

Project Phoenix meetings in Boston, MA with 65 attendees at Boston Church

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From March 8 to 10, Project Phoenix was welcomed to the great city of Boston, MA. Held at the historic Beacon Street church center, the gathering brought a wave of inspiration, education, and hope for the 65 attendees.

The program began with dinner on Friday evening, followed by Pastor Catherine Ono introducing the emcees, Dr. David Burgess and Sophie Maes. The emcees welcomed the evening speakers, David Young and Sancha Ogden, two young leaders who shared stories and exercises that led the participants to a deeper awareness of the power of listening to others. Through group and pair sharing, everyone explored their own patterns of communication and learned new tools to enhance relationships.

Saturday morning began with breakfast and two Project Phoenix signature activities. The first, called Honoring the Generations, had the Youngers and Elders divide into two groups to answer a series of questions about how they viewed the other generation and how they thought the other group viewed them. The answers, which were unique, honest, and sincere, were recorded and played back to the opposite groups.

In the second activity, Through Our Lens, four individuals take 15 minutes each to share what life has been like for them as an elder or younger in the Unification movement. These testimonies were conveyed with honesty and vulnerability. By sharing with the entire group in this way, it opened the door for group sharing and encouraged each person to express their own perspective with the same honesty and vulnerability.

Lunch was paired with a few fun games, which lightened the energy for participants to receive content from a passage written by True Father entitled "The Member-centered Movement." This reading reminded everyone that God's most important desire is for His children to love each other and treat each other with kindness.

Following lunch was an activity called Community Weaving where participants share their needs with others in the community and were given responses often resulting in substantial benefit to those requesting help.

The final segment of the afternoon program included an activity called Going Deeper, where Sophie Maes and her father faced each other on stage and answered questions designed to bring out areas of absence in their relationship. Through the Q and A format, both their hearts were opened to hearing each other in a way that had not been possible before.

After a wonderful bento box dinner prepared by Sachiko Yatsu of the Boston community, the program concluded with acknowledgments and appreciations and a survey that allowed attendees to offer feedback to improve the program.

Reflections

"I met so many wonderful people, and shared deeply, kindly, and honestly with them. I witnessed healing of relationships, revival of hope in downtrodden spirits, and an evolution of faith. I made new connections which I'm sure will lead to new creations."



"The Going Deeper segment really impacted me and made me emotional, thinking about my own relationship with my parents. In the group sharing afterwards, I even started crying just talking about what I felt. Experiencing that and the genuine love and support from the staff and participants made the event worth attending. It was comforting to be in a place where we all have the desire to share honestly, be vulnerable, and appreciate each other."

"I was able to experience a glimpse into what becomes possible when people take time to hold space and broaden their perspectives within my community. I also received some clarity about what is missing in my life. I was able to nurture a new part of my authentic self."

"This is the first church event I've been to in 5 years and I was pleasantly surprised. It gave me a place to feel safe, then to fully open my heart more than I have done in a long time and be genuinely heard. It also gave me the opportunity to truly hear others with no expectation to offer help, but just really listen and make the space safe. My heart feels calm and that is overwhelmingly good to me. Thank you."

"Project Phoenix began an important conversation in Boston and created the space in our community and in our hearts to take tangible steps toward building the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth."

"Recently, I had been feeling uninspired regarding my life of faith and my connections with my church community. In a sense, I felt like I was in a spiritual slump. But attending this conference reminded me of the potential my relationship with my church community can have and that I have been letting myself become a victim to my circumstances. I was reminded of the fact that I am craving genuine relationships, and in order to achieve those relationships I need to change the way I interact with others."

