda Restaurant in Highland Falls, N.Y. He suspected his parents knew what he wanted to discuss. At 20 years old, he was "at that age," as he put it, and he didn't typically have serious conversations with them, but this was something he had been working toward his whole life.

Mr. Learey was ready to begin the matching process for marriage. More than that, he had a potential partner in mind: Iasmin Lumibao.

"It wasn't so much as an arranged marriage, as I guess a lot of people would think," said Mr. Learey, now 22. He met Ms. Lumibao, who is from Macau, in 2014 during a church-led gap year program in Europe. "We knew each other beforehand. We talked to each other."

Mr. Learey is a second-generation member of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, widely referred to as the Unification Movement, where being matched is one of the first steps in the journey to marriage. But that journey is changing: Famous for its arranged marriages and mass wedding ceremonies, the Unification Movement is experiencing an uptick among members born into the faith who are finding their own partners, like Mr. Learey and Ms. Lumibao.



*Thousands of couples, clad in wedding attire, came from all over the world, with more connecting via satellite. Credit Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images*

The most recent mass ceremony [took place Aug. 27](#) in Gapyeong, South Korea, where Mr. Learey and Ms. Lumibao were blessed with thousands of other couples, with more connecting via satellite around the world.

"For me, that was really powerful, and it brings that sense of one family, that me and my brothers and sisters are all doing this together," Mr. Learey said.

Those in the Unification Movement, which was founded in 1954 in South Korea by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, believe marriage can help achieve world peace. In the early days, Mr. Moon matched members, including Mr. Learey's parents and Ms. Lumibao's parents, most of whom were strangers to each other and were of different races or nationalities; couples often didn't even speak the same language. They could accept or reject Mr. Moon's matches, but once committed and declared engaged, they could then participate in the movement's most signature events: mass blessing ceremonies.



*The brides and grooms posed for pictures before the ceremony. Credit Kim Hong-Ji/Reuters*