

Unificationist Matching Handbook

Phillip Schanker
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This handbook is designed for single adult Unificationists, as well as our friends and associates who are preparing for the Blessing of Marriage. It is designed to guide and assist them in their efforts to search for and find their eternal spouse. It will help them, and those supporting them, to inherit the beautiful tradition of matching and the Blessing of Marriage.

Contents

This handbook is designed for single adult Unificationists, friends and associates who are preparing for the Blessing of Marriage, to guide and assist them in the process of seeking and finding their eternal spouse. It is specifically intended for those who will become part of the “First Generation” of these newly Blessed families. With the understanding that humankind is the product of a fallen history and lineage, the term First Generation refers to those who engraft into the lineage of God through the Blessing of True Parents. They become true sons and daughters of God, and the first ancestors of their own renewed lineage. Their Blessed children are the first fruits of that lineage. Blessed families such as these are the citizens who create the Kingdom of God.

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides a clear, practical, step-by-step guide to the matching process. It is not intended as a rulebook or absolute mandate. It does provide ideas, recommendations and experience-based insights for candidates and matching advisors to develop a clear plan for approaching the matching process.

The process and policies outlined in this handbook are based upon the international matching guidelines of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. The information and resources come from the experiences of successful matchings, and from some of our most capable and experienced matching advisors. The teachings of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, our True Parents, are the foundation of this manual. We are confident that candidates and those supporting their matching process will find inspiration, encouragement and a wealth of wisdom about the matching process.

This handbook provides helpful suggestions for how matching candidates can prepare themselves, and how to know when to begin. It offers ideas and tools for the sometimes uncomfortable process of getting to know a prospective match. Doubts about the matching process; fears about how to make it work; desires to take a more active role in the process; all these and more are addressed in these pages. We encourage candidates, matching advisors and all those supporting the candidate to study it carefully.

We are pioneers of a new tradition of matching and Blessing, inherited from our True Parents beginning in 2009. It is essential that candidates and those supporting them understand the heart of this process.

Our Heavenly Parent's original design is that children grow in the love of their parents, developing a strong sense of their identity, value and character, and learn to love in the context of their family. These are the foundations for healthy and lasting marriages. Seeking and finding an eternal partner should also be guided by the love and wisdom of supportive parents. True Parents established the tradition of the Marriage Blessing in 1960, and took responsibility to educate and prepare Unificationists for the Blessing, to establish a tradition of God-centered, not self-centered love.

True Parents have counseled and matched literally tens of thousands of couples in the years following their own Blessed marriage. In this new era of "Cheon Il Guk," in their determination to establish the tradition of God's Kingdom on earth, they have passed on the responsibility of matching the children of these Blessed families to their parents. For those who join the Unification Movement as adults, church elders and pastors have inherited the role of suggesting matches and supporting couples.

In 2009 new International Matching Guidelines were announced by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. Among the core principles they contain are the following:

➤ While parents have an original and natural role in matching their children and can therefore inherit some aspects of True Parents' role, church leaders do not automatically have the authority or capacity of True Parents. Therefore, a new matching system is required, that maintains this God-centered tradition, but respects the candidates' input and gives them time to build a relationship and take ownership of their final commitment.

➤ A group of gifted Matching Advisors who feel called to this task should be trained and

certified by each nation's HQ, and should operate within the framework of the international guidelines. **Matching advisors do not make matches.** They work to educate, encourage and get to know candidates, and network with other advisors to make suggestions. Candidates then take time for communication and commitment. Church leaders who wish to make recommendations should be certified through the same process as all Matching Advisors.

➤ The matching process for First Generation Unificationists should have clearly defined stages of qualification, recommendation, couple communication and finally, commitment. Education, guidance and a clear vertical process that empowers candidates will result in healthier, everlasting Blessed Families.

This Unificationist Matching Handbook was written to develop and apply these international guidelines to a comprehensive matching system for the USA. It is intended as a resource for matching applicants and candidates, matching advisors, mentors and advocates, as well as pastors, family ministers and BFDs. Unlike the parents' matching process for Blessed Children, which is family-centered, the process for First Generation Unificationists must be supported by the church. In addition to working with candidates, matching advisors will work in teams to facilitate matchings for members in their community, state or district.

Unfortunately, some of the most important lessons in this handbook have been learned from earlier mistakes. As this new, healthier matching process develops, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions to continually improve it.

The motivation for this vertical matching tradition is to bring joy to our Heavenly Parent by realizing the ideal of love, and to bring happiness to our families. Our challenge is to find that heart and motivation, and to develop a process that will allow God to be present and to guide it. We believe that this simple handbook, when read thoroughly and considered prayerfully, will help matching advisors and advocates find God's heart and motivation, and work effectively to support candidates to find a solid match and build a lasting, loving Blessed Family.

Acknowledgments

The Blessed Family Ministry wishes to thank our True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, who invested their lives to establish the tradition and teach the value of the Blessing. We deeply appreciate the contributions of True Family, encouraging new international guidelines and inspiring us to develop a more healthy and thoughtful matching process. We are particularly grateful to the Matching Advisors, parents, candidates and others whose comments and suggestions helped to shape this second edition.

National Blessed Family Department

OVERVIEW OF MATCHING PROCESS AND GUIDELINES

Each candidate should become familiar with the policies, qualifications and process outlined below. Details for each step are provided throughout this handbook.

I. Important Policies

A. Applicants should have a minimum of one year of church membership, participate in Blessing Education and be fully qualified as candidates **before** beginning the matching process.

B. Only True Parents have the authority to make “absolute matches.” Matching Advisors, trained and certified by the National BFD, will suggest potential partners and support the matching process on behalf of True Parents. If church leaders plan to make matching recommendations, they should first become certified as Matching Advisors.

C. Each candidate’s input and priorities should be encouraged and respected.

D. Matching suggestions will be reviewed by the USA Matching Committee, acting on behalf of True Parents, before candidates begin the communication process with the matching in mind.

E. If candidates decide to explore a particular suggestion, they should spend a minimum of seven months to develop a relationship, solidify their commitment and take ownership of the final matching decision.

F. Candidates should only pursue a match with one candidate at a time.

G. Matching Advisors should only communicate with another candidate through that candidate’s matching advisor.

H. Candidates must fully disclose their situation and background to God and True Parents through the application and interview process. There should be no secrets or hidden past.

II. Qualifications for an Applicant to Become a Candidate

A. Membership- Candidates should be members in good standing for at least one year as demonstrated by regular attendance to Sunday Service and other church pro-grams, and contributing regularly.

B. Minimum Age— Candidates should be at least 20 years of age and legally single.

C. Divine Principle Education— candidates should have a good understanding of the Divine Principle and its application, as well as the importance of spiritual life. It is recommended that candidates be familiar with the contents of the *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, and agree with the principles of *The Family Pledge*.

D. Blessing Education- Candidates should complete Level 2 Blessing education.

E. Purity- Candidates should have remained sexually abstinent for at least one year.

III. Stages of the Matching Process

A. How You Can Prepare

- Read this Adult Unificationist Handbook carefully and completely
- Select a Matching Advisor, contact them to confirm they are available to work with you, and set up a meeting.
- Complete the Online Matching Application and schedule your purity interview.
- With your completed application and letters from your local pastor and an advocate, you become a **candidate**.
- Develop a personalized matching plan with your matching advisor, utilizing the planning worksheet in Appendix __, and assemble your matching team. This is the time to offer your suggestions, preferences and inspiration.
- As a candidate you can now upload your information to our secure Online Matching System (OMS), which allows your profile to be viewed by all certified matching advisors.
- You should begin preparing for the financial responsibilities involved in the matching process and Blessing: Blessing fee, travel, attire, etc.

B. The Matching Process [2 processes?- to find match vs. someone in mind (non-UC)]

- Your matching advisor will work with you and your team to search for potential matching candidates, based upon your personalized matching plan.
- If you have someone in mind, or are in a relationship with someone with whom you want to be Blessed, be sure to report this honestly to your Matching Advisor, and plan to follow the communication process as any potential couple would.
- Each matching suggestion will be reviewed by the USA Matching Committee before candidates begin the communication process.
- The 21-Day Introduction Phase: Once candidates are introduced to each other, they have 21 days to decide whether to begin to communicate with the matching in mind. If “yes,” they move to the communication phase; if “no,” they go back to the planning stage.
- The 25-Week Communication Phase: A clear period of communication for the couple to take ownership of their matching decision is important. Seven months minimum is recommended, with a maximum of one year if the process becomes stalled. Candidates are free to say yes or no at any time. This is not dating. Prospective couples should work to develop an intentional friendship.
- Finalize the match or, if the process ends, take time for reflection and evaluation, revise your matching plan as needed, and begin the process again.

C. Becoming a Couple

- Plan a commitment ceremony (take time and develop this together).
- Hold your commitment ceremony, complete and sign your Matching Report form, and announce your match publicly (for example, at church).
- Upload your signed Matching Report form and a photo of your couple as part of your online matching application.
- Invest in your relationship as a couple, with support from the community.
- Complete the Level 3 “Start Smart” Blessing Workshop for engaged couples, and look for additional relationship education opportunities.
- Participate in the Blessing Ceremony.
- Offer your first 40 days as a Blessed Couple to God and begin your conjugal relationship with the 3 Day Ceremony.

TRUE PARENTS' GUIDANCE

Guidance from True Father

The Meaning of the Blessing

The international Blessing developed by the Unification Church is not a wedding which is limited only to Unification Church members. This is the official course that all human beings must pass through. We should clearly understand this fact. Then what is the ultimate reason we need to do it? It is because our human ancestors fell. If our first ancestors had not fallen, it would not be necessary for us to receive the Blessing. But we have to reverse the fallen process. We have no other way to return to God's realm of authority than through a course that restores the fall. That is why human beings until now have pursued religion, for this is the direction and purpose of human history.

What is the ultimate goal? It is to realize a true family. This is the highest purpose that fallen human beings have been seeking. In order to establish a true family, a true person should come first. A true man comes first, so that he can find a true woman and establish a holy wedding centered upon on God, leading to a true family in the end. We can never establish God's original ideal of a kingdom without beginning with a true family through marriage. The reason that the Unification Church emphasizes the Blessing for all men and women is to make the ideal of God's kingdom a reality. It is not only single people, but married couples as well who should join the Blessing, making the proper conditions. Everyone should ultimately receive the Blessing to return to the original world of God's ideal of creation. The original Principle is that the ideal world should be established through the Blessing of true men and women. However, in the history of love throughout the world, it has never been realized due to the fall.

The Blessing Ceremony of the Unification Church is not simply a wedding through which a man and a woman come together and form a family. Until now, all weddings were solely for the sake of the people getting married. But our wedding ceremony is significant and necessary to set a condition to indemnify the past and return joy to God. Therefore, we conduct our ceremonies in a sacred and splendid manner. Divine Principle clearly explains to us that our wedding ceremony alleviates God's bitter grief that was caused by the Fall of Adam and Eve. It goes beyond the standard of husband and wife, which Jesus was unable to attain.

Why do we get married? Marriage allows us to go to the Kingdom of Heaven. Without marrying, we cannot go to the Kingdom of Heaven. So we have to get married in order to be qualified to go to the heavenly kingdom. What is the qualification to go to the heavenly kingdom? It is to resemble God.

What do we have to do to resemble God? We have to be people who practice God's word. We will pass if we can make God's love my love, and make God's word my word. This is why I am saying to the world on behalf of God, "Humankind, you have to go to the Kingdom of Heaven!" Next, we will pass if we can say, "In order to go to the heavenly kingdom, I will love humankind like God and take them there with me."

We can conclude that we are people on the heavenly side and candidates to go to the Kingdom of Heaven. On the day we become like this, we will have the qualification to get married. Now, why do we get married? The answer is in order to go to the Kingdom of Heaven and for the sake of humankind.

A man should know that the woman standing in front of him is God's daughter and humankind's daughter. If you can love her as a woman who is loved by humankind and love her as God's beloved daughter, you are qualified to be her husband. But otherwise you are not.

Women are the opposite. Do not think, "He is my man." Before saying that he is your man, think of him as God's son and a man representing the masculinity of humankind. You will pass if you are a woman who can love him more than humankind does and more than God does.

When you marry, you should think that as a man you will be the right foot and as a woman you will be the left foot, taking steps through the family to live for the sake of humankind and God. (88-316, 1976. 10.3)

When God's beloved woman lives in a man's heart and God's beloved man lives in a woman's heart as well, these two become his object partners, and when they love each other, God will be delighted to see this love and all things will rejoice. Heaven and earth will rejoice to see a man and woman with these values embrace. When man and woman embrace each other in mutual fondness, this mutual fondness becomes the point where the universe unifies. This is how the original image unfolds in God's ideal. (Blessed Family - 334)

The Value of the Blessing

"In the entire life of True Father, do you know what the most valuable thing I can imagine is? It is the Blessing. For all of you, the ultimate gift in human history is the Blessing. The value of the Blessing cannot be exchanged even for the world. The Blessing is one man and one woman, centering on God's will, becoming true father and true mother, producing true love."

"The perfection of a man and woman's love is the perfection of the universe. The day this love was broken, the universal order was destroyed and the vertical world was broken. Therefore, you must know how important marriage is from the providential viewpoint. Through true love, man and woman gradually get closer to the center of the eternal world. Man and woman centering on God will unite into one in the center. Man and woman centering on God, giving and receiving love, will become one and will give birth to sons and daughters. Sons and daughters who are born as the fruit of love, through give and take action centering on parents who are one with God, will produce the four position foundation."

Who is supposed to carry out the conversion of the lineage? It cannot be performed by just anyone. You must know that in order to become the one who can perform it, I walked the tearful path of the cross. Because I set such a standard, you are able to become a part of the tradition of the Blessing without having to do anything for it. It took thousands of years of hard work on God's part and my substantial life course, which was filled with hardships and suffering, to establish the victorious realm of the conversion of lineage. You are now standing on the foundation thus laid down. To receive the Blessing is to completely cut off the evil lineage and to engraft a new lineage. By engrafting, the lineage is completely changed.

God wants everyone reborn. From His position, He is trying to bring all of humanity, which is still in the realm of Satan's false love, to His side through His greater love. Since all humankind was born through the parents, ancestors and lineage of false love, they need to be reborn through the parents, ancestors and lineage of true love. In this way, they can become the children of God and the people of God's Kingdom.

For human beings love is eternal. It is one and never divided. Once a man and a woman are joined in love they are to live together for a lifetime and then eternally even after death. They are two bodies that become one body by uniting and revolving together. When the two bodies become one, they revolve as God does and form a four-position foundation of love, the expression of the ideal world of love. Only true love dwells there and false love cannot invade. When man and woman become blessed by God and achieve perfection, God comes to them freely. When they form a four-position foundation of love, they will come to love each other's mind through each other's body, and when they come to love the mind their body will follow. (Blessed Family - 344)

"A man should know that the woman standing in front of him is God's daughter and humankind's daughter. If you can love her as a woman who is loved by humankind and love her as God's beloved daughter, you are qualified to be her husband. But otherwise you are not."

"It is the same for women. Do not think, 'He is my man.' Before saying that he is your man, think of him as God's son and a man representing the masculinity of humankind. You will pass if you are a woman who can love him more than humankind does and more than God does."

"You should have a creed that you get married not for your own sake but for the sake of your partner. It is wrong to expect to receive a talented person or a pretty person for your spouse. Once human beings understand the principle of living for the sake of others, they should embrace the idea that they will also get married for the sake of their partners. By our marriage standards, a husband should have the conviction that no matter how dull his partner may be, he will love her more than a beauty."

“Unless you decide that you will love your partner like God, like humankind, and more than anyone else in the world, you cannot be restored to the heavenly kingdom. If you, as a man, do not know how to love a woman, you cannot love God and humankind.”

You get married for the sake of humankind. It is for the sake of the common benefit of humankind. It is something that represents the world. The man is a man representing the world and the woman is a woman representing the world. (75-278, 1975.1.12)

“In the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms masculinity and femininity – that is, the sexual organs – are reserved for the sake of one’s partner of love. Adam and Eve did not know this. Then why do the sexual organs exist? For love. Thus male and female exist in order to find love.”

“If all men and women admit that their sexual organ belongs to their spouse, we all would bow our heads and become humble when we receive our spouse’s love. Love comes to you only through your partner. There is no love other than love for the sake of others. We must remember that we can find absolute love wherever we absolutely live for the sake of others.”

“When a man and a woman become husband and wife, the important thing is how to achieve unchanging unity between them. When they sing of eternal happiness in such unchanging unity, this is eternal happiness. The standard of an ideal heart of love can only be established with an unchanging subject.”

“You should not defile your purity during your adolescence, the precious time when you can overcome and indemnify the bitter failure of Adam and Eve who lost their purity during their youth. In preserving that purity, which is pristine and of great value, you should have the mind and determination that even if you had to live alone for a thousand or ten thousand years, your love would never be misused.”

God exists with dual characteristics. Therefore, when the time comes for matured Adam and Eve to form the connection of love with each other, God’s masculinity can reside in Adam and His femininity can reside in Eve. By residing in our minds and bodies, God Himself can also be a part of the marriage. Adam’s mind is like the holy of holies, his body is like the most holy place, and God is residing in him, both in mind and body. If this had come to pass, Adam and Eve would both have become the body of God. Adam would resemble the male characteristics of God, and Eve the female characteristics. When they come together in holy matrimony, that wedding ceremony would be where the kingship of the universe is established. What is that kingship? It is the kingship of love.

Can you imagine how happy God will be on this day? On the day every evil disappears and we usher in a new era with the bright rays of the rising sun, nature will rejoice, everything in the universe will dance with joy, and we will finally celebrate the dawn of victory.

True Father's Words on Matching

"The ideal partner (ideal mate) in Father's mind is completely different from the ideal partner we imagine. The ideal partner that True Father thinks of is a match of completely opposite types, such as spring and fall types, summer and winter types, etc. True Father says, "When a North-pole type person is matched with a South-pole type person, then out of such a couple a child will be born who has a huge capacity to embrace the entire globe."

"In order for a spring-like woman to pass through summer and winter, she has to meet an autumnal man. A woman who corresponds to spring has to pass through summer in order to meet an autumnal man, and the autumnal man has to pass through winter in order to meet the spring-like woman. Therefore both ultimately pass through all four seasons.

"More than anything, one's love partner should establish an ideal harmony and balance. You should think that the person who appears as your beloved spouse is a son or daughter of God, whom He truly loves, and that therefore He may come disguised as the ugliest person. If you love your husband or wife with those eyes, it has the same significance as loving God's son and daughter."

Candidate's Attitude and Heart in the Matching Process

"The term "ideal spouse" is very good, is it not? Until now, you have thought that an ideal spouse is like this or like that. No matter how good your partner is, you will not find his or her value unless you have within you the quality to do so. Do you understand what I am saying? Where is your capacity to discover whether or not your spouse is excellent? Without you yourself being the best, you cannot find the very essence of your spouse's excellence."

"It is through the merit of investing myself that my partner is moved and comes to appear as an object with value. God created heaven and earth not just to see them as they are. He created in order to love, with heart as the basis. In the same way the only thing that matters in re-creation is acting with the heart as the guide. Even though Adam and Eve are small, in the world they are not seen as small but big."

"Until now, wives have put themselves at the center, and husbands have put themselves at the center, with both wanting to be served. This has been destroying relationships. Since the basis of love does not come from me, but from my spouse, if I am to possess that love, I must sacrifice myself for that love. Love requires patience and absolutely demands sacrifice."

"Men naturally pursue women, but for what purpose – to receive love or to give love? That is the most important question. It is a serious problem that American people have not understood how universal law works. You should never think, "I'm so glad I'm getting married because now my life will be easier. I will have someone to... serve me." But all of a sudden, that is not what happens and you start to complain, "Hey, what's happening here?" Your first concept was wrong; you are not supposed to get married in order to make your life easier. You should think that your life will get tougher, but you should be willing to do it in order to give love."

“Love cannot be realized by oneself. Where does love come from? Love does not come from me but from my spouse. Since love comes from my spouse, I must bow my head and serve her. This is where the heavenly principle of living for the sake of others originates. When something highly noble comes to me, I must honor and serve it in order to receive it. We must live the philosophy of living for the sake of others.”

“Why do you marry? It is to inherit the foundation of thousands of years and of ten thousand generations of chosen people; it is for the future generations. If you marry for the sake of yourselves, you will destroy everything. That kind of decadent trend is sweeping over the world, and all of it has to be cut off.

“Let’s say there is a good looking person among the blessing candidates. He or she might look splendid on the outside. But what is important is whether or not that person has the value to exist in the future in front of the will of God. That is the primary question for the partner whom that person meets.”

“Therefore, our marriages are for the sake of our descendants. Thus, even though candidates might appear unsuitable in some way, the problem is how to match people so that their children inherit only their parent’s good points.”

Guidance from True Mother

“The first responsibility is for one to become the master of True Love, truly free and thanking God for the freedom of love and knowing how to cultivate and control oneself. This responsibility for a love relationship should not be taken merely because of law or social convention. Instead, a person should establish responsibility through his own self-control and self-determination within the life-committing vertical relationship with God.

“Second is one’s responsibility toward the object of love. By nature, people do not want their spouse’s love to be shared with others. Horizontal conjugal love, which differs from the vertical love between parents and children, loses its potential for perfection the moment it is divided. This is because the Principle of Creation requires husband and wife to become one in absolute love. Each spouse has the responsibility given by love to live absolutely for the sake of the other.

“The third responsibility of love is toward children. The love of parents is the basis for children’s pride and happiness. They would wish to be born through the total and harmonious unity of their parents in True Love, and they would wish to be raised in that kind of love. The most precious responsibility of parents is not only to rear their children externally, but also to offer them life elements of True Love that can perfect their spirituality. This is why the family is so valuable. The daily experience of the heart of true children, true brothers and sisters, true spouses, and true parents cannot be acquired in any place other than the true family.”

“True Parents and True Family”

September 21, 1996

“Where does true love start? It starts from true parents. This is the Gospel of Gospels. No matter how many good words exist in this world, and no matter how wonderful the term “husband and wife” is, there is nothing better than the words “true parents.” After all, if true parents do not emerge in the fallen world, true husband and wife cannot come about.

“When we bear the fruit of true love and enter the eternal spirit world as a loving couple, we will be embraced by God's eternal love. We then truly become one with God.

“Even though the physical body grows old, as long as we live as husband and wife centering on true love, our spiritual body will actually become younger! This means that the longer we live, the more handsome or beautiful our spiritual body becomes.

“Why then do we get married? Very simply, we marry in order to resemble God. God exists as a being of dual characteristics. In God, the dual characteristics are completely harmonized as One. When God's dual characteristics manifest in our world, they do so as man and woman.. Accordingly, at the proper time, a man and a woman are like a seed. They unite to become one. Thus, husband and wife return to God. Together, we are a reflection of our Heavenly Parent's original nature.

“We need marriage because it is the true way to develop our love. In marriage, we ripen as a seed of God. Our entire life should be centered on true love. We should be born in true love; we should grow in true love; we should live centered on true love, and we should return to true love when we die.

“The way of true love is life for the sake of others. This is the purpose of a holy marriage. If we take any other path, we are taking the wrong direction for eternal life.”

“Blessed Marriage and Eternal Life”

Mother's Speaking Tour- April 1-16, 1998

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MARRIAGE BLESSING

To understand the matching process and its value, it is important to grasp the overall meaning of the Marriage Blessing:

The tradition of the Marriage Blessing and Blessed Families developed from the life and teaching of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon. According to the Divine Principle, God's essence is love, and the very motive for Creation is to give that love to His children, and to experience joy as we love one another, and return our love to the Heavenly Parent who gave us life. The family is the first institution created by God, and is the channel of God's love into the human experience. Healthy and harmonious families raise children of goodness, who become men and women of peace.

The Bible conveys that our original ancestors were created not as Protestant or Catholic, not as Muslim, Hindu or Jew, but as Husband and Wife. Genesis 1:27 teaches that God's image is male **and** female. The world's great faiths unanimously affirm the importance of marriage and family. In Matthew 19 Jesus said the reason we are created male and female is that "the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but **one flesh**, and what God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

The divine union of man and woman through a Blessed marriage reflects God's image more fully, and invites God's presence more powerfully, than any man or woman alone. And how is it that "the two shall become one flesh?" Husband and wife become one body through the bearing of children. The family is sacred, and the Blessing recreates God's original love, life and lineage.

Historically, some form of nuclear family lies at the heart of every great civilization. Sociological studies demonstrate that the healthiest way for children to be raised is by the parents who gave them birth, in a committed and lasting relationship. The current crisis of family breakdown is damaging to children, and detrimental to society as a whole. That breakdown also has its roots in our first ancestors. The Genesis story, in fact, tells of history's first dysfunctional family: hiding from God, blaming and mistrusting each other, and creating a family in which a jealous and angry elder brother killed his own younger sibling. This family, the scriptures teach, is the root of the entire human family. Whether one considers Adam & Eve as historical individuals or archetypes, the story of the garden is clearly reflected in the human experience.

Religions in general agree that the suffering of humanity stems from spiritual ignorance, alienation, or sin... in other words, separation from God and ignorance of who we truly are. But Rev. Moon's special insight is that the confusion and breakdown of love in the family is the root of the problem. Our first ancestors lost their innocence, and became ashamed of their nakedness, through selfish and misdirected love. Thus has been the experience of all human civilization: love is the source of our greatest hope, happiness and ideals, yet its immature and selfish abuse has been the cause of our greatest unhappiness and pain. The vast array of social, economic and political problems that have plagued humanity can be traced to the moral corruption and contradiction within our human nature, which is likewise rooted in the breakdown of the family.

The Marriage Blessing established by Rev. and Mrs. Moon is therefore much more than a wedding ceremony. It is an instrument of salvation and healing; a framework to resolve the contradiction in our nature inherited from the fall, and to reestablish the foundation for God's original love, life and lineage. The ultimate purpose of all religions is the restoration of true men and women, and the recreation of God's ideal for the family. The Kingdom of God that Jesus taught us to pray for "on earth as it is in Heaven" begins with rebuilding the family as it was intended in the garden. That is the purpose of the Marriage Blessing.

When Jesus called Rev. Moon in 1935 at the age of 15, charging him with the mission of carrying the Lord's earthly work to completion, the rebuilding of the family and the Blessing of marriage was at the heart of that call. This is the essence of their mission as "True Parents:" sanctifying families, creating a new lineage and tradition where God's love and Blessing is the center. Beginning from their own Blessed marriage in 1960, this Blessing tradition has spread to millions of families and homes throughout the world.

The Marriage Blessing that began with Rev. Moon's own followers has expanded to become an interreligious affirmation of the universal importance of marriage and family, more fundamental even than our faith traditions. Since 1992, clergy and members from many faiths have participated in the International and Interreligious Marriage Blessing Ceremony. Married couples join to rededicate their love to God and each other, renewing their marriage on the foundation of true love and Blessing that True Parents have brought to the world.

Just as God's love and guidance was meant to be the center of the first couple's relationship, parents' support and guidance is the foundation for a healthy relationship-building, courtship, engagement and marriage process for their children. Rev. Moon, in his capacity as a "True Father," took this role of recommending marriage partners for the first members of the Unification faith. He has made clear, however, that God's original ideal is that young adults find their ideal spouse with the loving support and guidance of their own parents.

This handbook is intended as a guideline for single adult Unificationists and those who support them, to help them inherit this beautiful tradition of matching and Blessing. It is designed to assist them in developing a healthy and successful process of searching for and finding their eternal partner, and provide them with the confidence to take ownership of their final decision and make a lasting commitment.

PREPARING FOR THE MATCHING PROCESS

Bringing Joy to God and Each Other

We are seeking to establish a tradition of lasting love in God-centered marriage, one that is different from the pervasive practice of self-centered love and sexual freedom. At the same time, our matching tradition is meant to bring joy to our Heavenly Parent by reflecting God's love as we love one another, and grow to become one as a couple. The healthy steps outlined here will create the foundation for God's guidance and in the matching process and in our Blessed marriage. The process is not mystical or magical, but requires maturity, sincerity and investment on the part of each candidate and those supporting them. How can we best prepare for it?

Becoming My Best Self

The quality of your Blessed marriage relationship and the health of your future family life will depend greatly upon the strength of each partner's faith, the quality of your character and your understanding of and commitment to the ideals of the Blessing. It is important to prepare your heart and establish a strong personal foundation for the Blessing. Some important things you can do include:

Developing Good Character

It is important to enter the matching process with basic maturity and a sense of self-identity. Working on personal growth and character development is a smart way to prepare for a relationship, as is living a spiritually and physically healthy lifestyle.

Being Blessed in marriage does not automatically guarantee "happily ever after." Rev. Moon teaches that the first and most challenging thing to accomplish is to bring our own mind and body (ideals and actions) into harmony, and the next big challenge is for a man and woman to build a harmonious and lasting relationship. Our personal maturity, strength of character and capacity to love are the foundation for a healthy marriage.

What are your goals in life? Do you have a career path? Are you employed? Do you feel good about the person that you are? Are you comfortable and at ease in your relationships with others? Are you trustworthy? Reliable? Responsible? Are there difficulties or secrets in your past that burden you? While no one is expected to be "perfect" when you apply for the Blessing, it is important to consider these questions, and work on these areas in your life of faith. True and lasting love begins, not by finding the right person, but by being the right person.

Spiritual Preparation

A healthy spiritual life is the best foundation for a successful matching process. Here are some ideas for developing your spiritual life:

Inspire your spirit and deepen your relationship with God, by celebrating at Worship Service each Sunday. In addition to prayer and traditional conditions of devotion, we encourage creative conditions that address your real situation and relationships.

Empower your life and relationships by making a point to always learn something new. Start by deepening your understanding of the Divine Principle as your foundation, to develop into the person our Heavenly Parent intended you to be. Building upon this, create a lifestyle that encourages personal maturity, healthy relationships, and fosters spiritual growth.

Connect to your family and community. Communicating with your parents and family is vital during this time. Your local church ministry is a great place to connect and develop your spiritual life.

Contribute your talents and passions. By tithing and sharing your gifts as a volunteer, you give God the chance to work through you to touch the lives of others. You can mentor young people, support youth or young adult ministry, serve the church and community or a cause that you believe in.

Share the teachings of the Unification faith and the value of the Blessing, and practice making them a part of your daily life.

Establishing Spiritual Conditions

The Divine Principle reveals how the great figures in the history of God's providence expressed their devotion and accomplished God's will through offerings, tests and trials, and other conditions of sincerity that demonstrated and deepened their faith. Each religious tradition encourages specific offerings of faith such as prayer, fasting, service, study of God's word, and other forms of devotion. The Unification tradition embraces all of these, with particular emphasis on activities that enrich, deepen and develop your faith and character. Consult with your mentors or pastor to develop a plan for your spiritual growth that means something to you.

In addition to prayer or other traditional conditions of devotion, we encourage creative conditions that can develop your character and improve your relationships. Spiritual conditions together with practical conditions of sincerity and service are a powerful combination.

The Process to Become a Candidate for the Matching

The process outlined below is in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the international BFD. Until the application process has been completed, you are considered an **Applicant** and should not be introduced to someone, nor should you be pursuing any specific match. When the application process is complete, you become a **Candidate** and will be eligible to be introduced to another qualified candidate.

A common question for those preparing for the matching process is, "How can I know when I am ready?" The most important preparation is internal: faith, motivation, maturity and capacity to love. The matching process is your gateway to the conjugal realm of heart, where love becomes exclusive, and grows to be deeply trusting. You should enter this realm with a sense of your own identity and value, and the capacity to love and relate well with others. Faith in God and True Parents is of course important, but each candidate may express this in unique and different ways. Some critical questions to ask yourself:

- What is my motivation to be matched? Am I focused simply on finding someone to love me, or someone I can truly love and make happy?
- How deeply do I understand the unique meaning and value of the Blessing? Is it just finding someone to love and committing to be together forever, or is there more to it?
- How comfortable am I communicating with and caring for others?
- Who am I? What are my own goals and plans for the future? Am I looking for someone to "complete me?" What if my spouse's plans are different from my own?
- What do I expect from a spouse? What do I have to offer?

It may not ever be possible to feel truly ready. However, there are some things we suggest you reflect upon:

- a sense of your own identity and self-worth
- your own social skills
- self-control and the maturity to put others before yourself when needed
- life goals and a career path
- a fundamental faith in God and the ideal of the Blessing

Important Pre-Qualifications

Fortunately, there are several practical ways to gauge whether you are ready and when it is time to begin. There are five important pre-qualifications to become a candidate to enter the matching process:

1. Membership

You should be a member in good standing for at least one year as demonstrated by regular attendance to Sunday Service or other church programs, and tithing and volunteering regularly.

Friends and associates who believe in the ideals of the Blessing and fulfill the remaining four qualifications are also welcome to become matching candidates.

2. Minimum Age

You should be at least 20 years of age and legally single before beginning the matching process. For many that is too early, and we do not encourage that you rush. Choosing a lifetime partner for Blessed marriage is perhaps the most important decision of your life. The more mature, self-aware and faithful each candidate is, the more solid and satisfactory the matching process will be.

3. Divine Principle Education

Candidates for the matching should have a good understanding of the Divine Principle and its application, as well as the importance of spiritual life. It is recommended that candidates be familiar with the contents of the *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, and agree with the principles of *The Family Pledge*. Currently, some ways to accomplish this education are:

- Watch the entire Divine Principle on DVD/video, and discuss it with a spiritual mentor, pastor or small group.
- Read the *Exposition of the Divine Principle* and demonstrate comprehension with a spiritual mentor or pastor.
- Work with your pastor and ministry team to organize a workshop or study group that covers and discusses the entire Principle.
- Participate in a complete *Original Substance of Divine Principle* workshop.
- Participation in any program that includes a complete study of the Divine Principle can also accomplish this.

To organize one of these programs, or for additional ideas, contact your local pastor or ministry team.

4. Blessing Education

The international standard is completion of a Blessing Workshop within two years prior to the Blessing. In the USA, three levels of Blessing education have been developed:

Level 1: Two Becoming One- an introduction to the ideals of the Marriage Blessing that is part of basic membership education. Young people 16 or older may also participate in the Level 1 "Discovering My True Self" workshop, which focuses on personal growth, becoming a marriageable person, and the meaning of the Blessing.

Level 2: Becoming an Ideal Partner- for those preparing to enter the matching process.

Level 3: Start Smart- Growing as a Couple- for engaged couples.

Level 2 is required to enter the matching process. Level 3 is required for all matched couples before the Blessing.

5. Purity

A minimum of one year of sexual abstinence is required

Becoming a Candidate

In addition to these pre-qualifications, there are several important steps for you to take to become a qualified candidate. Completing these also demonstrates your readiness to enter the matching process.

Select a Matching Advisor

Matching Advisors are trained volunteers, certified by the National BFD, who can guide candidates and their supporters through the matching process, assist in searching for matching candidates, support candidate communication and help if things become complicated or unclear. Identify a Matching Advisor you would like to help you, and contact them to confirm whether they are available to work with you. This is the beginning of a relationship that is important to your matching process, one that should be based on honest communication and trust. The role and value of the Matching Advisor is explained in detail in Appendix 1, as well as how to find and contact them.

Complete the Online Matching Application

The application for matching and Blessing is completed entirely online, and can be found at www.familyfed.org/bfd. The application process consists of three steps:

Step 1: All applicants should complete the online application to qualify as a candidate before beginning the matching process. This will require uploading several support documents, including:

- Letters of recommendation from your local pastor and a sponsor
- The signature page from your purity Interview
- Good-quality candidate photos
- Proof of age and nationality
- Health report and medical exams
- Certificate of completing a Level 2 Blessing workshop

In addition, your application includes several important personal questions that will become the basis of your candidate profile. This will allow other candidates or their matching advisors to understand who you are. Be sure to answer these thoughtfully. Once your application is complete, download a PDF copy and send it to your matching advisor.

Step 2: After concluding a match, candidates need to upload their matching report and a couple photo, and update their online application information as needed.

Step 3: At the time of the Blessing, as long as all information has been previously submitted, candidates simply need to register for the event, in addition to completing a 7-day fast and submitting their Blessing fee.

Complete Your Purity Interview

Set up an appointment for your Purity Interview with a pastor trained for this or their qualified representative. This interview is designed to help you leave your past completely behind you, receive the forgiveness and grace of God and True Parents and enter the Blessing with a renewed and pure heart. Your Blessing is a serious commitment and a new beginning, and should not begin with secrets. Your interviewer will receive your confession on behalf of God and True Parents. The content of your confession will remain confidential with your interviewer. Only the 3rd page of signatures will be included in your application. Full disclosure of past problems is important for your personal renewal and purity of heart, assuring the best possible condition for a healthy marriage. After this repentance and renewal, establishing a mutually trusting relationship with your future spouse is a solid foundation for the Blessing.

The purpose of the interview and confession is to allow each of us to completely separate from our unprincipled and fallen past. Honest confession removes the basis for Satan to accuse us and allows us to receive the forgiveness that True Parents offer. Then we can move forward in recreating God's ideal in our lives. Hiding one's past because of shame, pride or fear of condemnation blocks us from experiencing liberation and renewal, and allows past problems to continue their influence in our lives. Although God already knows our past in detail, and was present throughout, He can only forgive and absolve what we offer to Him honestly and sincerely.

Everything should be reported honestly to God and True Parents through the interview and confession. This includes all the unprincipled or immoral aspects of our past, such as sexual sins, misuse of love, criminal activity, addictions, hurtful behaviors, as outlined in the interview and confession form.

Develop Your Personal Matching Plan

One of the most important steps in preparing for the matching process is to make a Personal Matching Plan. Your matching advisor can help you with this, and you may wish to include your pastor or spiritual mentor in this planning process as well. Use the Worksheet in Appendix 2 for this. Your matching plan will help you accomplish these and other helpful steps:

Build Your Matching Team

An essential aspect of your matching plan is creating your support network. Consider carefully those whom you would like to help you in your search for your potential partner. These can include mentors, advocates, your local pastor, a family member and one or more Matching Advisors. If you work with more than one MA, be sure to identify which one will be the central point and coordinator of your matching process and team. Be sure to keep the process confidential among only those who have agreed to be part of your team..

An advocate is someone who knows you, who can network for you, recommend you to others, answer inquiries about you from matching advisors, or look for possible partners.

Clarify Roles and Relationships

The candidate, Matching Advisor and their team should discuss and clarify their relative roles and level of input in the matching process. The approach and roles will reflect the candidate's faith perspective and preferred approach. For example:

- Some candidates prefer to trust and receive their recommendation without input.
- Some candidates want to discuss and agree with a suggested candidate before their Matching Advisor contacts the other candidate's Matching Advisor.
- Some candidates have suggestions to offer for their Matching Advisor's consideration and investigation.
- Some candidates have a particular person in mind, and want their Matching Advisor to pursue that match on their behalf.
- If a candidate is already involved in a relationship and wishes to seek the Blessing with that person, it is important to report this honestly to a matching advisor and follow the matching process completely.

Each candidate needs to be clear about exactly how much they want to be involved at each stage of the process. Matching Advisors should encourage and respect their candidate's input, but not involve them where they don't want or need to be involved.

Agree Upon Preferences, Priorities and Strategies

Consider the candidate's preferences and priorities: age range, race, culture and nationality, language, faith, purity and level of experience, future plans, openness to special situations, etc.

Because each candidate is different, candidate plans will look very different.

Communication and unity of heart is a key, as is maintaining a clear vertical role for the Matching Advisor.

When considering character or nationality, matching opposites can be healthy. However, when it comes to purity, it may be best to match candidates with similar backgrounds and degrees of relationship experience. The more differences there are between two people's experience, the more potential for pain, hurt or mistrust there is. However, if two candidates do make such a match, there must be full disclosure between the Matching Advisors and the couple themselves. This is true regardless of what has been forgiven or absolved by True Parents' grace. There should be no secrets, hidden guilt or fears.

Work with Your Matching Advisor

Candidates should be honest and open with their Matching Advisor about their background, situation, plans and preferences. This will allow the MA to find the most qualified candidates to recommend. Full disclosure to a qualified advisor also ensures the vertical component that allows candidates to separate from self-centered motives, and creates the opportunity for God to guide their matching process. If candidates have any preferences, such as an international matching, or suggestion of someone they know, now is the time to report it to their matching advisor. We suggest that the candidate's input be encouraged throughout the process by presenting questions, examples of situations, and even potential candidates (anonymously) to clarify goals, priorities and preferences.

Important Issues to Consider

Some important questions that you should consider in developing your matching plan are:

1. What qualities are important to you in a potential match? Faith, life goals, level of education, character traits, etc.
2. What are the most important qualities to work on in order to prepare yourself to be a good spouse?
3. In considering a potential match, what are your "deal breakers"? (Things you are not willing to compromise on)
4. What methods will you use and who will be involved in finding potential candidates?
5. At what point and in what ways will you become involved in the process?

Before sitting down with your matching advisor, carefully review the "Matching Plan Worksheet in Appendix 2, to understand the process and its importance. Once again, we encourage you to include any mentors whom you trust in the planning process.

Develop a Set of Important Questions

Consider the questions you and your Matching Advisor want to ask a potential candidate regarding faith, expectations for the Blessing, degree of purity, future plans, etc., based upon the preferences and priorities you've developed. Be sensitive and respectful when asking delicate questions, but full disclosure between candidates is a must. Be prepared to honestly convey your own situation, and to get answers to any questions that are important to you. You may also wish to prepare questions to interview the other candidate as well. See Appendix 3 for some helpful questions you may want to use.

Develop a Personal Presentation

In order to complement your candidate profile you can prepare a brief autobiography, photo montage, or other creative expression of yourself, to share with a Matching Advisor and candidate who are seriously considering you as a candidate. This will help them to understand who you are.

Register on the Online Matching System

www.cheon-il-guk.org/matching.htm

The Online Matching System (OMS) is a service provided to the Blessed Family Department of the Family Federation for World Peace- USA. OMS works in conjunction with the USA BFD, and cooperates with all international Blessed Family Departments. It does not override the authority of the BFDs, but is simply a tool to facilitate the matching and Blessing of First Generation Unificationists according to their faith. Registering and completing the information on the OMS is not the same as completing the application process for the matching and Blessing. This needs to be done separately, with the support of a matching advisor, and must be completed before you can be a qualified candidate on the OMS.

The OMS is a secure web application that allows applicants to the Blessing to submit their application and create a profile. It facilitates candidates and their matching advisor in the search for a potential spouse. Matching Advisors working with First Generation candidates based upon the Family Matching Plan will search for potential matching possibilities and communicate with other MAs to find good recommendations. Once qualified, candidates are also able to read the answers to the profile questions of other candidates. They can offer suggestions or requests to their MA about candidates that interest or inspire them. However, candidates cannot access the names, photos or contact information of other candidates directly, and cannot contact them through the OMS.

At this point, the OMS does not provide special access to parents who are members and are supporting their child as a candidate in the matching process, but parents can have the same access as their son or daughter, or can work with a certified Matching Advisor to search for potential matches for their son or daughter.

The OMS is a secure website that allows applicants for the matching and Blessing to submit their application and create a profile, by simply following the website's tutorial. OMS facilitates candidates and their matching advisors in the search for a potential spouse on a worldwide level.

Once you are qualified as a candidate, you will have access to other candidates' profile information. This does **not** include their photos, names or contact information, but it does allow you to learn about another candidate's character, heart and goals. If you are inspired by a particular profile, you can report to your matching advisor and they will contact that candidate's advisor on your behalf.

The OMS is a tool to facilitate the matching and Blessing of Unificationists according to their faith, and does not replace the role of matching advisors or the authority of the Blessed Family Ministry.

Applicants must complete all the requirements for the matching to be qualified as a candidate and then can use the OMS to search for a possible match.

It is not required for any individuals to register on OMS, but it is highly recommended. We do understand that in some parts of the world the non-availability of internet access may make it more difficult to do things through OMS.

After filling out all the required information the first time around, it is helpful to revisit your personal profile on a regular basis to update or rethink the information posted.

The quality of your profile and the way you answer the essay questions is very important! Others will be learning about who you are through your answers. So take your time, read your answers aloud, and ask for input from your matching team.

When your MA has found a potential match to suggest to you, they will **first** submit their suggestion to the USA Matching Committee for their review. When that is complete your MA will introduce the suggestion to you at the same time that the other candidate is hearing about you. You then have up to 21 days to decide if you want to get to know this person with the matching in mind.

HOW TO USE THE ONLINE MATCHING SYSTEM

Registration- Applicants can visit www.cheon-il-guk.org, click on "Register," select "Applicants and Candidates," enter an Email address and a password of your choice, and click on "Register" once again. Answer the security question and click "submit." A first-time registration page will appear. Complete the brief information there. Select your category and select 2 of the 4 "Matching Status" categories. Once you have completed the information, click on "Finish Registration." You will receive an automated Email confirming receipt of your registration, including instructions on how to access the site. Even though you receive these instructions, you will not be registered or able to access the site until the webmaster has confirmed that you are a member or associate of the Unification faith community. You will receive a second Email within 48 hours, confirming your registration and granting you access to the site.

Creating a Profile- A candidate profile conveys information about the goals, dreams, values, interests and character of a candidate. It is part of the online Blessing application and is also used for the Online Matching System. It can be helpful for Matching Advisors and other candidates seeking to understand more about you as a person. This profile should be completed by the candidate, not by someone acting on behalf of the candidate.

Go to www.cheon-il-guk.org and click on "Login." Select "Applicants and Candidates," and enter your Email address, ID and password. This will take you to your main candidate screen. Begin by clicking on and completing each of the information categories 1 through 6 listed across the lower portion of the screen. You do not have to complete everything at once. Take your time to present yourself well, and save your information each time you visit. Be sure to select "Upload Images" and upload good-quality photos of yourself- at least 1 "head shot," one full-length shot, and one family photo. If you have any problems creating your profile, contact the OMS webmaster at uc.matching@gmail.com.

If you have any siblings of the opposite gender who are also matching candidates, you can enter their registration ID numbers to prevent the OMS system from identifying them as a potential matching candidate for you.

Searching for Candidates- The OMS is designed as a search and communication tool for Matching Advisors. Qualified candidates can access the answers to profile questions of other candidates, but cannot see the names, photos or contact information of other candidates. You must have the support of at least one Matching Advisor to use the OMS. A list of certified MAs is available at the website.

Once you have completed all the required information and have been approved to be a candidate by your matching advisor, a button named "Potential Candidates" will be visible on your main page. If you wish, you can use this button to access the limited profile information of other candidates, and use this information to make suggestions or requests to your MA. When you click on this button, a list of all qualified candidates of the opposite gender who are within 10 years + or - of your will be displayed anonymously with basic information, identified by number. By clicking on a particular candidate's number, you can read their answers to profile questions, and if you wish, anonymously request a full version of the profile be made available to your matching advisor. Be aware that when you request a full profile of someone you will not be available to others.

For more details, visit www.cheon-il-guk.org, and view the video tutorial there. Written directions are available at the site to guide you every step of the way.

Practical and Financial Preparation

The Meaning of the Blessing Offering

Preparing the Blessing fee is an important expression of preparing internally for the matching and Blessing process. It is an offering to be made by each candidate, as a sincere and substantial condition to receive the Blessing, and all of its historical value for their family and lineage. This condition was established by our True Parents, on whose authority and foundation the Blessing is given. The amount has been set internationally for each nation or region of the world. Spiritually, these funds belong to True Parents. Traditionally, a small portion of the fee will be used to cover the costs of the actual Blessing event, and the remainder is used only for the education and support of Blessed Families. Contact your pastor for the current amount and additional information.

The Blessing Fee must be fully prepared before participating in the Blessing.

Other Expenses to Consider

Candidates should consider and prepare for the costs of travel, as well as expenses for formal Blessing attire, Blessing rings, and other accessories. If you are considering an

international match, be prepared to travel in order to meet personally and develop your relationship.

Taken together, these expenses add up to a large amount, but are still far less than the cost of the average wedding.

A beautiful way for a candidate to prepare their heart for the Blessing and to "save for their future spouse" is to establish a personal Blessing Fund as soon as they decide that the Marriage Blessing is their goal.

It is helpful to have a career path or gainful employment, and a personal financial security before considering Blessed Family life.

The Role and Responsibility of the Matching Advisor

1. When an applicant for the matching requests for you to be their Matching Advisor, consider your time and availability, make sure that you feel capable and comfortable working with them. Applicants may seek support from more than one MA, but should identify one MA to take the central role of coordinating the matching process and matching team. Once you accept the responsibility as that central point, or as part of the team, make sure your role is clear, and work cooperatively.
2. Every adult Unificationist who enters the matching process needs a matching advisor, unless they grew up in the church and their parents are taking that vertical role to support their matching. Therefore, please cooperate with other MAs in your community who are working with adult Unificationists to make sure that every applicant in your area has at least one MA to support them.
3. Meet with your applicant in person, if possible, or via Skype, Google Hangout or some other online video conferencing method if they live far away from you. At this meeting you learn more about each other and you can clarify the important steps of the preparation process. You may wish to have this meeting before deciding to become their MA.
4. Your first job is to guide the applicant to become a candidate by completing the online matching application. By reviewing their application with them, you will get to know your candidate better. Once their application is complete, make sure that they download and send you a PDF copy of their application.

You may need to guide a candidate through the application process and answer their questions, but you should not complete the application for them. You can never do more for your candidate than they do themselves in their preparation process. If they are completely unfamiliar with computers or the internet, help them identify a capable young person to assist them.

5. Assist your candidate to develop their personal matching plan, using the matching plan worksheet. You can have them fill it out themselves, then review and discuss it with them. Or you may prefer going through the worksheet with them. This will be their roadmap to the matching, and will help you understand them more deeply. You will understand their desired approach to the matching process, and your relative roles. Be sure to ask questions to encourage their input, and take notes.

6. Part of the matching plan is identifying those the candidate knows and trusts to support them in their matching process. Help your candidate assemble their support team and develop a clear communication process.

7. Be sure to ask your candidate if they have any particular person in mind as a potential match. If they do, it is important to find out if it is simply their own inspiration, if there is agreement from the other candidate or if there is some level of relationship already established.

8. They may wish to search profiles on the Online Matching System, which allows them limited, anonymous access to candidates in their age range, and share with you any that inspire them. You can present them with different candidates' situations (always anonymously at this stage) in order to understand their preferences.

9. In addition to the matching plan worksheet, you can go over the questions in appendix to learn more about your candidate and their history.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are one practical and one spiritual condition that you can make to prepare yourself for the matching process?

2. *"Unity through good communication is the most important condition we can make for God to work."* What does this statement mean to you? What are some things you can do to improve the communication between you and those in your life especially those on your matching team so that you are on the same page during your matching process?

3. How involved in your matching process do you think you want to be? Have you been able to express that to your Matching Advisor? Why or why not?
4. Write down your personal motivation for wanting to be matched and Blessed according to the Unificationist tradition.

THE MATCHING PROCESS

Once you are a qualified candidate, you can begin the process of looking for a potential partner with your matching advisor and team.

There are a variety of ways to approach the matching process, based upon each candidate's faith perspective, preferences and priorities, as expressed in their personal matching plan. Some candidates feel more comfortable having their matching advisor and support team to do the work of identifying and suggesting candidates. Others will have suggestions of their own, or will want to discuss each potential candidate anonymously with their MA before any outreach is made. Some candidates may have a particular person in mind. All of these can be a basis for a good match, but two principles are important:

- It is important to have someone representing a vertical, parental center to the matching process. The essence of the Blessing tradition is reversing the self-centered love that has undermined relationships, families, and society. Guidance and support from a Matching Advisor, pastor or spiritual mentor can provide that important vertical axis.
- Matching Advisors, pastors and mentors should encourage each candidate's input, and take care to respect their preferences and priorities, as expressed in their matching plan.
- No matter where a matching suggestion comes from, the candidates themselves are solely responsible for the final decision. Once a potential match is suggested, candidates must be given the time and opportunity to embrace it, and must have the freedom to say no. We recommend a minimum of seven months for the couple to develop their relationship and reach a decision, with a maximum of one year if the process has stalled.

Now your matching advisor and support team will search for appropriate and qualified candidates. This search process will be driven by the detailed personal matching plan that you developed. [Appendix 2] Centered upon God and True Parents, matching advisors will communicate with one another and prayerfully consider the most suitable suggestion for their candidate.

Sources for Potential Matches

Matching Advisor's Suggestion

Based upon their candidate's matching plan, and with the candidate's agreement, Matching Advisors will search for and suggest potential matches. the tools that MAs will use include:

Suggestions from the Matching Team- the MA will gather and consider suggestions and ideas from the candidate's matching team.

The Online Matching System (OMS) for First Generation candidates at

www.cheon-il-guk.org: This is a confidential and secure website where Matching Advisors can view and consider the full profiles of qualified candidates. They can then contact the MA of any candidate they would like to consider.

Regular MA Networking Meetings: MAs will meet virtually at least 4 times each year, introducing their candidates and viewing OMS profiles altogether online. MAs will follow up on any possible match by contacting that candidate's MA.

Introducing Candidates to the MA Network: Whenever a Matching Advisor has a newly qualified candidate, they should introduce them to the entire MA network. All certified MAs are part of a secure online meeting place at Yammer.com, and are also connected via group emails. MAs can use either or both of these tools to introduce new candidates. They may of course communicate with other MAs about their candidates at any time.

Candidate's Suggestion

Candidates who wish to take a more active role in the search for a potential partner can do any or all of the following:

Once they are registered as a qualified candidate on OMS, they will have access to limited profile information of other qualified candidates. They can view the answers to profile questions for other candidates in their age range, but cannot directly access names, pictures or personal information. When candidates have questions or inspirations about a profile they have read, they can share this with their matching advisor. Please refer to "How to Use the Online Matching System" in Appendix ?

Sometimes a candidate will meet someone that they are interested in. To maintain a vertical process it is best that they share that suggestion with their MA, who should prioritize and consider it together with them. It is important that a candidate offer their suggestions to their MA during the planning process rather than pursuing a particular relationship on their own. The Blessing provides a unique opportunity to reverse and restore the long tradition of self-centered love that has undermined relationships and undermined families. Offering your heart and inspiration vertically to your MA allows God to receive, bless and guide it. The more you pursue a relationship privately and personally, the less it becomes a strong foundation for the life-changing, love-renewing experience of the matching and Blessing.

The Matching Advisor can contact the other person's MA to make sure they are a qualified candidate, currently available and ready to consider a potential match. If they are not yet ready to begin, this discussion may help clarify and prepare the situation for both candidates. The qualification process is designed to assure that a candidate is prepared, and pursuing the matching and Blessing with the best of Intentions. It places God at the center of the process, and provides an opportunity for candidates to cleanse their personal and relationship past, and make a new beginning. It clarifies the personal, financial and relationship situation of each candidate, and therefore protects other potential matching partners. It is a screening process, assuring other candidates that this person is prepared and qualified to enter pursue the matching and Blessing. Establishing a private commitment with someone who has not been qualified through this process can lead to misunderstanding and hurt.

Matching advisors can encourage candidates' input in the search process by presenting questions, examples of situations, and even potential candidates (anonymously) to clarify their candidate's preferences.

Suggestions from Others

The Matching Team assembled as part of the candidate's matching plan may include spiritual mentors, local pastors, friends or other advocates for the candidate. They are part of a valuable network for matching suggestions. Their ideas, and any recommendations from others, should be reported to and coordinated by the main matching advisor.

For Candidates Who Prefer an International Match, the Online Matching System includes candidates from many countries around the world. If the candidate prefers a specific country or region, their MA can also contact that nation's BFD directly for recommendations.

"The best way to receive the Holy Blessing is through a cross-cultural marriage. These marriages contribute to the great task of transcending the barriers of race, culture, nationality, ethnicity, and religion, and to creating one family of humankind. In God's sight, skin color makes no difference. God does not recognize national borders. God does not stand behind the barriers of religion and culture."

True Father

When seeking an international match, candidates should consider the extra financial burden of international travel to meet and develop a relationship with a partner from overseas. While email and Skype communication are useful, candidates **must meet in person at least once** before finalizing any match. Cultural differences provide additional challenges to the process of becoming one as a couple. Legal and immigration issues, such as visas and eventual country of residence, must also be considered.

Candidates who joined with their parents and whose parents are supporting their matching process may have their profiles displayed in a separate section at the Parents Matching Convocations (PMCs) in the USA. At the PMC these parents meet and network together to learn about other candidates and consider potential matches. These are held several times each year in the USA. Candidates can submit their profiles to the Online Matching System to be shown at the PMC.

STEP TWO: Finding and Recommending a Specific Candidate

NOTE: Officially, someone who has not yet completed the application and interview process is identified as an “applicant,” while one who has completed this process is a “candidate.”

The Candidate’s Role and Responsibility

Based upon your matching plan, you can work with your Matching Advisor and team to search for candidates who may be a good match for you. Your MA will gather suggestions, communicate with the MAs of potential matching partners and suggest the best match they can find for you. You may be part of this process, considering several candidate situations anonymously, or offering your own suggestions. Or you may prefer to receive suggestions from your advisor first, and then take responsibility to consider them yourself. The goal is to identify the best potential match possible. All suggestions will be reviewed by the USA Matching committee before being finalized. Once a suggested candidate is agreed upon, you should pursue the matching with only that candidate.

Some Helpful Points to Consider

- You may wish to make spiritual conditions that are meaningful to you, to invite God’s guidance and support. These can include prayer, study of True Parents’ teachings on the matching and Blessing, or reading this matching handbook.
- Stay in good communication with your matching advisor. **Ask questions.** Make sure that your MA understands your desired level of involvement as the matching process develops.
- You are welcome to work with more than one Matching Advisor. If you do, make sure that they are aware of this, that they communicate and work cooperatively, and that there is a clear central point. If the relationship becomes strained or difficult, feel free to select a different matching advisor with whom you can work more effectively.
- Always be honest **with yourself, God, your matching advisor and team, and any potential match.**
- Your matching team can only do as much as you are doing. It is helpful for them to hear from you regularly. We recommend that you send your matching team a report once every week or two. This will help your team get to know you more deeply, and keep them aware of how your matching process is going. These regular reports will keep everyone active and accountable and will keep your matching on the front burner.
- Remember, if you have someone that you are thinking of as a potential partner, it is important to share this idea with your MA. They will prioritize it and take it seriously. They are also trained to help you consider all the qualifications carefully, and help identify any potential challenges or deal-breakers that you might not recognize at first.
- It is wise to only consider qualified candidates as potential matching partners. Make sure with your MA that any potential partner is a fully qualified candidate before you begin communicating with them with the matching in mind.
- If you have a more particular or complicated situation, such as a previous marriage or Blessing, children, or a particular physical or personal challenge, do not be discouraged. These are precisely the kinds of situations in which your MA can be of great assistance. He or she can look for potential candidates in a similar or complementary situation, and

find those who are open to or interested in candidates in your situation. Do not hesitate to be honest and open, as God has certainly prepared the right person for you. By working together and communicating regularly with your MA, Heaven can guide you and your team to find the right match for you.

- It is sometimes beneficial to match candidates who have similar relationship backgrounds. For example, it can be complicated for someone who has never been in a serious relationship to be matched with someone who has been married, divorced and has several children.
- What if you are in a relationship with someone, and would like to pursue the Blessing with that particular person? If you desire to be newly Blessed as an engaged couple, you should both qualify as candidates, maintain your purity and follow the recommended process for any and all couples seeking engagement.
- It is important that you respect the confidentiality of any candidate whom you are considering with your matching advisor, and keep all sensitive information private. You should **never discuss sensitive personal information about any candidate** learned in the matching process with anyone outside that process.
- It is your responsibility to know your own deal breakers and your capacity to embrace another person's different level of faith, or their physical or mental challenges. Report these honestly to your matching advisor, and make sure they are included in your matching plan.
- When a candidate is suggested to you, be sure to take at least three days to consider and pray about this suggestion. Don't make a quick or impulsive decision based upon your initial feelings, external appearance or your own concepts alone. Rather than someone who attracts you or makes you feel good, you may need someone who balances or complements your character.

- Be prepared that a candidate might decline to consider a match with you, and do not take it personally. There may be several reasons that have nothing to do with you or your qualifications.
- Remember, you should only pursue the matching with **one candidate at a time**. Once you agree upon a suggested match, you should not be “shopping,” comparing or choosing between two or more different people at once.
- We recommend that you take a minimum of seven months to get know each other, so that you will be able to take complete ownership of the final matching decision.

Candidates who joined with their parents and whose parents are supporting their matching process are not required to have a matching advisor. However, MAs can help your matching process in many ways. They can introduce your profile to the Online Matching System (OMS) for all adult Unificationists, so that many additional candidates unknown to your parents will be able to consider you. MAs are also able to introduce you to other MAs, who have additional candidates of your age that are not being supported by their parents. In case your suggested match is not being supported by their parents, any suggested match for them is reviewed and supported by the USA Matching Committee. An MA is trained to help you accomplish this.

The Role and Responsibility of Matching Advisors

Finding and recommending potential partners for your candidate is one of the most important roles of a matching advisor. Here are some of the essential steps for you to take.

1. Establish a Spiritual Foundation

Our desire is for God to guide the process of bringing a couple together that will bring joy to our Heavenly Parent. It is good to pray with your candidate and their support team, and be supportive of the spiritual conditions that the candidate makes to connect with God’s guidance.

2. Follow the Candidate’s Matching Plan

The approach you take to finding candidates should reflect not only your own preferences, but the plan and priorities of the candidate, clearly outlined in their personal matching plan.

Therefore, your strategy and approach will differ for each candidate you support:

- Some candidates prefer to trust and receive their MA’s suggestion, pursuing it with an open heart during the communication period
- Some candidates would like to consider and agree with the MA’s suggestion (anonymously) before the MA pursues it as a possibility
- Some candidates may want to suggest particular people to be considered along with other suggestions from their team
- Some candidates may want their MA to pursue one person in particular.

If a candidate has an inspiration or recommendation, MAs should take it seriously, and give it priority. They should make sure the recommendation is a qualified candidate and review the profiles together.

- If a candidate is already involved in a relationship with someone and wishes to seek the Blessing with that person, you can review both profiles to ensure that there are no obvious complications or problems that have been overlooked. Unless there is such a concern, MAs can assist such couples in qualifying as candidates, and guide them to follow the recommended process for all couples seeking engagement.

Make sure to review the plan and process, and the roles and responsibilities of each team member, with your candidate and team.

3. Establish a Communication and Reporting System

Decide with your candidate how often they will communicate with you and their matching team. Team members will also be more effective if given a regular schedule of connecting/reporting, particularly if they are actively searching for matching suggestions. The team should meet by conference call or video conference at least once a month to pray and to report their activities and progress.

The candidate can enhance the search process and the effectiveness of their support team by sending, regular reports to them, every 1 or 2 weeks. By updating the team on their situation and the progress of the search process, they encourage the team to support them, reminding them to “Keep me on the front burner.”

4. Matching advisors should consider potential candidates to suggest with several important characteristics in mind: level of faith and commitment, education, age, children, who can relocate, life goals, family histories, medical situations and personal preferences, according to their candidate’s matching plan.

5. When you encounter someone whom you believe could be a good match for your candidate, contact that person’s MA directly to learn the candidate’s situation more fully. Some important questions you will need to answer in this first encounter are:

- Is their candidate ready to enter the matching process?
- Is their candidate a fully qualified candidate, or still in the application process? Have they completed their purity interview?
- Are the two candidates at a similar level of purity and relationship experience? • Is their candidate currently talking with another candidate, or is this MA talking to another MA about someone for their candidate already?
- Is the MA willing to consider your candidate as a potential match for their candidate?

It is unwise to begin considering matching recommendation with an MA if their applicant is not yet a qualified candidate. The couple may be a great potential match, but the first step is to focus on helping each person become a qualified candidate.

It is important that you respect the confidentiality of any candidate whose advisor you communicate with, and keep all sensitive information private. You should **never discuss sensitive personal information about a candidate** learned in the matching process with anyone outside that process.

6. The “Suggested Questions for Learning about a Matching Candidate” in Appendix 3 are a helpful tool to guide your inquiry and help you ask sensitive but important questions like:

- Is your candidate in good physical health? Have they ever had an operation, serious condition or disease? Is there any reason there might be difficulty having a family?
- Is your candidate in good mental health? Have they ever been diagnosed with any psychological condition, emotional problem or learning disability? Is there any family history of mental illness or suicide? Has your candidate ever needed medication for depression?

7. Be prepared that an MA you ask to consider your candidate might say no. There may be several good reasons for this that reflect their candidate's situation, priorities and matching plan, and have nothing to do with the quality of your candidate.

8. If another MA contacts you, requesting that you consider a match between your candidate and theirs, be sure to treat it with respect and sincerity. Even if you are busy or already engaged in the process with another MA, **be sure to answer them**. Even if you need a week or two before you are free to respond fully, send them a brief acknowledgment **within three days** of receiving their inquiry. Their request may be full of their candidate's prayer and expectation, and failing to answer is disrespectful.

9. If you want to consider a match being suggested by a team member or another MA, begin by reviewing that candidate's profile to assess how closely they reflect your own candidate's plan and preferences.

10. You can ask the other MA for more information and photos. You should also prepare good quality photos that present your candidate well if you plan to introduce them. Also have them prepare a bio and perhaps their resume.

11. Matching Advisors and candidates should stay in good communication throughout the process. If questions arise MAs can always get their candidate's input by explaining and asking anonymous questions.

12. Gather information about the candidate from advocates or others who know them. You may choose to ask their pastor confidentially about the candidate's personality and church involvement. Other advocates, mentors, and members of the candidate's matching team will have their own avenues of information to learn about a prospective match. Your candidate may be interested in someone active in the church, or a social person, or a serious person, etc. Consider your candidate's criteria and preferences carefully.

13. You may wish to Google the potential candidate, or check out Facebook.

14. Both MAs may agree to do interviews with the other candidate by phone. This needs to be arranged through each candidate's MA and the candidates need to be prepared for it. MAs should prepare questions to ask your candidate's potential match like: Why do you feel ready to make the unconditional commitments required for marriage? What does the role of a husband or wife mean to you? What is your passion? What is your dream for your marriage? How would you handle conflict? How do you believe your life of faith should be lived? What are your educational plans? What are your professional or vocational plans? How do you want to raise your family?

MAs should always address candidates through their MA.

15. Your candidate may have a more particular or complicated matching situation, such as a previous marriage or Blessing, children, or a particular physical or personal challenge. These are precisely the kinds of situations in which MAs can be of great assistance, by seeking potential candidates in similar or complementary situations, or finding those who are open to and interested in candidates such as yours. You can encourage your candidate to be honest and open, and not to be discouraged, as God has certainly prepared the right person for them. By working together and communicating regularly with your candidate and with other MAs, and by learning what each candidate you represent is open to and interested in, Heaven can guide each candidate and their team to find the right match.

16. When two or more matching advisors agree that they have found a good potential match for their candidates, they will submit their suggestion to the USA Matching Committee for review and evaluation.

One Candidate at a Time

MAs may want to present more than one potential match's situation anonymously to their candidate, to help the candidate clarify priorities and preferences. But once MAs have a suggested match that has been reviewed by the USA Matching Committee, they should present only one such matching suggestion at a time for their candidate's full consideration. While the candidate's input should be encouraged throughout the process, candidates should not be "hedging their bets," or "shopping," comparing and choosing between two or more different people at once. MAs and the candidate's support team should take the parental, vertical role of considering various possibilities, identifying the best and making one suggestion at a time (or embracing the candidate's recommendation). The candidate has total ownership of the final decision. This allows each candidate to maintain an attitude of faith and seek God's guidance through a step-by-step process of 7 months or more. For this reason, the international matching guidelines stipulate "one candidate at a time" for serious consideration.

Candidates who joined with their parents and whose parents are supporting their matching process are not required to have an MA. Their parents retain the central role in guiding and supporting their matching process. Your role as an MA is to educate and advise the candidate and their parents. In addition, you can introduce a candidate's profile to the Online Matching System (OMS) for all adult Unificationists, so that many additional candidates unknown to their parents will be able to consider them. You can introduce them to other MAs, who have potential Unificationist candidates for them that are not being supported by their parents. You can also present any suggested match for them to the USA Matching Committee for review as needed.

Important Points to Consider When Recommending a Potential Partner

Make sure both MAs are clear and united in their recommendation. Once you give this suggestion to your candidate, you should not doubt or take it back. Be honest and thorough with each other from the start in order to reach a clear agreement on a good recommendation. Then, after review by the USA Matching Committee, give the prospective couple responsibility and ownership of their eventual decision, supporting them in the process as needed.

It is important to introduce a matching suggestion to both candidates at or near the same time. Coordinate with the other candidate's MA to offer your recommendations simultaneously. This will avoid confusion and prevent the possibility that one candidate would find out about the recommendation from a source other than their MA.

First impressions do matter. Be sure to present your recommendation wisely, at the best time and in the most positive light. Introduce your recommendation to your candidate in a private setting such as at home, with a prayerful attitude. The candidate should have the opportunity to receive it calmly, and to have time to focus and reflect. It can be stressful and distracting to present your suggestion at the time of school exams or during their lunch break at work. MAs should be sensitive, and not push or force the process, so as not to create a major disruption and distraction in your candidate's life. It may be encouraging however, to pique their curiosity in a hopeful way by letting them know that you have a candidate in mind for them to consider at the right time.

If an undisclosed problem comes out during the couples' communication, MAs should not end the process arbitrarily on their own. It is important for both matching teams to respect their candidates' opinions, especially if their hearts are already connected.

Candidates who joined with their parents and whose parents are supporting their matching process are not required to have an MA. Their parents retain the central role in guiding and supporting their matching process. Your role as an MA is to educate and advise the candidate and their parents. In addition, you can introduce a candidate's profile to the Online Matching System (OMS) for all adult Unificationists, so that many additional candidates unknown to their parents will be able to consider them. You can introduce them to other MAs, who have potential Unificationist candidates for them that are not being supported by their parents. You can also present any suggested match for them to the USA Matching Committee for review as needed.

The Role of the USA Matching Committee Matchcommittee@unification.org

When two or more matching advisors agree that they have found a good potential match for their candidates, they will submit their suggestion to the USA Matching Committee for review and evaluation. This will take place **before** the suggestion is presented to the candidates. When two candidates want to consider being matched to each other they should ask their MAs to submit this suggestion to the USA Matching Committee for review **before** beginning any discussion with the matching in mind.

The committee is composed of experienced matching advisors and operates under the supervision of the Blessed Family Department. It acts on behalf of True Parents to review suggestions and address any questions, concerns or potential challenges. These may include large differences in age, who will relocate, or vague aspects of a candidate's information. The committee's role is primarily to oversee and support the work of matching advisors, and to assure that the guidelines of the matching process are maintained. They do not approve matches. They do not decide whether a matching suggestion is a good idea or not, but they do assure that the candidates are qualified, and that the recommendation process is followed. To report a suggestion to the committee, MAs should take the following steps:

- A. Both matching advisors send a letter explaining the reasons for their recommending this match, with a copy of their candidate's online matching and Blessing application to Matchcommittee@unification.org. MAs need to also submit their own contact information in case questions arise. See Appendix 4 for the detailed reporting process.
- B. The committee will respond within 7 days, by completing their review and offering any suggestions or comments, or requesting further information. If more information is needed, MAs should cooperate as quickly as possible, in order to reach a conclusion with the committee within 2 weeks. The committee review process should take no more 7 – 21 days at the most.

C. When the Matching Committee has offered suggestions or has a concern, each MA may need to clarify their candidate's priorities and preferences to address this. They should ask these questions anonymously, discussing the issues but never revealing the identity of the potential matching partner at this point. Following the committee review, the MAs can present the recommendation directly to the candidates, and the candidates begin their 21-day introduction phase.

D. Both candidates and their matching teams will want to agree upon the process they will use and the expected time it will take. This will help avoid misunderstanding.

When both people being suggested for each other are candidates who joined with their parents and their parents are supporting their matching process, no committee review is required. The central role of parents in guiding the match is completely respected. However, if one or both of the candidates is not being guided by their parents, the committee review fulfills the church's parental role in supporting those candidates. When a candidate who is being guided by their parents is suggested for a candidate being supported by the church, the USA Matching Committee will review the suggested match, respecting the parents' role while assuring the qualification of each candidate.

STEP THREE: The Communication Phase: Building a Relationship, Reaching a Decision

The Candidates' Responsibility

In general, we require that a couple take at least seven months to meet, develop a relationship and take ownership of their commitment. Candidates should trust in God's guidance, and know that they are free to say yes or no at any time during this process. Even if a couple has each other in mind, or are already connected to one another, it is important to take these seven months to develop a God-centered relationship with the Blessing clearly in mind. This will help you establish a stronger foundation for your Blessing, and you will definitely learn more deeply about the person you intend to commit to. The seven months is meant to be divided as follows:

21-day Introduction Phase

Once you agree to consider a particular candidate, you should first decide whether you want to invest in building a relationship with them with the Blessing in mind. You can take the first 21 days to get to know them, and consider together if you will begin the communication and relationship-building phase. Take time to consider this prayerfully, and avoid making impulsive or external decisions. But feel free to decide not to pursue the match if either or both candidates feel it is not right.

With the guidance and support of the matching advisors, candidates are introduced to one another. The purpose of these 21 days is to learn enough about each other to decide whether or not to enter the communication phase and pursue a potential match. You are not committing to be matched at this point, but deciding whether or not to enter the 25-week communication phase.

- A candidate should only be introduced to one potential match at a time.
- Connecting from the inside first—While candidate photos are important to most MAs to gain an impression of the character of a potential match, many MAs prefer that the couple they are introducing not be given pictures of each other immediately, but be introduced to each other's character first. This can be accomplished by giving them each other's answers to prepared questions and a short autobiography and resume of the prospective match. If candidates reflect and show interest, more information can be shared, such as creative work that reflects the potential match's heart and character. Pictures can be shared after that, if there is still interest. If the candidate is open, MAs can encourage them to pray and think about it for three days while they coordinate with the other MA. The first meeting should be coordinated with the other MA only after the information is shared, each candidate has an opportunity to reflect and both are willing to proceed. If one of the candidates says no to the possibility, check for the clear reasons and report to the other MA honestly but sensitively so they can learn from the experience and have closure.
- During this stage, candidates exchange basic information about themselves, such as their faith, values, life goals, family background, hobbies and interests. It is important to remember that this is just an introduction period. Each candidate should maintain an open mind and a prayerful heart, trying to see the other from God's point of view.
- First impressions do matter. Be sure to prepare well for your first email, phone call and meeting, and put your best foot forward. You can read your email aloud or run it by a trusted member of your team before you send it. You might want to write down questions or topics to discuss before you get on the phone. Of course you will want to look your best when you first sit down together.
- Candidates should take care not to judge or dismiss one another quickly or externally. On the other hand, this is only an initial exploration, and each candidate should be careful not to open his/her heart prematurely.
- Meeting for the first time can be awkward. Careful preparation is important. Consider these steps to make your first meeting more comfortable:
 - You might feel more comfortable to have a friend or member of your matching team join you in this first meeting for support.
 - Too long of a first meeting can become stressful. If you are local, your first meeting can be over coffee or lunch. If you are traveling a long distance, it is better not to spend more than two or three days.
 - If one person has to travel, be sure to prepare appropriate accommodations.

- Be careful not to approach this meeting with too many expectations. Men and women are different, and have contrasting communication styles.
 - It can be helpful to plan activities that allow each candidate to express them-selves naturally and get to know the other. Some suggestions are: sightseeing, a service project, hiking, visiting a zoo, bowling, miniature golf, a dinner, board games and maybe a movie for a break.
 - It is best not to introduce your potential match to members of your church community at this early stage, as their curiosity and expectations can create unnecessary pressure for the two of you prior to any commitment.
- No matter how you feel after this first meeting, do not make a quick decision. Take time to pray, reflect and discuss with your MA about whether you wish to go forward or not.
 - By the end of this 21 day period the candidates should each let their matching advisor know what their decision is. If both candidates agree they would like to invest in and consider the possibility of being matched, they can begin the communication phase. If both candidates decide not to pursue this match, they should revisit their Matching Plan with their advisors, revise it based on what they have learned, and begin again when they are ready. However, when one person wants to continue but the other does not, the advisors need to carefully guide the situation, supporting both candidates and helping resolve any feelings of misunderstanding or rejection. When they are ready, MAs should help them begin once more from a renewed matching plan.
 - Sometimes after 21 days the candidates have not had a chance to meet in person, and are still undecided about whether or not to pursue a match. They may wish to take more time to make this decision. In this case the candidates should communicate with their MAs and each other, and decide a specific additional period to extend their introduction phase. They should be sure to meet in person if they have not yet done so, or at least meet through Skype or video-conferencing if a personal meeting is impossible. However, their decision whether or not to pursue a match should not be drawn out for an indeterminable period.

The Importance of Full Disclosure

When True Father matched the early couples, he interviewed each candidate personally, often for many hours, and followed up with couples after their matching. After matching one group of young couples, Father gave them money and sent them out to enjoy their evening and get to know each other. The next morning he gathered them, asking testimonies of what they did the night before. One young man reported, "I confessed all of my past to my fiancé." Father replied, "You shouldn't have. I already forgave you."

It is not necessary or appropriate to report every detail of our confessed past to a prospective partner. But there are issues which any potential partner has a right to know before accepting a match, which **must be disclosed to them honestly**. This includes anything that would affect their life, lineage or heart, such as previous marriages, children, physical or psychological problems, infertility, inheritable conditions, STDs, or any history of addiction or criminal behavior. These are outlined in the application process and health forms. Sensitive information about ourselves should neither be shared too quickly, before knowing a prospective partner at all, nor too late, when they might feel betrayed or misled. Any hidden secret will inevitably come out at some point, and will cause even greater pain when it does. Your MA can guide and support you in this process. If you have a specific problem or challenge, your MA will work to find prospective partners who are prepared to consider a situation such as yours.

25 week Communication Phase

Now that you have decided to build a relationship and pursue the matching, you will need enough time to consider one another for your eternal spouse and to decide if it is right. A recommended framework is a minimum of 25 weeks and a maximum of one year if the process becomes stalled.

At any time during the Communication Phase either candidate may decide not to continue and report that decision to their Matching Advisor. Candidates should have the freedom to say “no” at any point during this period, but should never reject, demean or criticize one another directly. The candidates should maintain an open and honest relationship with their MA, and communicate their concerns, questions or decisions to them.

Through this thoughtful, step-by-step approach, our goal is that all members involved benefit from this process, whether it ends in a matching or not. The following recommended steps will help make the communication phase most effective:

The Importance of Prayer and Spiritual Conditions

When candidates pray for each other on a daily basis, this places God at the center of their growing friendship. They may also want to read and share Father’s words with each other each day. These simple conditions begin to build a spiritual foundation for their relationship, and will impact their thoughts and feelings about each other and their relationship over time. During this time it is important that the MAs and mentors support the couple by praying for them and for the process.

The most effective conditions are those that are practical, relevant and involve things that are important to you.

Developing Communication

As you invest in developing your relationship, communication can proceed naturally at a pace that is comfortable for both of you. You can begin by asking questions regarding each other's family background and culture, and each of you can share your life stories. When you meet, you can plan mutually enjoyable activities that allow you to express yourselves and get to know one another comfortably. You should make your growing relationship a priority, and show that it is by your **actions**, by how you choose to spend your time with one another. **Small things do matter.**

Communicate consistently and often during this time. Try to meet in person as much as possible. Even if your prospective match lives a great distance from you, you should meet and spend time with each other at least once before deciding upon this match. Remember that discovery and relationship-building is a step-by-step process. There is no need to rush. Timing and support are very important to making a comfortable connection, getting an accurate understanding of each other and having a good outcome.

It is normal to go through uncomfortable or difficult experiences as you work to understand each other and build a relationship. At these times, candidates should not make quick judgments or withdraw without communicating. A helpful "rule of thumb" is the **Three-day Rule**: at each step along the way, whether an experience you have together makes you consider moving closer or stepping back, you should pray and reflect for three days before making any decision. It can be helpful to share your concern with your MA during this period, to help you think it through carefully.

It is important not to make quick or impulsive decisions based upon initial feelings, external appearance or your own concepts. True love grows out of respect, honesty, friendship, and establishing a genuine connection with someone. It is important to invest in making that connection. You may have no idea what treasures lie within the heart and mind of another person unless you dig for them. You may be looking for someone who attracts you or makes you feel good. But what you may need is someone who balances or complements your character, someone patient, faithful and sincere enough to stand by you in the ups and downs of raising a family and building a life. Give yourself enough time and be open to a process. Kind words, loving actions and time to build communication and trust will help genuine feelings grow.

Helpful Tools and Support for Your Growing Relationship

Hopefully your relationship will develop naturally. Sometimes however, romantic expectations or the basic differences between men and women can challenge your communication, creating misunderstanding or frustration: "He answers all my questions with one word!" "She doesn't make any sense!" "I don't know what to say!" Sensitivity, misunderstandings or quick judgments can undermine your developing relationship.

If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable or confused about something your prospective partner said or did, or having difficulty to communicate, talk with your MA, mentor or someone who knows that person. They may be able to help you understand the other candidate better, or help that person understand and become aware of how you feel. Be sure to consider and prepare translation if needed for an international or intercultural relationship.

If you need good ideas and methods for deepening your relationship, consider these tools, all of which can be found in the “Resources and Reference Materials” chapter of this handbook, and can be linked from the Blessed Family Department webpage. These relationship-building tools will help you learn more about each other, and understand your similarities and differences:

- Suggested Questions for Learning About a Matching Candidate [see Appendix 3]
- The Five Love Languages- Learn your partner’s language, it may be different than yours!
- The Flag Pages- a simple tool to understand your partner’s heart, and your own.
- Myers-Briggs Personality Survey- a professional research-based inventory identifying 16 basic personality types.
- Personal and couple assessments such as Couple Checkup, “FOCCUS”, “PREPARE”, or “READY”
- Or you can simply read and discuss Father’s Autobiography together

Monitor the Relationship Regularly

Reporting regularly about how you feel and how your relationship is going to your MA, mentor or pastor will help both prospective partners maintain a healthy and satisfying communication process. Be sure to communicate with your MA **at least once each month** to share how things are going, and confirm that you want to continue this relationship. It is good to schedule these regular reports in advance according to your schedule and theirs, to establish a consistent routine.

Important Questions to Consider

The “Suggested Questions for Learning About a Matching Candidate” in Appendix 3 will help you identify many of the most important questions to ask any potential partner. These include questions about plans and expectations for your careers, home and family, and any future or existing children. Where will you live? Who will be able to move? How will you merge your lives and careers? How will you take care of finances? What roles will you each have in your marriage?

There are more sensitive but important questions to ask about family and personal background, mental and physical health, marriages and divorces, and more. Some people find it easier to address sensitive or difficult questions through written communication.

It is important to explore your perspectives on faith and the Blessing, and commit to raise any children you have in an environment of true love, following the traditions of a Blessed Central Family, centered upon God and True Parents.

Growing Your Relationship Through Service

You can learn a lot about each other's characters when you get involved in a service project or volunteer together. If you live far apart from each other, you can each serve others in your own local areas, and share your experiences with each other.

Fidelity

During your communication process, think deeply about your commitment to maintain heartistic and sexual fidelity in your Blessed Marriage.

A Suggested Monthly Plan

You can creatively use some of the excellent relationship-building tools to help you deepen your relationship step-by-step in the communication period. For example:

- Months 1 and 2—Answer the suggested questions for candidates found in Appendix 3 of this handbook. Couples can discuss several questions each week.
- Month 3—Couples can fill out the Five Love Languages questionnaire and discuss what their love languages mean to each other. They can also go on line and complete Mark Gungor's Flag Pages, or one of several couple inventories (PREPARE, FOCCUS or RELATE). These are listed in the Resources and Reference Materials chapter of this handbook, and can be linked from the Blessed Family Department webpage.
- Months 4 and 5—Read and discuss the article "Selecting a Marriage Partner—29 Critical Matching Variables" by Neil Clark Warren, the founder of eharmony.com. This can be accessed through the "Matching Resources" menu under "Blessing and Matching" at the FFWPU-USA's BFD webpage.
- Maintain a consistent, growing spiritual life—It is helpful during this time for each partner to attend church and any available educational opportunities, such as workshops and small groups.

It is important that both candidates are serious about their tithing and that they are saving for their Blessing fee.

Reaching a Decision

At some time during the 25-week communication period candidates will usually make a decision. Candidates who are unsure, or need more involvement should be given the time they need to resolve any lingering questions or insecurities and own their final decision. When candidates come to the point of looking into each other's eyes, knowing that, "This is what we choose," and standing side-by-side, look forward to a future together with a clear commitment, they will be stronger when facing any future difficulty.

By the end of the entire seven months, candidates should report their decision to their advisor.

If the Answer is “Yes”

The couple should begin planning their Commitment Ceremony, but there is no need to rush it. Time is our friend, and allows things to grow, develop and mature. Delayed gratification is a good thing. This time period is part of a necessary Foundation of Faith. By waiting and planning the ceremony the couple learns more about each other and the importance of the commitment they are making.

If the Answer is “No”

Both candidates and their matching teams will need to go back to Part 1—their Personal Matching Plan. If both candidates say “no,” they should revisit their Matching Plan, update it based upon the lessons they have learned, and begin again once they are ready. If one candidate says “yes” and the other says “no,” the advisors can help determine the reasons, help the two candidates heal and learn from this experience, and begin once more from their matching plan when they are ready. In either case, candidates and their MAs need to allow time for healing, time for communication between candidates and MAs, time for evaluation and a new beginning. We suggest a minimum of one month of preparation for every three months the couple was in the communication period. A candidate should only begin again when they feel ready to. It is not unusual for some candidates to go through this process more than once.

What NOT to Do

- Do not share about any prospective match with people outside your matching team until the match is finalized and offered in a Commitment Ceremony.
- If one candidate dislikes something about the other, or finds them unattractive, they should not express this openly to the other, but share it honestly with their MA. **Do not demean, hurt or treat a prospective match insensitively.**
- These are some “red flags” that should not be ignored: when uncomfortable or negative feelings arise and continue; when someone exhibits secretive behavior or withdraws, or seems excessively pushy or controlling. Take time to investigate and question any of these behaviors. Some of these issues may not appear until 3-4 months into the communication process, even with someone you have known for years.
- It is important not to push either candidate into an early decision because the other wants to move forward or is uncomfortable. If candidates are proceeding at different speeds, it is better to explore each candidate’s feelings and communicate about them sensitively.

Physical Closeness: What is Appropriate?

From the Introduction Phase until a clear Commitment Ceremony you are getting to know each other and deciding if you have a future together. While there may be the hope of that future, this is the time to learn about yourself and each other, about your goals and aspirations. This relationship-building process is **not the same as dating**. As you come to know each other from the inside, and begin to establish trust, openness and respect, there should be no physical or sexual contact at all. The best sexual chemistry flows from internal chemistry.

NOTE: While you might send a thoughtful card or take your prospective match out for a meal, you should avoid giving personal gifts until there is a clear, established commitment to a lasting relationship.

While in the communication phase, your growing friendship should only be known by those guiding your matching process, and should not be shared with friends or on Facebook.

After the Commitment ceremony you are a matched couple. Your matching should be announced publicly, at church the following Sunday or at a similar community event. You are promised to each other, and you should develop the trust and closeness of a true brother and sister; become best friends. Premature physical intimacy can undermine or short-circuit the development of genuine emotional intimacy and trust. Continue to learn about each other and begin to make decisions together. Like any brother and sister, it is natural to hold hands, and greet each other with a warm hug. You should not kiss, lay down together or anything that begins the process of sexual stimulation. This will be deeper and more meaningful when it is based upon knowing and trusting each other, in the freedom of God's Blessing. Many young men take this opportunity to prepare an engagement ring as an expression of their commitment. Some young women prefer that such a memorable expression be delayed until it can be accompanied by their first kiss. You can discuss and decide this together as a couple.

After the Blessing Ceremony and the 40 day period of offering established by True Parents, your couple can begin your married life with a special 3-day ceremony if you feel ready to. One or both of you may want additional time to deepen your trust and emotional connection before beginning your sexual relationship with the 3-day ceremony. Be sure to discuss this together, and come to a shared understanding and clear plan. Please get the instructions for this holy ceremony from your local pastor during the 40 days following the Blessing. We also recommend that a couple be legally married first, in accordance with the legal and social norms of your country and culture during this 40 days.

After the 3-day Ceremony, you are completely free to develop an intimate, loving relationship in the realm of God's Blessing based upon the respect and trust you have developed.

Important Steps for Candidates Who Joined as Children, with Their Parents

If your parents are involved in your matching process, refer to the Family Matching Handbook. This is especially true when both candidates who are being considered for a match joined as children with their parents and both sets of parents are involved in the process. Yours is a family matching process and you will go through changing your lineage at the time of the Blessing. You will determine your parents' role in your matching process when creating your Family Matching Plan.

If your parents are not involved in your matching process you will want to find a Matching Advisor to act on your behalf in this process and follow the process outlined in this handbook. You can clarify your MA's role in your matching process when creating your Personal Matching Plan.

If your parents are supporting your matching process, and you or they are considering someone who has a Matching Advisor serving in that parental role, then the other candidate's MA will need to work closely together with your parents. The MA will want to make sure that your parents have access to all the information that any other MA would be able to see. At the same time the MA and your parents will need to ask and answer all of the questions that any two sets of parents would normally ask each other about their candidates. Your parents may want to interview the other candidate before they feel they can recommend them to you. The MA will need to be sure to help that happen.

In the case where one of the candidates is being supported by an MA rather than their own parents, the main difference from the Family Matching Process is that before the two candidates begin communicating with each other the matching suggestion will be reviewed by the USA Matching Committee, which oversees the work of all MAs. The MA will help prepare everything for both candidates for this review, and your parent's recommendation letter is perhaps the most important piece. The MA will continue to act in the parental role for the other candidate throughout the communication and the commitment phases of your growing relationship, much as parents would.

Commitment Ceremony

COMMITMENT PHASE Once a couple has made the decision to be matched, they should plan a personalized Commitment Ceremony, where they officially accept the match and make their eternal commitment to each other. At this point the couple has chosen one another and embraced a future together, and there should be no turning back.

The commitment ceremony is meant to be very special and holy. This is the first time they pledge to be together eternally. Candidates can discuss when and where to hold the ceremony. The couple can decide on the content of their ceremony and write their own vows. After the prayers and vows a Matching Report Form should be signed by each candidate, the local pastor and two witnesses. Report the match to your local pastor, submit a copy of the Matching Report Form to your local church, and upload it with a photo of your couple as part of your online Matching and Blessing Application.

This is your Commitment Ceremony. It is the first thing you work together to create. Please take the time to create a ceremony that reflects who you are and who you want to become. Create a ceremony that begins your walk through life together by welcoming God into the heart of your relationship. Your ceremony may be simple or ornate, the important thing is you have worked together to create it and you are sincere in your commitment to God and each other.

Some Basic Components you may want to consider:

Recommended Components:

1. Opening Prayer by a local church leader or matching advisor
2. A few words by a friend or someone in the parental position for each candidate
3. The candidates express themselves:
 - What the Blessing means to me
 - What this commitment means to me
 - Why my match is the best person for me.
 - Vows they have written, either individually or together
4. Exchange of gifts
5. Signing of the Matching Report Form
6. Closing prayer
7. Share celebratory meal or refreshments
8. Photos

Some other ideas that couples have included in their ceremony:

1. Offering a bow to True Parents, and between the candidates.
2. Guests: This can be very appropriate and inspiring to share with close friends or family.
3. Testimonies: It can be very moving to hear a testimony or two about each candidate from someone who knows and loves them, expressing hope and encouragement for the couple.
4. The candidates may choose the order and who says the prayers and give guidance to a speaker who may be saying a **few** words about the meaning of this day or the Blessing.
5. Gifts: These need to be agreed upon beforehand. The mentors or church representatives may give spiritual gifts to the couple like Holy Salt or a Holy Candle with matches. The candidates may exchange gifts with each other as well.
6. Other things that you may want to consider for your ceremony:
 - a. A banner.
 - b. A slide show of each person growing up, their meeting and growing together to reach this decision.
 - c. Music.
 - d. A reading of Father's words.

- e. Photos: This is a great chance to take photos of the couple.
- f. If there are quests from outside our church you may want to consider a brief introduction that puts our matching tradition in a historical context.

Reporting Your Match

During or after the commitment ceremony, the Matching Report Form should be signed by the two candidates, a witness for each candidate and the officiator, usually the local church leader. A copy of this form with a picture of the couple is uploaded to the Online Matching Application. The couple should keep the original. This match will be reported to the USA Matching Committee, and should be announced at the next Sunday Service of your local church.

Questions for Discussion

Candidates-

1. Do you have anyone in mind that you would like to consider for the matching process? Have you shared that your MA? Why or why not?
2. What is one spiritual condition you can make to invite God into your heart during your matching process?
3. In a perfect world what would be the ideal way for your MA to offer you a matching recommendation? Have you shared that with them? Why or why not?
4. Which tools do you feel comfortable using for networking to find a matching candidate?

BECOMING A COUPLE

Preparing for the Blessing

As an engaged couple, you are now a betrothed (promised) brother and sister. During this period you should build your relationship internally, refraining from physical or sexual intimacy until God has Blessed your relationship. It is appropriate to hold hands and exchange a warm embrace when greeting or parting, but you should abstain from anything that begins the sexual process until after the Blessing. Kissing on the lips, laying down or sleeping together, sexual touching, etc. are not appropriate at this time.

Some important ways to grow your relationship are:

- You can invite God into your growing love through a habit of prayer and of study.
- It will benefit your future together if you attend all available education especially any programs for couples.
- Plan to attend the first available Level 3 “Start Smart” Blessing Workshop for engaged couples. To fully participate in the couples’ education, it will have more meaning if you attend this together. During this program you will be asked to sign your “Ideal Year” commitment, to seek support any time challenges arise in your relationship.
- Connect to your local spiritual community. Maintain an active and serving life of faith, good character and a sincere attitude. Live for others: find creative ways for each of you to serve your community.
- Find ways to date each other even though you live in different areas. Let your fiancé know they are the most important person in your life. **LITTLE THINGS MATTER.** Communicate, email, phone, text, Skype, and visit. Find special terms of endearment for each other. Let your actions show you care. Loving actions create loving feelings. Each day ask yourself, “What did I do for my future spouse today?”
- Each candidate for the Blessing should complete a 7-day fast prior to being Blessed. This represents Jesus’ 40-day fast, and the biblical 40-day periods of separation from evil. It is a condition to separate us from our sinful past and fallen lineage. It can be more profound and meaningful for your engaged couple to make this offering together, fasting during the same period. To understand the meaning of this period and learn more about the internal process of the Blessing, please read the chapter entitled “The Change of Blood Lineage.”
- Practical and Financial Preparation

Consider and prepare for Blessing expenses **well in advance**. These may include:

1. The Blessing Fee- this offering was established by our True Parents, as a substantial condition for each candidate to receive the Blessing, and all of its historical value for their family and lineage. It is currently \$2,000 per candidate in the USA, \$1,500 when traveling to Korea for the Blessing.
2. Travel costs- you will need to prepare for travel either in the USA or internationally.
3. Clothing and accessories- for your wedding dress, Blessing suit, shoes, etc.
4. The Blessing ring- prices and information on how to order will be available at

www.familyfed.org/bfd.

5. Candidates should have completed their online matching application and accompanying documentation at the time of their matching. Now the only remaining paperwork is a simple registration for the Blessing itself.

6. It is important for candidates to connect with their pastor, or the person who conducted their purity interview, regarding any issues from the original interview, subsequent challenges that may have arisen, or any other internal issues they want to address before participating in the Blessing.

The “I-Deal” Year

Any relationship between a man and woman, no matter how loving and committed it may be, will face challenges and difficulties. God designed men and women as complementary opposites; we love differently, and experience love differently. Growing to understand your partner’s needs, though they are unlike your own, is essential to building a healthy marriage. But because of immaturity, emotional barriers or ancestral burdens, and the stress of life’s unexpected challenges, many relationships face times of crisis.

When painful times arise, the strength of your eternal commitment is of course important. But at the time of the Blessing, each couple will be asked to make a simpler, more practical commitment to an “I-deal Year.” If troubles arise and communication breaks down; if a couple cannot find the way to resolve their struggle, it is not acceptable to withdraw and avoid, drift into non-communication, or seek comfort in unhealthy ways. If you feel overwhelmed, it is important to report the situation honestly, not only to a friend, but also to a trusted mentor, counselor, or pastor. The Blessed Family Department is committed to providing a network of understanding, support, and guidance that can assist you confidentially and professionally.

A one-year process of counseling and mediation to support each couple’s effort to understand, communicate, and “deal” with their problems will be provided whenever they need. An investment of at least a year in a guided process will be a minimum requirement for each Blessed Couple.

Of course, a healthy spiritual life, honest and open communication, participation in community and regular relationship education can help ensure that your marriage never reaches a point of crisis. The Blessed Family Department’s commitment is to provide such opportunities, and we encourage each family to invest in ongoing education and support. When problems arise, don’t let them get so out of hand that there is no way back. If you can’t find the solution within yourselves, do not hesitate to seek help as soon as you need it.

THE BLESSING AND THE CHANGE OF BLOOD LINEAGE

The purpose of human life is to embody and reflect God's ideal of love. The channel for Divine love into our lives is the family. Our first ancestors' purpose was to realize an ideal family, fulfilling the Three Great Blessings (Genesis 1:28). Their selfish misuse of love brought about the Fall, and separated us from the Heavenly Parent's original love, life and lineage. True Parents, standing on a historical foundation of victory, have the authority to engraft all humankind into the original lineage of God. The Blessing is the process through which we become God's original sons and daughters. It consists of these steps:

A. Holy Wine Ceremony

As a result of the human fall, our families have been separated from the love and life that the Heavenly Parent intended. A false tradition of love has been inherited from generation to generation. In the Holy Wine Ceremony, we transition spiritually from this fallen lineage and tradition to that of True Parents.

This ceremony restores the order of God's original love, cleansing us from the original sin. It is performed in precisely the reverse order of the process of the fall. True Parents give the wine to the woman first, who then shares it with her future husband. The wine represents God's original blood lineage through True Parents. The condition to become the first Israel was keeping the law, and the condition to become the second Israel (Christianity) was baptism and communion. The Holy Wine ceremony connects all humankind to the ultimate, final "Israel," the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

B. The Blessing Ceremony

The Holy Blessing was traditionally officiated by Father and Mother Moon in their capacity as True Parents, or an officiating couple representing them. The officiators and their attendants "baptize" the couples with holy water, signifying their rebirth into God's lineage as a Blessed couple, leaving past sins behind. Through the vows, couples pledge to fulfill God's ideal of creation as an eternal husband and wife. They promise to establish a loving family, maintain fidelity, and to raise their children to remain pure before marriage and faithful in marriage. They also determine to love all people of the world as our Heavenly Parent does. The officiators extend their arms and pray for the couples, claiming them as renewed sons and daughters within the realm of God's original, eternal Blessing. Then True Parents proclaim the completion of the Blessing in front of God and the entire cosmos.

C. Chastening or Indemnity Ceremony

The fall took place through the corruption of sexual love, and the misuse of our sexual organs. Therefore Jacob could be victorious and blessed by God as “Israel” only after the angel struck the “hollow of his thigh,” knocking it out of joint. In the same way God required circumcision as the condition for Israel to become His people. These were conditions of indemnity to restore the misuse of our sexuality.

The betrayal of the fall initiated a history of resentment between men and women. We have all experienced, directly or indirectly, the pain of misused love, as have our ancestors. This simple ceremony provides an opportunity for each couple to indemnify our false sexual past and the historical abuse of each gender by the other. Each partner firmly strikes the other three times upon the buttocks, to repent for and resolve the history of sexual immorality and the misuse of our bodies. This ceremony is of course symbolic. Any abuse or violence between the couple whether emotional, verbal or physical, is a violation of the Blessing vows and not acceptable. Completing this ceremony opens the door to our Heavenly Parent’s forgiveness and grace. It is conducted shortly after the Blessing ceremony, as the foundation for the next step.

D. 40 day Separation Period

The number “40” is the Biblical period for separating from Satan, and holy people of many faiths have traditionally carried out 40 days of fasting, prayer and spiritual cleansing. In this tradition, abstaining from sexual intimacy during the first 40 days of marriage is meant to separate the newly Blessed Couple from the history of false and fallen love between men and women. It can also help heal any painful personal sexual past. The newly Blessed Couple offers their married life to God first, and focuses upon developing the inner aspects of marriage- love, trust, commitment and spiritual intimacy.

E. Three-day Ceremony of Renewal

The Fallen love relationship between Adam and Eve brought about the corruption of love, distorted the family ideal and established a false world centered upon Satan. Through this final ceremony, Blessed couples begin their conjugal life by reversing this tragic process. The couple first cleanses their bodies with the Holy Wine that now links them to God’s lineage. Then with a prayer of offering, they invite the Heavenly Parent to enter their most intimate love relationship. Through symbolic ceremonial steps, each partner will give rebirth to their spouse as an original man and woman. Their renewed conjugal life, with God’s Blessing and presence, should become one of total freedom, loving and serving one another in joyful spiritual and physical oneness.

Through his crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus brought spiritual salvation for humankind. The three-day ceremony makes physical salvation a reality by reestablishing the original ideal of love.

NOTE: The 3-day ceremony has profound significance. Couples should be sure to obtain the detailed instructions for this ceremony from their pastor during the separation period.

AFTER THE BLESSING

How to Care For and Protect Your Blessed Marriage

A. Inspire- your spiritual life: Read God's word daily, attend Sunday Service or small groups at least twice a month, and participate in a workshop or retreat once a year.

B. Empower- your couple through skills and education- attend small groups, men's breakfasts, sister's meetings, church gatherings of all kinds to fellowship. Attend any marriage enrichment programs. Foster all friendships in and out of the church arena with other couples and families. This promotes a marriage culture that is eroding in our society at large, and protects our Blessings. Note: If you do not have small groups in your area, share a dinner once a month with another family.

C. Connect- to your partner, family and community

- **Date night:** Once a month minimum go out on a date alone or with married friends. When you have children trade babysitting. It is healthy for your children to see you getting ready to go out together.
- **Family time:** Dedicate one night a week or one afternoon on the weekends as family time. Talk to each other, take a walk together or find something you enjoy together. This tradition is especially important when you have children to balance out the influences of this world. Regular family vacations, at least once a year, are important ways to "Love Life" and create eternal memories.
- **Mentoring:** Identify and develop a relationship with a mentor couple, and become a mentor couple to others.

D. Contribute your time, tithe and talent- By sharing your gifts as a volunteer and supporting the church financially, God can work through you to touch the lives of others. Make tithing a strong determination. This ancient tradition of giving back the first 10% of all God has blessed us with benefits us the most.

E. Share the tradition of a Blessed Family- Celebrate our beautiful traditions in your home. Among the most important Unification traditions are Hoon Dok Hae, An Shi Il, major holy days, and celebrating births and birthdays.

Protect Your Relationship: every couple should protect the health and happiness of their Blessed marriage by avoiding any private relationship with someone of the opposite sex, including internet relationships, or any behaviors that we cannot share openly and honestly with our spouse.

THE "I-DEAL" YEAR

Any relationship between a man and woman, no matter how loving, committed and deep it may be, will face challenges and difficulties. God designed men and women as complementary opposites; we love differently, and experience love differently. Of course, the best way to maintain a strong marriage is to live a healthy spiritual life as part of a supportive community. But it is normal and natural for any relationship to face times of greater challenge, or even crisis.

When such painful times arise, the strength of your eternal commitment is of course important. However when you feel overwhelmed, it is smart and healthy to get help. If you cannot find the way to resolve your struggle, it is not acceptable to simply withdraw and avoid, drift into non-communication, or seek comfort in unhealthy ways. It is important to report your situation honestly, not only to a friend, but also to a trusted mentor, counselor, or pastor. The Blessed Family Ministry is committed to providing a network of support and guidance that can assist you confidentially and professionally.

The "I-deal Year" is a commitment to invest at least one year in a guided and supported process to heal and renew. This is a minimum requirement for any Blessed Couple, before concluding that your marriage has no future.

THE DIVERSITY OF FIRST GENERATION MATCHING SITUATIONS

While the basic guidelines in this handbook apply to all First Generation adults, there are particular categories that require special guidance:

A. Single Unificationists: Due to the greater urgency and complexity of finding a Blessing partner, and the increased sense of maturity and ownership of those over 40, these candidates will be given a more active role in the process of searching for a prospective spouse. Rev. Moon recommends that candidates over 40 should take the primary responsibility for finding their eternal partner. The matching advisors and USA Matching Committee will respect the role of these older candidates as we review and support their matching process.

- For candidates who have children, building a healthy Blessed marriage is one of the best things you can do for their emotional well-being, and to demonstrate the meaning and value of the Blessing. It is important, however, to consider your children's feelings, and to gain their agreement with and support of your new relationship. This may require time, patience and sensitivity, but including your sons and daughters in your decision will also pave the way for them to choose the Blessing for themselves when the time is right.

- Candidates are welcome to bring someone they meet into the Unification faith, educate them in the DP and the meaning of the Blessing, and work with local pastors to help them become a qualified candidate. Then if both agree they can enter the matching process together with the Blessing in mind. Working with MAs, they can get to know each other while consciously putting God at the center of their new relationship through their 7 months communication period before the matching.

- Seeking an Interfaith Blessing: a potential partner does not necessarily have to convert to Unificationism in order to appreciate and receive the Blessing. A Unificationist candidate may choose to pursue a match with someone of another faith, or a conscientious, good-hearted person of character. There are Ambassadors for Peace and others associated with the Unification community who are interested in being matched and receiving the Blessing with a member of our faith. The two would want to study together the tenets of both faiths, meet the basic qualifications for the matching, and understand the meaning and value of the Blessing. When they enter the matching process, they can each work with a Matching Advisor as other candidates do. They can utilize the 7 months communication before their matching to discuss and work out how to cooperate and help each other experience God in their Blessed marriage. Some of the important things they will want to talk about are: holidays and traditions, practicing their faith individually and together, their respective roles in the family, and how to raise their children. All of these are best worked out before the matching.

- Quote from True Parents - Over 40, find your own- how to do this

Importance of Education; keeping purity;

[If in an intimate relationship, 2 choices: as engaged (purity period) or married couple]

B. Young Adults Raised in the Unification Faith: These are First Generation adults who entered our church as children, when their parents joined. While they still need every step in the process of renewing their lineage through the Blessing, their parents may take a central role in their matching process. When parents are involved in the matching, these candidates should still use the First Generation, but follow the process outlined in the Family Matching Handbook. If parents are not actively involved, candidates should seek the support of a Matching Advisor, and follow the guidelines in this handbook.

When parents join the Unification faith with their children, it is natural that they be involved in each child's matching process. Therefore, although their marriage partner will be an adult first generation Unificationist, the family process outlined in the Family Matching Handbook will apply. It is a parent-centered process with candidates' ownership of the final matching decision.

It takes great courage for a young person who joined as a child and grew up in a faith chosen by their parents, to make that faith their own and choose the path of the matching and Blessing for themselves. Parents and pastors alike should do everything in our power to support the efforts of these precious young people to achieve their vision of a God-centered family.

The good matching candidates for those whose parents joined when they were young are others who became members as children and grew up in our church, as well as single Unificationists who joined as adults. www.cheon-il-guk.org/matching.htm

The matching process for these candidates is the Family Matching process. The path to the Blessing, however, for these and all First Generation candidates, is the restoration and renewal process of changing the blood lineage. A brief outline of this process contained in this book is below. The Blessing Workshop explains the meaning of the Blessing and the change of blood lineage more deeply. Your pastors and spiritual mentors can guide and assist you through each step along the way.

C. Previously Married Couples: The Blessing gives married couples an opportunity to renew their married life centered upon God and True Parents. Though matching is not involved, most of the other requirements do apply. These can be profoundly important for couples to experience the deep significance and power of the Blessing. Blessing education, a pastoral interview and spiritual conditions together are helpful. A previously married couple's Blessing process includes the Holy Wine, Blessing and Indemnity ceremonies. They should also observe 40-days of sexual abstinence and the 3-day Ceremony after the Blessing. This engrafts their couple into God's lineage, and helps them renew their relationship and trust. Married couples should complete a simple application for couples at the online application site.

D. Divorced or previously Blessed Unificationists: The end of a marriage or Blessing is a painful, life-changing experience, for the couple and for any children that are involved. Time and care should be taken to heal any hurt, anger, or resentment. It is vital that any divorce or dissolved Blessing is legally documented and honestly reported. This will be carefully reviewed during the application process. When children are involved, their well-being comes first. The decision for a parent to be Blessed is a family decision, and should be embraced and supported by everyone. It may be easier for some candidates to

be Blessed with a partner who has had similar relationship experience.

E. Friends and Associates of the Unification Faith: The Blessing is more than an Unificationist ritual; it is a ceremony to realize one human family through engrafting people of all faiths and backgrounds into God's lineage. Many non-Unificationists embrace the ideals of the Blessing: building a God-centered family, uniting the entire human family under God, rejecting divorce and infidelity, and raising our children to inherit these ideals. Clergy from many faiths have participated in the Blessing as married couples or through receiving the matching. Many among the global movement of Ambassadors for Peace and other organizations founded by True Parents have done the same. The guidelines in this handbook are extremely helpful for anyone seeking the matching and Blessing. Each candidate is unique, and each situation needs to be addressed individually.

For those seeking a matching, an Unificationist mentor can assist them in selecting a matching advisor. Their matching advisor will help them prepare to become a candidate, develop a matching plan, connect them to the Online Matching System, and support them in finding an eternal partner.

INTERNATIONAL MATCHING

How to find and consider candidates living in other countries

“The best way to receive the Holy Blessing is through a cross-cultural marriage. These marriages contribute to the great task of transcending the barriers of race, culture, nationality, ethnicity, and religion, and to creating one family of humankind. In God’s sight, skin color makes no difference. God does not recognize national borders. God does not stand behind the barriers of religion and culture.”

True Father

True Father has challenged Blessed Families to transcend traditional barriers to build an original culture of heart, and encouraged international or cross-cultural matchings for our children. This path, however, is not for every candidate. Many candidates have attended True Parents’ matching expecting an international or interracial marriage, but found themselves engaged instead to someone from their own country or race.

Therefore, each candidate with their matching team should prayerfully consider whether an international matching is appropriate. The first and most important consideration is your heart and desire. If you want an international match for the right reasons, and is prepared to commit to it, consider it seriously. You may feel a special calling to marry someone from a developing country. MAs, if God is inspiring such a course, you can help them consider all of the implications or challenges they may face, but please be prepared to support them if they are truly aware and committed.

There are many countries to consider, both near and far. With webcams, Skype, and the growing era of international travel, the world is becoming truly one community. Others may hesitate because they simply don’t know how to find candidates. A variety of international networking methods are recommended in this chapter.

On the other hand, if you cannot fathom the possibility of an international match, and is truly unprepared to go beyond their comfort zone in this area, it is not helpful to push even though you believe it is the best course. You can discuss, educate or encourage, but you must consider and respect your candidate’s desires when making your matching plan. It is also possible to find a match for your candidate with someone of another race or nationality who lives within the same country or geographical area as your family.

To assist your family in considering an international match, here are some points to consider:

True Parents' Guidance

Almost everybody who was important in God's providence had to leave his own hometown. Jacob had to go away, and you, too, must go into enemy territory at one time or another. The best way would be to marry a person who represents your enemy. Those who marry interracially, especially white and black, are accomplishing this, and bringing together two extremes."

The Harvest Season for God's Providence, September 9, 1982

"The Unification Church should gather the races of all five colors and establish true brotherly love. The realm of brotherhood was shattered in Adam's family; thus, we should realize brotherly love. The marriage that established the satanic lineage took place due to the breakdown of true brother and sister relationships. We should thus realize the global blessing that transcends nation and race, where we connect life and lineage through love centering on God and True Parents, while standing on the absolute standard of brotherhood and sisterhood. This is the worldwide blessing project of the Unification Church."

Proclamation of the Realm of Liberation of Cosmic Unification for the Parents of Heaven and Earth—September 9, 1999

Benefits of International Matching

- The most important benefit of an international matching and Blessing is the harvest of heart that can result from it. True Father teaches that our environment and experience in the spiritual world is determined by the size of our heart and the quality of our love. He said that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven we should be able to truly love three nations other than our own. He has explained that the most beautiful, shining couples in the spiritual world are those who have developed the deepest hearts by loving each other beyond the most extreme differences. He has honored the path of international couples as unique and precious for this very reason.
- Cross-cultural marriage is God's holy instrument to heal the world's divisions and liberate the resentment of our ancestors. There is, no doubt, profound merit and meaning to be inherited from participating in this profound healing and restoration process.
- Children raised in such an international environment will be able to embrace the world, and all of its citizens more naturally and easily
- How glorious and enriching to develop an extended family and lineage that stretches around the globe and spans the divisions of nation, race and culture!

Important Points to Consider

- When establishing your Matching Plan, be very sure that your candidate agrees with, wants and is realistically prepared for an international match.
- Candidates must complete the Blessing application and interview process in their own church community before beginning the international matching process. Because international matching requires strong faith and deep commitment, completing the application process demonstrates that candidates are more prepared and serious. It also allows each nation's BFD to communicate with each other concerning the international match.
- Be sure you are financially prepared for at least one visit between candidates, and family members if possible, during the communication period, before deciding upon the match.
- Utilize the available and growing international resources and support, which includes international matching websites and Parents Matching Convocations in different countries. For additional support see the list of international BFDs in Appendix 5.

Potential Challenges to International Matching—and Recommendations

How do we find potential candidates?

One of the best ways to find candidates is to use the international matching website www.cheon-il-guk.org/matching.htm for all candidates. In addition, MAs can network themselves and receive suggestions through spiritual mentors, friends, leaders and members whom they know living in other countries.

International matching is a unique realm of faith, where we are creating an opportunity for God to work beyond our comprehension. Nevertheless, we recommend a period of time and communication for every potential couple, including international matchings. Candidates can communicate deeply through Skype and webcam when possible, and we strongly urge that candidates visit the other candidate at least once before deciding upon the match.

In addition, many international couples have found that a limitation in one form of communication can sharpen and sensitize other ways of understanding each other. If your candidate has the heart and desire, allowing them to pioneer and become self-reliant and strong is a wonderful thing. Just be sure that they have a realistic understanding of what to expect.

The Process of International Matching

Please follow the guidelines in the previous chapter, "The Matching Process," with special attention to the issues and concerns identified here. Matching Advisors can support you through the process. You must complete the Blessing Application process in your own church community before beginning. This will allow the BFDs and advisors in each nation to communicate with each other and support your matching process to its conclusion.

The following tools can assist in finding potential matches in other countries:

The Online Matching System (OMS) for First Generation Unificationists
www.cheon-il-guk.org/matching.htm

The Online Matching System (OMS) is a service provided to the Blessed Family Department of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification- USA. OMS works in conjunction with the BFD, and cooperates with all Blessed Family Departments. It does not override the authority of the BFDs, but is only a tool to facilitate the matching and blessing of First Generation Unificationists. This tool will be helpful for those candidates who joined as children along with their parents, who have the support and involvement of their parents in their matching.

The OMS is a secure web application that allows applicants to the Blessing to submit their application and create a profile. It facilitates candidates and their matching advisor in the search for a potential spouse. Matching Advisors working with First Generation Unificationists use the candidate information there to search for potential matching suggestions, and communicate with one another to find good recommendations. Candidates are able to read the answers to the profile questions of other candidates, and can offer suggestions or requests to their MA, but candidates cannot access the names, photos and contact information of other candidates, and cannot contact them through the OMS.

Matching Advisors and International Liaisons

Each nation and region is working to develop international liaisons that can help find potential candidates and communicate with candidate's matching advisors or the BFD in other nations. For international BFDs see Appendix 5?: Contact Information.

Questions to Consider with a Prospective International Partner

Be sure to consider and discuss the following issues with any potential international partner:

- Where will you live? Who will be the one to relocate?
- Carefully consider the differences in the two candidates' cultures such as different gender roles, parental expectations, and the tradition of extended families.
- Be sure you understand the particular challenges or limitations concerning when and where you can come together, according to the immigration laws of your countries.

- Consider what church and community support systems are available in the country where you plan to live. Is there a church or worship service? Is there a supportive community?
- Consider that there may be special concerns in certain countries, such as health, immunization, political or financial issues.

Matching Advisors

When considering an international match, feel free to consult with a certified matching advisor. Advisors can also assist and support you throughout the matching process. To find a Matching Advisor, check the available list at each matching website or at www.familyfed.org/bfd, or write to matching@unification.org.

Discussion Questions

Candidates-

1. What are the men/women in your life like? How could that affect your perception of the role of a husband/wife?
2. What aspects of your own cultural background are most important to you?
3. What are your reasons for wanting to be matched internationally?
4. What are some of the challenges you think you might face with an international match?

RESOURCES AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

Online and Networking Resources

- USA: *Blessed Family Ministry Website*- www.familyfed.org/bfd: news, upcoming events, matching resources and educational materials
- USA: *First Generation Online Matching System*- www.cheon-il-guk.org/matching.htm
- *Matching Advisers*- each nation and region will identify, train and certify first and second generation elders who, by spiritual gift, calling and/or experience, can support and assist parents and candidates in the matching process. To find a matching advisor, or find out how to become one, contact matching@unification.org.
- *Utilizing an Advocate*- a candidate can identify an elder, friend or spiritual mentor to represent them in the matching process. This advocate can recommend the candidate to others and serve as an intermediary for them to matching advisors.

Educational Support

- *Educating for True Love*/ Chapter 21 - HSA Books
- *First Comes Marriage* - Reva Seth - Through the advice from 300 arranged marriages, she shares the importance of knowing yourself and identifying what's central in building a lasting marriage.
- *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*- John M. Gottman. Based on his research with 700 couples John Gottman lays out a clear path how to build and maintain a happy marriage.
- *Five Love Languages of Love*- Gary Chapman: Identifying the different ways in which people express their love to one another and how to use that knowledge to build a lifelong relationship.
- *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* - Joshua Harris- Smart love looks beyond personal desire and the gratification of the moment. A "how to" for preparing oneself for marriage from God's perspective.
- *Tale of Two Brains* - Mark Gungor (DVD): Explores the difference between Man and woman in an honest and hilarious way.
- *Can We Dance?* - "Learning the steps for a Fulfilling Relationship", by Susanne M. Alexander. Learning how to prepare for and be in a relationship that is founded on character development and personal growth.

- *The Meaning of the Blessing- True Father (BFM-resources-matching)-website*
- *Cheon-Hwa-Dang: House of Heaven's Harmony* – Hyung Jin Moon Wonderful internal guidance on developing character and internal discipline. HSA-Books
- *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families* – Stephen Covey: Applies the seven habits to the building healthy and successful marriages and families
- *Lady in Waiting* – Jones/Kendall (biblically-based marriage preparation/comes with accompanying workbook. A book about finding God's biblically based marriage etc.
- *Top Ten Things to Think About for Matching Candidates* - Jim Stephens (BFM-resources-matching) website
- *29 Critical Matching Variables* - Neal Clark Warren (BFM.-resources-matching) website
- *How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk*- John Van Epp: healthy ways to prepare yourself; learning to ask the right questions of a potential partner; understanding how to evaluate character, compatibility, relationship skills and patterns developed from family and relationships.
- *Conscious Dating*- David Steele: becoming clear about who you are, your life goals and what you want in a committed relationship, as the basis for an intentional search for life partner.
- *The Truth About Love*- Pat Love: understanding the stages that every new relationship goes through, the highs, the lows, and how to make it last forever.

Building Relationships / During the Matching Process

- *Flag Pages- Mark Gungor* - Helpful tool for young people to learn about themselves in preparation for matching. (BFM- resources-matching) website
- *Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts* - Les & Leslie Parrot- Points to prepare yourself for being a qualified candidate. Asks the reader 7 important questions, through answering, the reader can gain valuable skills that help build a successful marriage.
- *Pure Gold – Encouraging Character Qualities in Marriage*, Susanne M. Alexander. Learn how to understand and practice positive character traits in your marriage. Great for before and after the matching and Blessing.
- *All in One Marriage Preparation* – Susanne M. Alexander. A wonderful compilation of articles on the topic of preparing for marriage collected from the best marriage educators in America.

- *Boy Meets Girl*, by Joshua Harris. Practical guidance on how to switch from “no dating’ to building a God centered relationship that develops into commitment and marriage.
- *Myers/ Briggs - Personality Types at a Glance* - (BFM.-resources - Matching) *website*
- *Couples Surveys*- A helpful way to learn about myself and my prospective partner: values, upbringing, communication styles, attitude toward faith, children, money, etc. “Prepare/Enrich” www.prepare-enrich.com; ”Foccus” www.foccusinc.com; “Ready/Relate” www.relate-institute.org
- *Five Love Languages Questionnaires* - Gary Chapman -Find out how you and your fiancé differ in giving and receiving love. (BFM – resources-Matching) *website*
- *Questions to Ask Potential Matches* - Marjorie Buessing . Great conversation starters and questions to ask potential matches. (BFM- resources-Matching) *website*

Websites

- Blessed Family Ministry website: www.familyfed.org/bfd
- Online Matching System for First Generation: <http://www.cheon-il-guk.org/>
- BFA website: www.blessedfamilies.org
- www.smartmarriages.com
- www.twoofus.org
- For Better and For Ever: www.marriagepreparation.com
- www.themarriagelibrary.com/archives/.htm
- Drrobertepstein.com: *love and relationship resources from Harvard professor and former Psychology Today editor Dr. Robert Epstein*
- Lisakifttherapy.com: *The Tool Box –Online Pre-Marital Education for Engaged Couples*
- Lesandleslie.com: *SYMBIS Pre-Marital Assessment; Love Talk Indicator*

APPENDIX 1

The Role and Responsibilities of Matching Advisors for First Generation

What is a Matching Advisor and What do they Do?

They know the process, the best practices, and the available tools for matching.

- A. They **thoroughly** understand the international guidelines and procedures for the matching process as outlined in The Unificationist Matching Handbook.
- B. They know the matching and Marriage Blessing application process, where to find the forms, and how to submit them.
- C. They have been trained and certified by the National Blessed Family Ministry, and participate in advanced training at least two times per year.
- D. They know how to use the First Generation Online Matching System and visit it regularly.
- E. Some matching advisors serve a particular community or geographic area, while others specialize in particular categories of 1st generation candidates, such as those over 40.
- F. Matching advisors are volunteers. They feel called to this work. They usually have specific hours or days they can offer their time. Their availability should be clearly defined and genuinely respected by each candidate and family.
- G. Your Matching Advisor should be someone who is trustworthy, a good listener and an effective communicator. Someone who can support good communication and unity within your family and with another family. An MA is a connector who knows people in different categories and situations.

Matching Advisors serve as guides through the Process

- A. They educate and encourage applicants and candidates about the preparation for and process of the matching. They may also host educational programs or small groups and distribute Handbooks.
- B. They assist applicants in the process of becoming a candidate, develop a deep understanding of who they are and establish a relationship of trust with them.
- C. They support the candidate in developing a matching support team and a matching plan by using the Matching Plan Worksheet in Appendix 1.
- D. They help candidates in the process of finding a potential match by researching any suggestions the candidate may have, searching the OMS, using the Matching Advisor network and meetings and working with the candidate's matching team. **Note:** It is important the each candidate is represented by their own MA. One MA should not represent both candidates of a suggested match but should find another MA to represent one of the candidates.

- E. They will present the suggested match to the USA Matching Committee. (Appendix 5?)
- F. They will introduce and guide the candidates through their initial meeting and three week introduction phase.
- G. They support candidates during their 25 week communication process.
- H. If the couple chooses to be matched upon completion of their communication phase, the matching advisor will support them in planning and holding a commitment ceremony. They will be sure that the match is recorded by the signing of the Matching Report Form, and with an announcement at church.
- I. If the couple chooses not to be matched at any point during the introduction or communication phase, matching advisors will help each candidate learn from the experience, heal, and when the time is right begin again by making a new matching plan.
- J. Matching Advisors will see that matched couples continue their education together and attend a Level 3 Blessing Workshop for couples. They will educate candidates and couples about the “Ideal Year” commitment.

Some characteristics of a good matching advisor.

- A. One who feels called by God to this mission
- B. A Good Listener
- C. Trustworthy
- D. Connector/Knows people and situations
- E. Respects confidentiality
- F. Effective communicator
- G. Willing to work within the guidelines, with the BFM and with other MAs
- H. Ideally – Blessed successfully

As a candidate, you may want to choose a Matching Advisor whom you can trust and be honest with, and who can represent you well. Once you have identified someone you feel you can work with, make sure that they are available, willing and able to be your MA before you begin. Your Matching Advisor can be a valued member of your matching team.

APPENDIX 2

Personal Matching Plan Worksheet for Adult Unificationists

This form will help you develop your plan and approach to your matching process and the search for your lifetime partner. You can either fill it out with your main Matching Advisor (MA) initially, or you may wish to fill it out first yourself, perhaps with the support of your pastor or spiritual mentor, and then flesh it out with your MA to create a unified plan. MAs can also go over it separately first, to clarify their approach and perspectives on their candidate's matching plan. Not all parts of the worksheet apply to the MA but by doing this new ideas and approaches can develop through listening to each other.

An effective planning process depends upon honest and open communication between the candidate, the MA, and any other mentor or advocate supporting this matching plan.

1. Who will be a part of your matching team? What role will they each play? When and how will they be involved? (Below is a list of possible team members you may want to consider. Each person you choose to help in your process should be personally invited to help and given the parameters of their responsibility)

- Candidate:
- Family member(s):
- Mentor:
- Support committee:
- Matching Advisor(s):
- Advocates:
- BFD Representative:
- Local pastors:
- District Pastor and/or their interview representative:

2. What process will you use to initiate matching discussions with another candidate's Matching Advisor or International BFD Representative?

3. Before you begin looking for the "right person," it is important to consider your own life goals, core values and the type of marriage you envision. We encourage each candidate to reflect upon and answer the following 6 questions to the best of your ability. Discuss these with your spiritual mentors and any members of your support team who can help you look at these more deeply.

A. What kind of life are you planning for? Do you plan to remain a private person? Will you be active in your church or community? Are you passionate about particular hobbies or leisure activities? What will be your work-life balance? Do you plan to travel and be mobile in the coming years? How might your school or career plans affect your marriage and family plans? How soon would you anticipate settling down & having children? How important is having children to you? Just 1 or 2 kids, or will having and raising a family be your focus?

B. What kind of marriage relationship fits into the life you anticipated above? Is it private? Public? Spiritually-based? Religious? Strongly Unificationist? Two professionals? Two career-focused people or one home & family-focused? Of course these may be flexible based upon the person you meet and commit to, but consider what your preferences might be.

C. What qualities are most important in the person who will help you create the relationship you described above? Is he/she religious- more, less or the same as you? A strong Unificationist, or simply someone who shares your basic values? Is he/she outgoing, verbal and expressive? Is he/she a quiet, supportive type of person? Is he/she strong, disciplined and accomplished? Is he/she career-oriented or more relationship/family-centered? What kind of family does he/she come from? What 3 character traits do you believe would inspire you the most in a spouse?

D. Who are you? What are the most important core values by which you will live your life? What character strengths do you bring to a relationship? What areas of yourself do you think need improvement that may need your partner's understanding and support. What is important for your partner to understand about you?

E. Do you have any deal breakers or absolute requirements? Consider what past relationship experience you are comfortable with in a partner, and any preferences concerning language, location, race, nationality, faith, physical appearance, or any challenges or complications you are comfortable with and open to in a partner.

F. If you had a previous matching effort, marriage or Blessing experience, what lessons did you learn that can help you adjust and approach things more effectively this time?

4. Are there important questions that you need or want to know about any potential match from the very beginning? (You can compile a list with the support of your MA and team. Refer to Appendix 3 in the Unificationist Matching Handbook for ideas.)

5. How will we find potential candidates?

Suggestions from the candidate

Suggestions from the MA

Online Matching System

Matching Advisor Networking Meetings (Virtual or In-person)

Suggestions from family and friends

Suggestions from other Matching Advisors, advocates, pastors or others

Blessing workshops, DP workshops, LLM, Galas, Service Projects, other church activities

6. When there is a suggested candidate, what do we do?

- Who does a suggestion go to first?

- How do we investigate or screen a suggested candidate?

- Matching Advisor and/or advocates will check using their resources

- Check with the other candidate's Matching Advisor, local church leaders and advocates

- Consult your matching plan and list of important questions and deal breakers

- What do you want your MA or other team members **NOT** to do?

7. When and how does the candidate become involved?

- We suggest that the candidate's input be encouraged throughout the process by presenting questions, examples of situations, and even potential candidates (anonymously) to clarify goals, priorities and preferences. If specific candidates are introduced at this early stage, be sure to present only the internal profile information, and not the photos, identity or specifics.
- We suggest timing be carefully considered, and that the process not be rushed. Waiting a little longer for the right time and clear understanding is always better.

Does the candidate want to wait until the MA can fully recommend another candidate, and the suggestion has been approved by the USA Matching Committee, before becoming directly involved in communication with the other candidate? (This is the recommended approach.)

Does the candidate want to be consulted after initial screening, before extended talks between the MAs and approval by the Match Committee? (This consultation should be anonymous: the profile information should not include the names or pictures of the candidates)

Does the candidate want to look at a number of profiles and put them in order of preference? (These profiles should not include the names or pictures of the candidates)

Does the candidate have someone in mind they want to suggest? Does the candidate want a more active role?

Or is there some other agreed upon plan?

8. When does a suggested candidate become a recommendation? When and how do the two candidates begin communicating with each other?

- Both need to be qualified candidates before communication begins. (They have completed the application process and completed their interviews.) They may already know each other or have worked with each other as brother and sister before they are introduced as a possible match.
- MAs offer the matching suggestion to the USA Matching Committee for approval. The approval process takes about a week, or a bit longer if the committee has questions for clarification.
- When approved, the candidates are introduced (often by photo via their MA). They each have up to 3 weeks to decide whether to enter the matching process together or not.
- If they both agree they enter a 25-week communication phase to learn about each

other and begin to build a friendship. If they both agree by the end of the 25 weeks, they can then prepare their matching ceremony.

9. Meeting in person: It is good to have a general idea of how early in your communication process you want to meet in person. We recommend that the first meeting be carefully structured, so it will not be overwhelming. Even long distance first visits should not be too long. We suggest that the MAs be involved in planning this meeting.

10. Communication and reporting: It is important that the candidate and MA continue to communicate throughout the process. Many choose to report weekly or monthly. Choose the reporting method that works for you.

The candidates' MAs will need to agree on how to handle any differences in their process and plans. This will promote clear communication and avoid misunderstandings.

If the matching process between two candidates ends, the reasons should be clear so that both candidates can have closure and move on. MAs need to facilitate this process and at the right time make a new matching plan with their candidate.

NOTES/COMMENTS:

APPENDIX 3

Suggested Questions for Learning About a Matching Candidate

Here are some recommended questions for Matching Advisors to think about and use when communicating with others considering a potential match. These can be used in their initial communication with other MAs. They might also use some of these questions later in the exploration process when interviewing the other **candidate** directly. Sensitive questions should be asked with care.

1. When did you feel closest to God? What was your spiritual life like as a child? as a teen? as an adult?
2. How much Divine Principle Education have you had?
3. Which part of the Principle grabs you the most?
4. What church activities have you been involved in?
5. How do you view the roles of husband and wife in the family?
6. What expectations do you have about your spouse and about your marriage? What expectations do you think your spouse might have of you?
7. How do you envision your future family connecting to and participating in the church community and activities?
8. What kind of community and environment would you like your future family to live in? [city or countryside, big church community or independent, etc.]
9. Where would you like to live while you raise a family?
10. How big a family would you like to have? When do you think you would want to start having children?
11. Do you have any health concerns?
12. Is there any reason to think having children could be a problem?
13. Have there been any health concerns in your family history that are hereditary? Examples of these would be epilepsy or sickle cell anemia.
14. Have there been mental health concerns in your family history? For example, bi-polar condition or attempted suicide.
15. Have you ever seen a mental health professional, been diagnosed or taken medication for any mental health problem, psychological or emotional condition, learning developmental disability?

16. Ask questions about how the candidate was raised. Ask about grandparents and great-grandparents. These are precious questions about the possible joining of two lineages.
17. What are your family's views on the three-generational family, and how do you envision your future relationship with your children and grandchildren? What are your views on aging?
18. How were you disciplined as a child? How would you like to discipline your children?
19. How do you manage your anger? Have you ever had a violent outburst?
20. What is your level of purity and experience? Have you ever given your heart to another person?
21. Have you ever experienced any addictive behavior? (Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling, Pornography) Is there any family history of addiction?
22. Do you have any "Deal Breakers" (issues that make it impossible for you to consider a match with someone)? Examples of these could be language, location, race, purity level, education, vices, etc.
23. What are your passions and goals?
24. What is your career path and what are your plans to support a family?
25. Describe your educational and job experiences. What was your relationship to classmates, coworkers and bosses?
26. What are your interests and aspirations?
27. What were your hobbies and sports growing up? What do you enjoy doing now?
28. What are your political views?
29. Do you have any debts, such as college loans?
30. How did your parents handle finances? How do you see it working in your marriage?
31. Love is a verb. It is something you do, not just a feeling. After you commit to someone at the time of the matching, what will you do to win their heart and care for them?
32. Unity and love between a husband and wife is not easy- men and women are so different. What are some things you would do to continuously grow and develop a healthy friendship and marriage?
33. How do you see you and your future spouse solving disagreements? How was conflict and difficulty managed in your own family growing up?

34. If you were to find yourself struggling in your marriage, who would you turn to for help?
35. What educational activities, volunteer work or supportive friendships might you choose to participate in as a couple and later as a family.
36. What are some of the needs and desires that were never fulfilled by your parents? What were your hurts and disappointments as a child? What were your greatest joys?
37. What parts of your childhood would you like to relive and why?
38. How did your family celebrate holidays? Did your family have any special traditions? What was your favorite family vacation?
39. What did you enjoy about school activities? Who were your favorite teachers and why?
40. What awards and achievements did you win?
41. Who were your close friends growing up and where are they today? Who are your closest friends today?
42. Who are the five most important people in your life?
43. What are your unspoken personal 10 commandments?

We also suggest that candidates pray for each other every day.

APPENDIX 4

HOW TO REPORT A 1st GENERATION MATCHING SUGGESTION TO THE USA MATCHING COMMITTEE

Before presenting a match to the USA Matching Committee:

1. Each Matching Advisor needs to prepare a cover letter introducing their candidate to the committee. The letter should explain why and how the candidate is ready for the matching process, and why they are suggesting this match. When a candidate joined as a child with their parents and their parents are supporting the candidate's matching process, the parents will write the recommendation letter for their child.

Two MAs or teams should work together- one for each candidate. If you happen to be an MA for both candidates you are recommending, be sure to report this to the committee, and make sure that another MA is involved, or that you have another trusted MA review your suggestion and reasons before submitting it.

Always Get a 2nd Opinion!

2. Include a copy of each candidate's online matching and Blessing application. Once a candidate has completed and submitted this application, they can download and save a PDF copy, and share this with their matching advisor.

3. If a candidate is from another country please clarify their immigration status.

4. If a candidate joined our movement in another country but is living in the USA, they must either be an official member in the USA or have a letter from their home country stating that they are approved to go through the USA matching process. They must comply with the USA requirements to be a candidate.

5. If a candidate was previously married or Blessed, proper documentation of divorce or dissolution and an explanation of the circumstances are required.

6. If a candidate has children, please explain the children's readiness to accept their parent's new Blessing. Include the age and gender of each child, and the situation of the former spouse. If any of the children are minors, then custody agreements and possibilities for relocation need to be included.

7. Both matching advisors should include their contact Email and cell phone numbers.

MAs should submit everything by email to matchcommittee@unification.org. Please send all the information together. **The email subject line should be the names of both candidates.**

The committee will respond within 7 days with their review, or questions for further discussion. If more information is requested, please investigate and respond promptly so that the final decision can be reached within an additional 2 weeks.

APPENDIX 5

Contact Information

USA Blessed Family Department and Matching Advisors

481 8th Ave, Room 606 New York, NY 10001 Phone: (212) 997-0055 Fax: (212) 997-0054

Administration: BFDadmin@ unification.org

Matching Advisors: matching@ unification.org

USA Matching Committee: matchcommittee@ unification.org

Blessed Family Departments in other nations

Europe

www.bfdeu.org

BC Blessing Department www.esgd.org

Korea

bfdkorea@ hanmail.net ; dmjn486@ hanmail.net

Japan

BFDjapan@ j-seiwa.org

South America

bfdbrzail@ gmail.com

Asia

bfdasia@ gmail.com

Oceania

bfdoceania@ gmail.com

Middle East

bfd.middleeast@ gmail.com

Africa

hqafrika@ gmail.com

Northeast Asia

nerhq.blessing@ gmail.com