

Benjy Uyama presents the Value of a Parent-Based Matching process to Atlanta Family Church

Gary Chidester
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How can a community of families, parents and children navigate the process of engagement and the Holy Marriage Blessing? On April 24 – 26, 2015 the Atlanta Family Church invited Benjy Uyama, National Blessing & Family Ministry (BFM) Project Coordinator, to meet the community, present the value of a parent-based engagement (Matching) process, and deliver the Sunday worship sermon. Benjy participated in a leaders' conference call organized by Rev. Gary Chidester, District Pastor, with pastors and ministry leaders from the surrounding communities of District 5.



On Friday, April 24, Rev. Haruki Kimura, pastor of the Atlanta Family Church, and Mrs. Koko, BFM Coordinator in Atlanta, shared their vision for the families, couples and youth in the community. They are excited to host a large-scale Parents Matching Convocation (PMC) education seminar in the next few months, as well as a “Preparing for Marriage” Level 2 Blessing education workshop. They are inviting any surrounding communities and states to join for these valuable experiences. Dates are forthcoming.

On Saturday night, Benjy met with the college age young adults and facilitated a sharing about their vision for themselves, their family and their community. Each young adult made a new commitment to their family and relationships based on their sharing. Benjy further elaborated on his own experience of navigating through his relationship with his parents and the matching process.

On Sunday morning, the Atlanta Family Church hosted a Sunday worship service organized entirely by the youth. The emcee, music and even dancing were all organized locally by the youth community. Benjy Uyama shared a message on the topic, “In God’s Image”. He shared his experience with vividly

experiencing our Heavenly Parent's love through relating with his own parents and True Parents. He explained that the only way to know our own Godly image as men and women is in relation to parents, or True Parents as parental figures.



After worship service, youth and parents gathered to discuss and ask questions about the matching process that has been outlined in the Family Matching Handbook. Young adults also shared about their new determination to have open communication with their parents about the matching process.

Parents then met with Rev. Kimura, Mrs. Koko and Benjy to discuss the value of parents' support and education about the matching process, as well as ask questions about the National BFM's projects and initiatives. Many of the parents stayed longer to seek matching advice.



Both parents and youth made a new commitment to their families and relationships. Their new commitment is to engage in more meaningful conversations of sharing and listening (giving and receiving) between parent and child.

The dynamic of the parent-child relationship is something we all experience. Every community would benefit deeply from re-committing to investing in the parent-child relationship. Based on that relationship of understanding and authenticity, the window to the matching process and Marriage Blessing is wide open. BFM encourages all youth to reflect on their future marriages by involving their parents in the conversation. The *Family Matching Handbook* offers many helpful perspectives and approaches.

