

## The Universal Peace Federation Connecticut's Forum on Marriage in Bridgeport

Roger and Daniela Wetherall  
February 23, 2019



The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Connecticut Forum on Marriage took place on Saturday, February 23 in the conference room of the Action for Bridgeport Community Development building in Bridgeport and welcomed 40 participants.

The topic of marriage lent itself to a lot of interest and criticism alike because over the last few decades, marriage has really come under intense attack. In Connecticut, this is a special issue because they have one of the lowest marriage rates of any state in the U.S. Nevertheless, it was important to make a public statement on the importance and benefit of marriage as an institution that not only allows for God's unique blessing and grace to take place, but also forges a deeper commitment for the couple entering this covenant and their eventual progeny.

There are many social, economic, legal, spiritual and philosophical issues that need to be considered when dealing with the issue of marriage. The forum speakers all approached this issue from a different perspective. Mr. Bill Hawthorn, an executive with the Church of Scientology in Connecticut, shared an interesting, practical formula to foster deeper communication and understanding within a marriage. Mrs. Lynn Walsh, the Director of the UPF Office of the Family, and Mrs. Cheryl Wetzstein, an award-winning journalist on marriage and family issues, gave presentations that ranged from practical tips to daunting UN statistics of the adverse affects of non-marriage on children. They also provided a few practical steps to take to help families and communities.

Mrs. Wetzstein emphasized the need to re-institutionalize marriage in society. Some ways this can be done are to have national conversations about what marriage is, increase the 58% success rate of first marriages to 75% by talking about our own happy marriage and encouraging others to do the same, decrease the rate of unwed childbearing from 39.8% to 30%, monitor efforts to further change U.S. marriage laws such as pro-polygamy bills and marriage age-limit laws, more bioethics oversight and public education about selling or donating sperm and eggs and the hiring of surrogate mothers, and create

more programs for both premarital and married couples.



Mr. Greg Breland pointed out how much lawyers and child therapists benefit from the scourge of divorce and broken families. As Mr. Breland further commented, "The need for a spiritual awakening has never been stronger in this country!"

A QandA took place after each presentation which gave the participants a chance to direct questions and comments to the presenters. Some of the younger guests commented on the fact that young people no longer entertain the idea of marriage because they seem to financially depend much more on their parents and the pursuit of their career becomes predominant in their life. Yet, the rise in cohabitation versus marriage underlines a basic lack of commitment and respect that are fundamental in creating a stable family, which indeed is the pillar of a healthy and flourishing society. After all, the family is the School of Love!

