

Unificationists in Montana Make Gains in both Public and Private Sector

Mike Yakawich
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Chief Leon Rattler, head of the Blackfeet Nation, gives the Native-American blessing to the rebuilt Billings Civic Center on June 19, 2011. Rev. Mike Yakawich, head of the local Unification Church, is on the dais at far left.

The Unificationist Pastor of the Family Church in Billings, Montana recently was honored as a representative of clergy in the city on June 19, 2011. A rededication ceremony of the City Civic Center in Billings, the largest city in the state, included an interfaith program featuring an Episcopal priest, a Jewish rabbi, and a Unificationist Pastor, the Reverend Mike Yakawich, who mailed the following testimony to Familyfed.org.

“After 20 years of membership in the Billings Clergy Association (BCA), it was the first time I was asked to be in an official position representing the BCA. The occasion was a rededication ceremony of the city civic center, Metra Park Rimrock Auto Arena, which was destroyed by a tornado on Father’s Day a year ago in 2010.

To prepare for this ceremony, the county commissioners called upon the Billings Clergy Association to organize an interfaith program. The president of the BCA, an Episcopal priest, a Rabbi and I were asked to lead a committee to organize this aspect of the program. This was an interfaith blessing of the Metra held at 4 p.m., the anniversary of the tornado touch-down that demolished the Metra in 2010. In the course of a number of meetings, we prayed, planned and prepared for this historic ceremony.

The ceremony was filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a great honor to be on stage with a number of other interfaith leaders. It was even a greater honor to be on the program to introduce Chief Leon Rattler, spiritual leader of the Blackfeet Nation, who gave the Native American Blessing of the building.

It strikes me that when we do not give up and continue to give, blessings do come. Over countless meetings with the BCA, it has been a great opportunity to meet and get to know many fellow clergy working in our community. Then to be asked and invited to organize this rededication ceremony has been to me a high honor.

After the program, the county commissioners and the Mayor expressed their gratitude for the program. It was a great day for our community to shine. In all of this, I give all glory and appreciation to our Heavenly Father.”



Pastor Yakawich's 10 year old son lecturing on Adam's family.

Montana Youth Explore Their Faith by Giving Lectures

In other developments in Montana, youth from ages 10 to 21 gave inspirational lectures at the Annual South Park Retreat in Billings, Montana, on Monday, June 20, 2011. Conceived as an education event many years ago, it has continued as a unique approach to understanding our Unificationist faith. All ages of youth participated, and it was a wonderful blend of elementary to college students offering lectures.

Prepared over the past months during Sunday School and at home, youth had drawn diagrams of their lectures and prepared talks. Assisted by the Sunday-School teachers and parents, the youth formulated what topics to lecture. Practicing their 5-10 minute lectures was a big part of the preparation for the day over the past weeks. "There is no better way to understand your faith than to be able to lecture it," said one youth. We have found this both a challenging, interesting and educational part of the year.

Mr. Chad Martin videotaped the lectures which later will be placed on our Public Access Channel 7 Family Church TV program. Many positive comments have been given due to this airing. It is so great to see the youth lecture shared one home church couple. "We look forward each year to see the youth on TV," commented Tiny and Chris Heaps. "We can no longer attend church due to health issues but we can see the youth lecture at our own home."

There is always a progression of abilities over the years. The older youth have developed skills in lecturing that they would not have had without this innovative retreat. They gained greater confidence and skills in public speaking. They also have been able to grasp more deeply the meaning and significance of the Fall of Man, the purpose of the Cross in the life of Jesus, the depth of the meaning of the Last Days, Resurrection, Predestination, Christology as well as the content of God's working in Restoration of mankind and that of the Second Coming.

There were also home church members and other families attending. Lecturers included members of the Martin, DiLorenzo, Wood, Felig, MacMurdie and Yakawich families. Sports, a picnic with local friends and other activities encompassed the day. We felt God in the lectures and the Holy Spirit in our entire workshop.