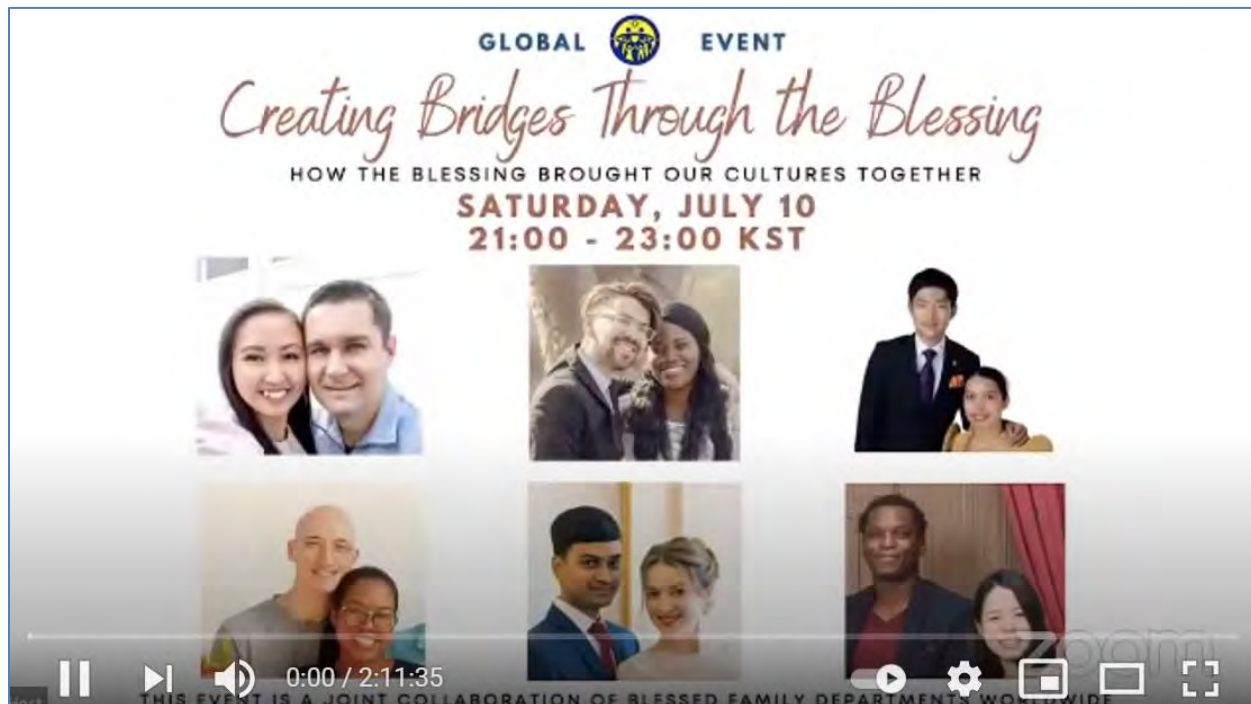


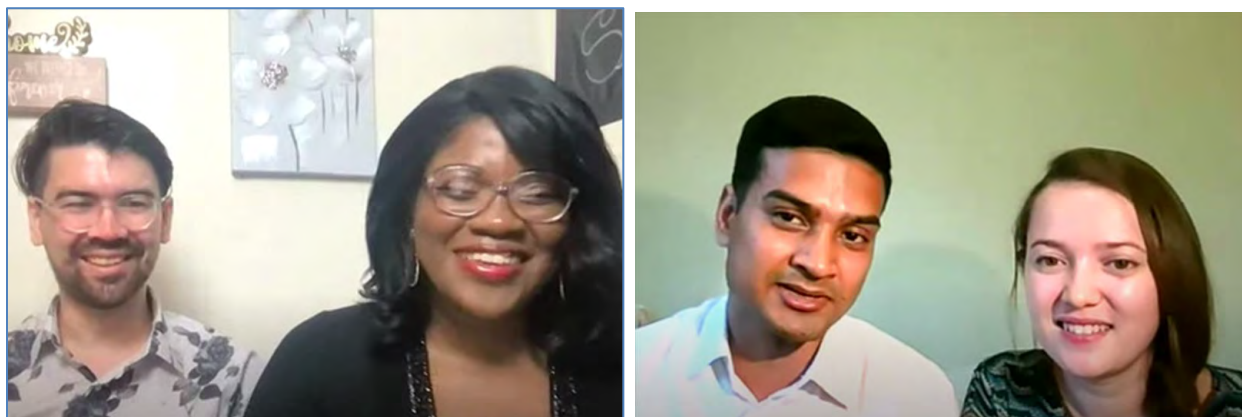
## Creating Bridges Through the Blessing - Couples experiences of the Blessing

Naokimi Ushiroda  
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"There are many problems in the world, but the main problem lies in the relationship with family," said Yulia Diwakar. "We are families that do not have national boundaries."

Yulia and her husband, Anshul, were among five international and cross-cultural Unificationist couples who shared their experience of receiving the Marriage Blessing in a virtual [program](#), "Creating Bridges Through the Blessing," on July 10. In a panel interview by Ilya and Diane Hack - a couple of Japanese, American, and Congolese heritage - the group shared their unique journey toward international marriage and their desire to bring together different cultures to foster a more peaceful world.



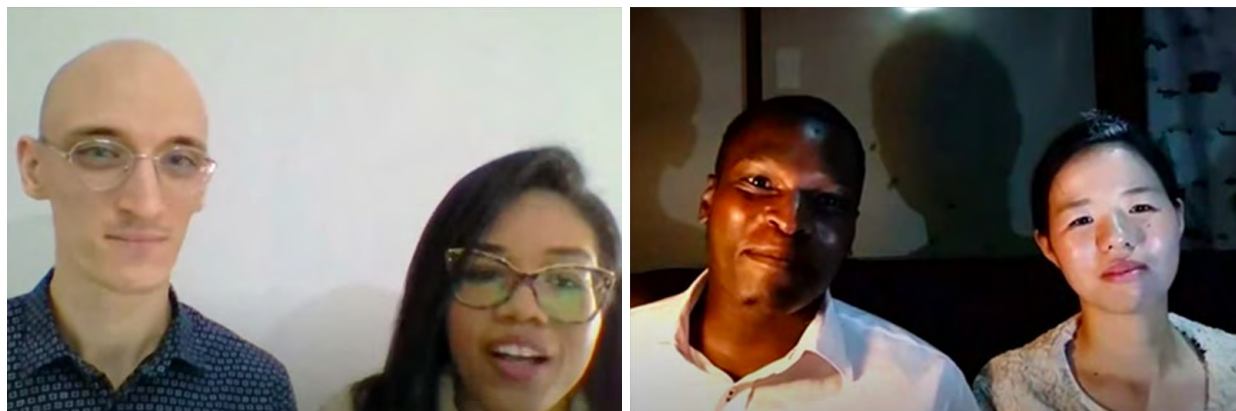
The global program, which was organized by all Blessing and Family Ministry ([BFM](#)) departments of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) International, was translated into 13 languages and livestreamed to more than 2,000 online participants from 96 countries.

For Anshul and Yulia, who are natives of India and Russia, their marriage has been an incredibly rewarding experience of merging vastly disparate worlds. Joining the Unification movement, they received the Marriage Blessing in 2018 and welcomed their first son in 2020.

"For me, it's very interesting and amazing because in India it's not possible to get married internationally and interculturally," said Anshul. "But through our movement it's possible. I have this change in my generation, in my family, and even in my son who is only 10 months old. I'm so thankful and happy with the Blessing."

The Diwakars are part of the global [Marriage Blessing](#) movement initiated in the 1960s by the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founders of FFWPU. Millions of couples from all backgrounds around the world have since received the Marriage Blessing, a wedding ceremony which transcends societal boundaries such as race, religion, and nationality to promote world peace.

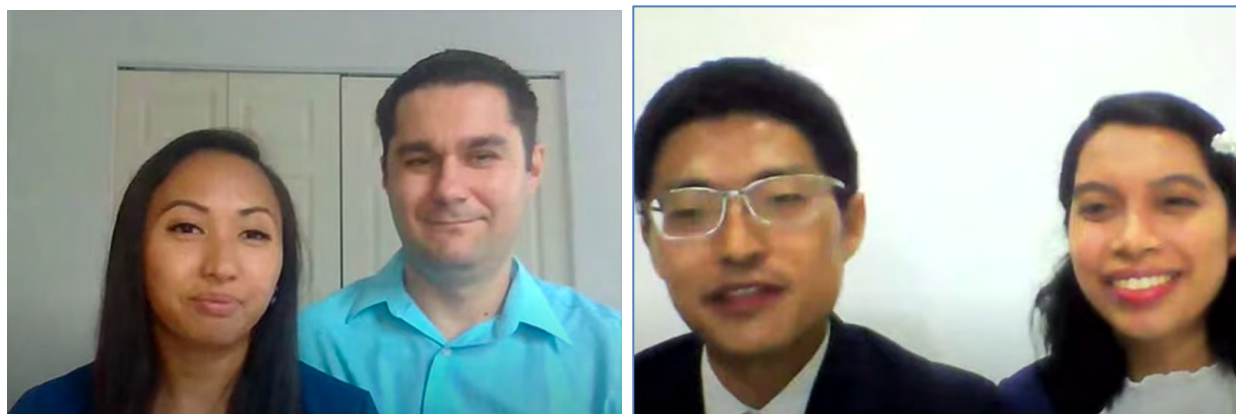
"International and intercultural marriages are the quickest way to bring about an ideal world of peace," wrote Rev. Moon in his 2009 [autobiography](#), *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*. "Things that would take seemingly forever can be accomplished like miracles through these types of marriages in just two or three generations. People should marry across national and cultural boundaries with people from countries they consider to be their enemies so that the world of peace can come much more quickly."



Couples of various nations, cultures, and languages pursue the Marriage Blessing with the shared goal of Rev. and Dr. Moon: to bring about unity as one global family under God.

"For us, the main understanding of the Marriage Blessing is creating harmony through restoration," said Daniel Yurkin, a young Unificationist whose parents are Swiss and Russian-Ukrainian. In 2020, Daniel received the Marriage Blessing with Heayun, who is of Haitian and Brazilian descent.

"Breaking through cultural and traditional differences is definitely a powerful thing," said Daniel. "We're looking forward to seeing the future and the harmony we want to create together with our kids."



Another panel couple, Unificationists David and Awako Noumonvi received the Marriage Blessing in 2010 and have three children together. As natives of Africa and Japan, they say international marriages can solve a lot of global conflicts.

"The world is full of war, broken homes, and terror," said David. "So when people see international couples together this can make them feel great and come together. That's what I feel very strongly about. As international couples, we introduce ourselves to the world and bring everybody [together] as one family under God."

Spase and Katherine Kace, a couple of Albanian and Canadian-Filipino descent, said what's most important to them is creating "children blended in different cultures." They received the Marriage Blessing in 2014 and have two children together. Likewise, family relationships are paramount for Kuninobu and Jahyeon Sugiura, who were Blessed in 2012 and also have two children.

"Our family is from Japan, Korea, Philippines, and Brazil," said Jahyeon. "We are the starting point in a school of how to love the world for the sake of world peace. I believe we and our children can have a total experience understanding and loving each other's differences until we can be one and share that with the world."

The program, hosted by Asia Pacific BFM Directors Cheng Hai and Koay Phing, featured an opening prayer from BFM North America Director Yun-A Johnson and a special message from BFM International Director Rev. InPyo Moon.