

FFWPU USA: "Model Church" retreat in Las Vegas for pastors of large churches

Naokimi Ushiroda
February 14, 2023



Photo courtesy of FFWPU USA

"All large church pastors of Family Federation were called to gather together based on Dr. Yong's inspiration for communities around the country to learn from each other to create model churches," said FFWPU USA President Rev. Naokimi Ushiroda during a Feb. 14 leaders meeting report. He noted the movement's national leadership has shifted its focus in recent years from large-scale campaigns to local community-oriented projects and engagement.

Nearly 30 Unificationist leaders kicked off 2023 with a "model church" retreat in Las Vegas. Directors and pastors from across the country gathered Jan. 9 at IPEC to exchange ideas and best practice tips to help grow and further develop their communities in various ways.

"There's a continual increase in the number of younger leadership and young family engagement," said Rev. Naokimi. "We've shifted from short-term campaigns being the subject to more long-term growth."

Leaders assessed key objectives for the new year while referring back to the movement's 2027 goals. The ambitious multi-year plan includes gaining 120,000 "Morning Devotion" viewers; establishing a thousand holy communities and 30,000 new members; achieving 144,000 clergy CheonBo couples; donating \$10 million to global missions and supporting a heavenly unified Korea; and reaching 124 million people - roughly a third of North America's population.

This means each region and community has designated goals to help accomplish the national plan. "All of our campaigns should now contribute to our long-term growth," said Rev. Naokimi, stating that there shouldn't be "sacrifice of long-term growth for our short-term campaigns. We're asking each community to think about what they can do to start working on these main areas."

Rev. Naokimi said that, since 2020, new appointments in leadership and implementing fresh strategies have led to notable success. In 2021, he identified several milestones such as two Blessing Festival campaigns, in June and December. The summer campaign saw more than 40,000 participants and 150 watch parties, while the winter campaign drew another thousand participants. "These festivals and watch parties really helped bring the best of what we have to every family and every local community to share with their guests and family," said Rev. Naokimi.

Then there was the 50-state tour of Dr. Chung Sik Yong, regional president of FFWPU North America, from September through December 2021. "[Dr. Yong's] tour really helped him connect with the field and understand where the American movement and members are at [in each community]," said Rev. Naokimi.

In 2022, similar success emerged where leaders focused on spiritual development, preparing single people for the Marriage Blessing, supporting newly blessed couples through the 43-day process, engaging young families, and contributing to the movement's global missions. Some highlights were the "New Life" campaign, which drew 120 new members in time for True Father's Seonghwa anniversary in August, as well as the appointment of Cheon Shim Won USA leaders, who celebrated its grand opening in November.

For 2023, leaders said the sky's the limit. "To start the year united with clarity on our direction, goals, and strategies, all the pastors meeting in Las Vegas for our very first model church retreat really set the tone for great things to come," said FFWPU USA Northeast Secretary General, Resfred Arthur. "We've made an effort to shift so that we are really planning for the future."