

FFWPU USA: Humans Are A Social Species, Wired To Connect

Demian Dunkley
December 15, 2023



Humans are a social species, wired to connect. No matter what our circle looks like, being there for one another has deep-rooted effects. The power of connection has the ability to transform lives, and even revive communities, as Unificationist leaders across the country have seen after individually visiting local members over the last several months.

Since becoming Regional Chair of FFWPU North America in May, Rev. Demian Dunkley has encouraged leaders to visit as many of their members as possible. "Let's try to meet with

everyone," he urged during an online pastors' meeting December 12. "We should make that kind of effort in our communities ... It's more valuable than them coming to church on Sunday."

To date, more than 400 members have been personally visited throughout the Northeast, among other regions, with nearly a hundred people in Clifton, New Jersey - home to the largest population of Unificationists in America. Visiting members - whether at home, a park, or other places - has been integral to strengthening the national movement by developing greater member support and community engagement.

In Sacramento, the small Unificationist community of about 16 families has experienced a dramatic shift since visitations began and more guests were invited.

"We're an older community," noted Pastor Charles de Watteville of Sacramento Valley Family Church. "But we have three couples that developed an amazing trinity."

Pastor de Watteville credits the couples with inspiring more people to join church services and activities, now leading to a highly anticipated Christmas service and celebration.

"Suddenly, our church has turned into a lively church, with lots of kids running around," Pastor de Watteville said. "There's a 'happy chaos.' Before it was like older people going around in their wheelchairs."

For leaders in Dallas, visiting young members, particularly one Unificationist man, brought new insights and answers to their questions. Reconnecting helped members, in turn, feel valued and understood.

"There's a young [member] who is working a full time job, and then at his parents' business on weekends," recalled Izak Hernandez, secretary general of FFWPU-USA South. "We didn't see him for a while but were getting big donations from him."

Izak said the young man explained that tithing was his investment despite his absence from church. "He told me, 'I really feel obligated to give back to God whenever I can,'" Izak said. "There are people who are so humble, so faithful, and really love their community ... I feel very grateful and very moved by this young man."

Then in Chicago, a young Unificationist couple who were previously inactive in the community due to various circumstances said they were touched by a "check in" from leadership. "It's nice that [other members] reach out and show they care; that they want to support us and include us," they said.

But it goes deeper than that. Studies show that a sense of community and integration is vital to human beings. Feelings of love and belonging fulfilled through interpersonal relationships and connection to others is one of [our most important needs](#), according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

True Parents also explained our interconnection best, as one family under our Heavenly Parent. "The starting point toward a true family is the heart of love that treats every person as family and shares with them," True Father wrote in his autobiography, *As A Peace-Loving Global Citizen* (2009).

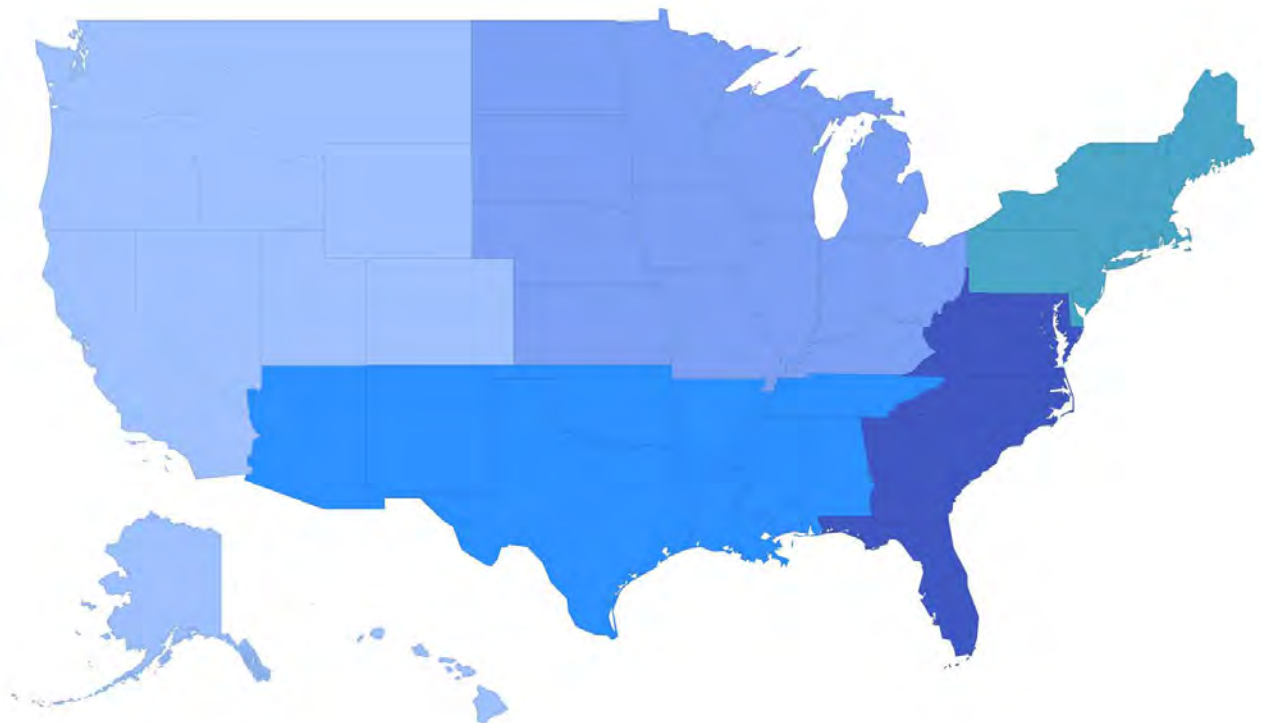
Leaders said they will continue reconnecting with more members over the holiday season and into the new year.

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