

FFWPU USA YAYAM's National E-Series Strengthens Interpersonal Relationships

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During a time of social restrictions and distancing, young Unificationists from around the U.S. and Canada connected through a new national e-series designed to strengthen their interpersonal relationships. Several guest speakers discussed the theme "Relationships: A Reason for Being" during the 2020 Midwest Young Adult Retreat, organized by [Youth and Young Adult Ministry](#) (YAYAM) regional leaders and staff from August 14 to 16.

"Having the right tools can help us recognize our role in taking responsibility in our relationships," said Dr. David Burgess, one of the speakers invited from Project Phoenix, a grassroots organization working to heal family relationships.

About 35 young adults, ages 18 to 30, participated in the online program with sessions examining family relationships, friendships, partnerships and marriage. Project Phoenix representatives shared personal stories and advice on how children can improve their relationship with their parents, while participants were given helpful exercises to use with their families.

Pastors Garrun and Yusun Abrahams of Columbus, Ohio, also shared their insight and reflections as a young Unificationist couple with children. "I faced many challenges with my own parents," said Pastor Garrun. "And even though it took time to heal from my experiences growing up, those challenges have now encouraged me to become an even better parent to my own children by overcoming those issues."

The group later heard from Noah Trimble and Daniel Higuera, best friends from Ohio who talked about their longstanding friendship and developing deep relationships from a principled view emphasizing real love. Breakout discussions gave participants a chance to reflect on the kinds of friendships they want to create in their own lives and what they may need to sacrifice about themselves in order to achieve this.

Yun-A Johnson, director of the [Blessing and Family Ministry](#) (BFM) of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA, introduced more internal guidance on marriage. "The Marriage Blessing is a lifestyle, not just a ceremony," said Johnson. She emphasized the importance of faith and the pillars of a blessed life while discussing the difference between the Unificationist matching culture versus dating culture, and the essence of God's hope for love in our lives.

Jeff and Rosia Schmidt, a young Wisconsin couple and soon-to-be parents, shared candidly about their matching and Blessing experience before the program concluded with a QandA session for all the speakers. Participants received guidance on how to encourage growth in their friendships; deepen their relationships with people who share a different faith or value system; prepare for commitment in the matching and Blessing; and address common mistakes or reasons couples break up, among other relationship topics.

"This e-series is an amazing effort to encourage more young adult gatherings in general," said Kai Moyongo, who was involved in the program. "It fosters more connection, growth, and development with one another and among all of our communities."

Stay tuned for more information on the next young adult retreat program from [YAYAM](#). For more information on the matching and Marriage Blessing, you can visit the [BFM](#) website.