

Miilhan Stephens, Vice President FFWPU USA, visits Columbus Family Church

Michael Balcomb
November 6, 2016



On the weekend of November 5-6, 2016, Miilhan Stephens, the Vice President of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA, visited the Columbus Family Church, also known as UC Columbus. By the end of the weekend, Miilhan's sincerity, openness, and heart for the Unification movement inspired both Unificationists both young and old alike.

Miilhan's visit began with a meeting with youth and young adults on Saturday evening. Around 30 young Unificationists were present at the beginning of the meeting, but the crowd swelled to over 50 people by the end. The meeting, conducted over pizza and refreshments, was intimate and sincere but casual, too, as the younger Unificationists simply enjoyed sharing of one another's company.

The following day, Miilhan delivered a sermon, entitled "Position" to a full chapel. At the beginning of his sermon, Miilhan played a video of "Marching On" by One Republic, a song with great meaning for him. The song moved him to tears, and prompted Miilhan to ask the congregation at the opening of his sermon, "What does Vision 2020 mean for you?"

Miilhan went on to explain that, "In reality, Vision 2020 is about mainstreaming our movement toward a heavenly culture. It is about becoming Tribal Messiahs, people who build heaven right where they are. It is not something far away," he insisted, "because we must always remember that God is with us; it is personal and must be sustainable." For Unificationists who struggled to understand the ambitious goals of Vision 2020, Miilhan's explanation of its underlying meaning provided peace in understanding.

Toward the end of his sermon, Miilhan again challenged the congregation to think about another key mission in the Unification movement: "What is your Cheon Il Guk?" He encouraged the audience to ask themselves this question, find the answer, and allow that answer to guide their hearts toward Tribal

Messiahship, so that they could uniquely create the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth together. He emphasized the absolute importance of working together, as disunity will destroy Cheon Il Guk, rather than build it.

After the service, the congregation came together for a delicious Korean lunch. Miilhan then hosted a Q & A session with parents and other members of the Columbus community. In this session, Miilhan addressed topics including how to live a life of faith, reconciling differences between parents and children, and beginning to understand the Heavenly Parent through Jesus. According to some in attendance at this second meeting, Miilhan maintained an attitude of perseverance, positivity, and love, elaborating on his quest to reunite his mother with her physical family in Japan after 40 years of separation.

The weekend spent with Miilhan left a lasting impression on many in the Columbus community. Ethan Young, an active young Unificationist, remarked, "Religion has fallen out of fashion with me, but his expression of it was a reminder of the heart and warmth which drew me in, and for which I had once strived so hard for." He continued, "He's an example for the second-generation Unificationists here, and across the nation."

Sunder Willett, another young Unificationist, was particularly moved by Miilhan's reminder that not everyone will encounter God in the same way or on the same path. "This was so inspiring to me because one of my great struggles as a young Unificationist has been how to connect with God when many of the conditions and traditions that come so naturally to my parents and my peers often don't have meaning for me." Sunder was grateful for Miilhan's visit, reflecting, "hearing Miilhan has encouraged me to continue trying to find new ways to meet with God and make God a part of my life."

To watch Miilhan's sermon in full, please visit the official website of UC Columbus at uccolumbus.org/#/sermons.