

On the radio in Nevada - a testimony

Sarah Canak
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Sarah Canak, Isaiah Slowe Price and Chris Brown gathered for a talk show on "The Stimulus" on 99.1 FM Fox News Radio in Reno Nevada.

Reno-resident Sarah Canak, 23, a second-generation Unificationist who, together with her spouse Chris Brown, shared about her arranged-marriage experience on April 21, 2012 on a radio talk show called "The Stimulus," which she co-hosts.

I am the co-host of "The Stimulus" on 99.1 FM Fox News Radio in Reno Nevada. It falls under a larger umbrella of shows called "Nevada Matters," which is owned and operated by Eddie Floyd. The host of my show's name is Isaiah Slowe Price. The show airs every Sunday from 6:30-7 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. You can listen to the show from the website www.991fmtalk.com/

I got on the show by actually being on another show called "The House of Savoy," in which I talked about the problem of human trafficking. After my interview with Sean and Gene Savoy, hosts of "The House of Savoy", I greeted a man in the audience. I like to meet new people. We talked briefly, and he handed me his business card.

After that, I received a call a few days later. He was impressed with the interview I had done with "The House of Savoy," and asked me if I wanted to be the co-host of his radio show! I was surprised and flattered, and since then, I have done several shows with Isaiah. I feel like it's a great experience, and a good opportunity to uplift people that otherwise might not get heard. I've invited a lot of wonderful guests on the show and learned a lot from them and my fellow radio hosts.



Brown and Canak traveled to Korea to participate in Rev. Moon's Marriage-Blessing ceremony on March 24, 2012.

On "The Stimulus," our goal is to stimulate people's minds. The host, Isaiah, knows a lot about politics and economics, which he refers to quite frequently. I definitely know less about these topics, but I think my contribution has been to find interesting guests to be on the show, and to add a more lighthearted spirit to the show.

If any second generation wants to get involved in talk radio, I would advise that they get exposed to radio. They should be an audience member of a local radio show. I've also seen that they offer internships at shows. Most of all, I recommend being bold and asking to get involved. Adults love seeing ambitious young people that are articulate and have purpose, drive, and something meaningful to say. If you have something important to say, be aggressive, and ask to be a guest on a radio show.

It was an unexpected blessing to be asked to be a radio co-host, but I believe God wants to give those

opportunities to us if we speak up about the truth. Every time I have put myself in a vulnerable position to say what I truly believed, it has always led to more challenge, but also much more blessing, and a multiplication of goodness! Many times good people are afraid to speak up, or prefer being "peaceful" and turning the other cheek. I love Father's boldness in never sugarcoating anything: he tells it like it is. If you speak up for the truth, often people who didn't have the boldness to say what you said step out of the woodwork and support you.

I also invited all my close friends to meet Chris, and we showed the footage of the Blessing ceremony in Korea and spoke about the whole process and decision to them. Once again, I was a bit nervous, but actually my friends could relate to the values we expressed, and the experiences we had gone through. They may have not understood and agreed with everything, but nevertheless they came away with something more, and they were inspired.

I have to thank the folks at familyfed.org, like Douglas Burton, Ariana Moon, Yoshie Manaka, and the other interns there for boldly campaigning to publicize the Blessing. This encouraged me to talk about the Blessing on the radio show, although usually I only reveal my personal life to very close friends. I was nervous, but your example helped me to continue to be proud of my faith. I am also encouraged by Father's ideals behind the Blessing. I have seen some couples hole up and enjoy their married life together, sort of "us against the world." However, I still remember the four main pledges I made at the Blessing ceremony, and I intend to keep them. I want the Blessing to be a new motivation in my life to give more to others, and share more. I hope the Blessing can set a new ideal and a new precedent for marriage around the world.



Canak, the co-host of "The Stimulus," said that the reason she decided to participate in the Blessing "was because I believe in lasting love."

The Radio Interview

Canak: I would love to introduce my guest today. You'll all be surprised, because I'm going to tell you a little bit about myself, but I'm going to tell you more about my new husband. His name is Chris Brown.

Brown: Not the black one, unfortunately. But I am older than him. I like to say I taught him all that he knows.

Price: Right, Right...

Canak: And I'm Rihanna, right? People always say, 'Oh, Chris Brown! You must be Rihanna!' But thankfully Chris is not that kind of person.

Price: Right, you know with all the domestic-abuse issues...that's not what we want to have happen. So. Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself? Who are you, where'd you grow up, where'd you go to school, and what brings you here today?

Brown: Alright. Like she said, my name is Chris Brown. I was born in New York, but I've basically lived in Ventura California my whole life. It's known for surfing and fun times, it's a beach city. I went to Foothill Technology High School, and right after high school, I did three years of missionary work through a program called Special Task Force with the Unification Church. Basically, we went across the country and we witnessed, told people about our faith, and did service projects and tried to help out, just make the world a better place in the small ways that we could. Then I did one year of college at Chabot Community College in Hayward, CA, and right now I'm currently in my third year of a program called Next Gen Academy, which is a leadership program for high school and college students. Basically, we try to help youth discover their passions, connect to God, and really find out what it is that makes them come alive. It's been good. It's been a really good experience.

I'm here today because Sarah asked me here so we could talk about our marriage process. It's a little bit unique. Not your normal story here. We actually had an arranged marriage from our parents. It's part of

our faith, I guess you could say. We strongly believe in abstinence before marriage and...what happened was our parents matched us. Our church has a website where you put your information and a little bit about ourselves, what we're looking for, and then our parents went on the website and they looked for candidates that fit the person I was looking for, and it happened to be Sarah. And my mom called her dad, and then we started talking from then on.

Price: You know, that's extremely interesting because right now, especially in America we're seeing this extreme disillusionment with marriage. I think just a few months ago, the *Christian Science Monitor* even had "Redefining marriage" as their cover story. Your story is very interesting because people are looking for new ways to revive this institution. What's interesting about your story is that you're mixing the old, traditional way, which is arranged marriage and parents being highly involved in the process, plus also using new technology.

Floyd: Plus Isaiah, I don't know about you, but the audience thinks Chris hit the lottery, too! You have an arranged marriage and you end up with someone like Sarah Canak, I think you won the lottery, Chris!

Brown: I think I did, I got very lucky on this one.

Floyd: You know, it's funny, Isaiah, because a lot of people were asking questions, to be quite frank with you, it's amazing to you that we have this kind of thing now. And perhaps that's what's needed! You know, if we have this marriage work, and it's because the people were wise enough and smart enough to arrange a marriage...then maybe that's what we need to go back to, since the new way sure isn't working, is it?



Brown said, "a big part of the marriage [Blessing] process... [is] to break down the barriers of race, religion, and culture. We believe that through the Blessing, we can create world peace."

The Decision To Have an Arranged Marriage

Price: Well, let me ask you a question. Why did you guys decide, and why did your parents decide to get involved and do the arranged marriage?

Canak: Well, I can help answer that. A lot of people ask me that. I think a big question for people is, 'well, what if you don't like the person?' It's really such a thing that is deeply embedded in our Unification Church culture, but I really believe it's a part of everyone's culture too. Because everybody's looking for love. I know they want something that will last. I feel like sometimes it's easy to forget that because we see something different every day.

Price: Yeah. There's a kind of fast-food culture, I mean, we kind of take that concept into everything we do in life.

Canak: Exactly. I think, not to judge or anything, but I've seen a lot of my friends go through the dating process and a lot of times it ends up...not really where they want it to be. They really commit themselves emotionally to somebody and a lot of their time, and then...it's not something that's over and done with in a thirty-minute episode, you know? There are some real consequences to not taking your time, or basing a relationship on something fleeting. So, the reason I decided to do this was because I believe in lasting love. Because we are in the process, we don't think about it in the same way other people do. We know that we're in it for life. We know that we're really about developing ourselves as a person and working on it.

I know from experience, of course, love comes to you and it's there, but if you're making a commitment, love *is* the commitment. You need to work on it. It's a journey and a process and an effort, definitely. So, that's why I would say I chose to do this.

Price: Well Chris, what about you?

Brown: Well, one thing I like about this process is that in dating, you think about, ‘Oh I got to get the hot guy’ or ‘the cute girl’ or ‘the person with money,’ and a lot of it is about external details. But with our process, the entire thing was centered on God. Like, even when our parents suggested us to each other, we prayed about it for 21 days before making a decision that we wanted to go forward with it. And of course it hasn’t been completely easy, I don’t think any marriage process is an easy journey, but the thing that kept us going throughout this whole time, was that love and dedication we have for God. Both of us are extremely dedicated, and I feel like that’s why we’ve been able to work until now. We’ve been together for three years, and we just recently got married in March, and it’s been an amazing journey because of our commitment to God and the fact that we’ve learned so much about ourselves along the way.

I feel like I’ve grown tremendously in the last three years. I’ve had to let go of a lot of selfish tendencies and other things that are holding me back from truly opening up to Sarah.

Price: What’s interesting about this process is that it’s definitely not unique to Christianity. You see this in Buddhist and Hindu cultures. It’s a very interesting process in the giving credence to your parents who have more experience. That might actually be a nice thing—now of course my dad is always trying to hook me up with every waitress we see! So, you know, for him, it would be like, ‘oh, here! This is the one!’ and I would know that he didn’t put any thought into it – but one thing that I really like about what you’re saying is that it’s about something more than the physical, more than the now. Because I think it’s really easy to get so caught up in the now, who is cute right now, who do I get to be seen with, what dinner are they going to take me to, what dinner can I afford, those are all those kind of questions we ask, but you two take it a step beyond that.

Parents and the History of the Unification Church

Floyd: And you know, Isaiah, one of the things these two will never have to worry about is ‘I wonder what my parents will think of the other person!’

Price: And you’ll never have that kind of embarrassing family gathering where the parents say, ‘well, we told you...’

Brown: I’m glad we brought up parents actually, because it’s been a big part of this process for me. I definitely feel that I’ve come to trust my parents so much more after this. My mother asked me, what was I looking for in a spouse, and I gave her a list of characteristics. We talked a lot, and probably, the most we ever talked was going through this process, and definitely on a much deeper level than we ever usually do.

Price: Well, excellent! You know, that whole communication in getting involved with your parents – I think that’s one of the things we need a lot more in our society is parent involvement. In everything from early stages and education all the way up through our lives. That’s the one thing we’re really missing in this culture.

This has been a mind-blowing conversation so far. So, you guys are with the Unification Church.

Canak: That’s right.

Price: So, arranged marriage is a part of the Unification Church.

Canak: Definitely, yes.

Price: And I hear that it’s got a long and illustrious history?

Canak: It does! Both of our parents were matched as well, by Rev. Moon who is the founder of the Unification Church. You know, it’s really interesting. Rev. Moon has set some world records: for fishing, but a big one is for what they call ‘mass weddings.’ Our parents were married along with a large group of people in Madison Square Garden in 1982. My parents, Mitch and Jun Canak, and –

Brown: My parents, Robert and Penny Brown –

Canak: Yea. And um, I don’t recall the number of couples...

Brown: It was what they call the 2,075 couple Blessing, but there’s been many since then. Tens of thousands of people getting Blessed – or married – all at the same time.

Beyond Racial, National, and Cultural Boundaries

Canak: Yes, the one we were just in was in Korea, and it was over 2,500 couples, from what I heard. But

they also videotape the ceremony, and then people watch it by satellite. So, if people are not able to make it to the ceremony, what they do is they watch it live, and they are married through the same ceremony. So, there were people from 190 nations around the world participating in the same ceremony. It was really incredible.

Floyd: So, this is a question from the audience, Sarah. When you got married, you were basically involved in a couple thousand other couples at the same time?

Canak: Yes, that's right. We all got married in the same room!

Floyd: Well, how would you like to be the photographer at that wedding!

Brown: I wish we had a video of it to show you, actually. Because I'm pretty visible. I was waving my hands like crazy, because my little brother was in Uganda at the moment, and I wanted to send a big shout-out to him and the rest of my family. I wish we had that tape, because it's pretty funny.

Canak: Yea, it really is.

Brown: We were out there in the middle of 2,500 couples, doing our wedding vows and exchanging the rings, and all kinds of other things to really bring God into the ceremony.

Price: Well, that's one thing that's really interesting as well. Because we mentioned a lot about modern-day marriages and materialism, and one of the biggest shows of material wealth tends to be the wedding, and that's in just about every culture. So, you see the extravagant expenditure, and it becomes more about the wedding than the love and the connection between the people. From what I hear, there are more fights during the wedding planning process than all the years leading up to it.

Floyd: Well if there had been a fight at their wedding, it'd have been a brawl!

Price: 'Who threw the first chair?' Also, one of the things I really like – I'm an international person myself. I lived in China, lived in Sweden, have friends all over the world, and it's really interesting that you guys shared your wedding ceremony with so many different people from so many different cultures. You all have the Unification Church in common, but at the same time, there are so many differences. It's so nice to see people actually come together for something that unite them, instead of focusing on the things that divide them.

Brown: that's actually a big part of the marriage process; you know to break down the barriers of race, religion, and culture, whatever it is that's keeping us apart. Because we believe that through this marriage process, through the Blessing, we can create world peace. How can you hate your enemy nation if your grandchildren are from that nation? That's a huge, huge part of what the Blessing is all about, and what Rev. Moon is trying to accomplish through these mass weddings that bring so many different cultures and races together.

Price: And there's a huge historical precedent for that too! That's how peace treaties were brokered in the medieval times. You would have a French person marry an English person to unite the family. You would get this whole kinship vow between the individuals. And I think that's a really interesting bonding experience, something we need more as a global society. We need more of something that brings us together, that focuses on our similarities, the fact that we all have issues. Global warming does not just affect Americans; it affects people in Africa as well. And war-it affects everybody. We all need to work together.

Canak: Like Chris said, a big, big thing about Unification Church marriages is that we encourage people to go across the boundaries of face, culture and religion. I mean, my parents, for instance. My mom was an American-born Japanese woman, and my dad's ancestry is European. So I'm a mixed race, and a lot of kids in the Unification Church are multicultural as well. And, I think the result is great. I mean, look at me!

Price: And Chris mentioned something interesting, you said your brother is in Uganda. Is he still over there?

Brown: Um, he was there for a month. He was doing service work and teaching character education to schools and students in the Ugandan area.

Price: Well that's fantastic. I study Identity Politics and Ethnic Conflicts, and Uganda is definitely one of the places I studied. So I really give it up to you and your brother for going up there and trying to make a difference in the world. Sarah, we first met because she was coming on, trying to make a difference in the world. My hats off to both of you! Thank you for a wonderful show, this has been The Stimulus.