

UPF and FFWPU's forum: The Family and the Sustainable Future of St. Lucia

Remy Taupier
May 22, 2016



Castries, St. Lucia — UPF and the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) held a special forum on the theme, “The Family and the Sustainable Future of St. Lucia” on May 22, 2016 in celebration of the UN International Day of Families 2016. The event, which took place in the Sunny Acres community in St. Lucia’s capital of Castries, was attended by 16 people, including representatives from academia and politics, as well as of various faiths.

Mr. Remy Taupier, secretary general of UPF-St. Lucia, introduced the International Day of Families and spoke about the importance for a nation to have good, strong families to assure a stable, thriving and sustainable future. Many foreign consultants in St. Lucia have remarked that St. Lucians are generally a very religious-minded people. Attendance in churches is high. Why is this God-loving attitude not translating into good, thriving families?

Ms. Fortuna Anthony, chairman of the board of directors of Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC), gave a clear and straightforward overview of the situation of families in St. Lucia. She said: “Even if the nuclear family is what everybody wants, unfortunately, in the world [in which] we live [this] is not the reality. Research shows the majority of families in St. Lucia are headed by a single mother. We lack the role models who embody the ideal of a good family. Education is not enough; we need to practice it. It is practicing what we know that is important.”

The participants then divided into two groups and discussed: “People have many different motivations for going to church. What are these motivations?”

The groups listed all the various motivations and then classified them by degree of concern for God.

Some of motivations that were identified were:

“To show off new outfits (shoes, clothes, jewelry),” “to gain respect,” “to find a girlfriend,” etc. The people who attend church with these motivations are only concerned about themselves.

“It’s mandatory for my church,” “do it to obey the Bible,” “it’s the tradition,” “do it out of routine,” “do it for confession,” etc. These motivations do not express much enthusiasm to attend church.

“To go to Heaven,” “not to go to Hell,” “to ask for God’s help.” These motivations seemed to be of a higher degree. However, when the groups examined them more closely, they realized that people who think going to church is a sufficient condition to go to Heaven do not think efforts to become a better person are necessary.

“To hear and learn about God and Jesus,” “to praise and worship God,” “to learn about the Bible,” etc. These are praiseworthy motivations, but the group pointed out that unless people have a sincere motivation to put into practice what they have read and learned, they may not make the effort to become better people.

“To become a person of good character,” “to be able to better contribute to society,” “to become a good person that God can use.” Everyone agreed that these motivations are of the highest degree and that they require more personal effort. They also remarked that people who have these motivations for going to church are a minority.

The second group activity was to discuss: “What practical lessons can we learn from the Bible verse, “If a man says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”



Both groups agreed that this verse clearly outlines that if we love God, we should practice it in our daily lives, within our families and with the people around us. It means a person who loves God should strive to become a person of good character, as loving God and becoming a person of good character are linked and cannot be dissociated.

Through this discussion, the participants could better understand why high church attendance does not automatically result in forming people of good character, people who can become good spouses and parents who form good families.

The participants felt challenged to reevaluate their own motivations for going to church and felt empowered to make greater effort in being better people in their everyday lives.