

The Ahava Loves Experience – Roland

The first time I heard of the Ahava Loves matchmaking platform, my heart is filled with great expectation. Due to the pandemic happening around the world, I do not get much chance to meet others face to face. The Ahava Loves website promises to bring together people with the goal of meeting your future spouse. (This is a great deal for me, as some people think meeting marriage candidates in fellowship as friend first then gradually transition to become a relationship is more natural, for me I don't have the know-how to do so, so when Ahava Loves aims brings together people with the same purpose, to first be friends with the pre-text of becoming part of a relationship, this excites me very much.) Since I feel mission-bound to China, I've always hoped that I can return to my native country. At Ahava Loves, I discovered that it allows international contact. My heart is filled with happiness, because in my heart I've been looking for a marriage candidate located in the country which I am going to eventually end up in

I have with great expectation. I started filling in my info soon after the matchmaking website went online. I began using Ahava Loves immediately. After being sent the list of candidates, I saw the sister-in-Christ Nemo whom I'm currently dating. She filled her profile with a lot of info; from reading her faith info to her self-introduction, I became very excited. In my mind I felt "Isn't this the person I was looking for all along?" (So please fill your profiles as complete and detailed as possible.) With similar faith backgrounds, and more importantly with the same missionary vision, I excitedly sent a chat request. I received a reply soon thereafter. I remember that during our first chat we didn't talk too much but did schedule a zoom meeting. Nemo is a socially active and delightful sister-in-Christ. Her boundless energy and openness are deeply attractive. The first conversation we had left great positive impressions, hence we both accepted the "date" request from one another. (This request does not mean we are already formally in a relationship but is for focusing our efforts to see God's purpose and leadership between us, hence won't be considering other people for the time being.)

Nemo is located in China. I live in Canada. The physical gap is large. During our first online meeting, we decided to commit to a shared daily Bible-reading sessions. This is how our romance blossomed. During her evenings and my evenings, if there are no emergencies, we would meet online. The Bible-reading and fellowship we enjoyed only took up a portion of our meet. The rest of the time is spent communicating and understanding one another. I also started to develop an

understanding of her during our fellowship time. I don't have much experience dating; hence I don't have a reference to tell the various differences between online dating and offline dating. This may have turned out to be for my advantage. Of course if the situation permits I will choose to go back to China and meet her face-to-face. Perhaps with a physical meeting, even if for a short while, our relationship may become stabilized.

In addition, being able to have fellowship with one another in the beginning of our relationship is a great experience. First understand the faith of the other, learn what their world-view is, what her thoughts on romance is. At the same time also understanding whether we both share a vision of how we plan to live our life in accordance with God's will. These things, when uncovered first, will form a firmer scaffold upon which we can build our future. With physical dating and fellowship groups, it may mostly be about having fun and delays getting to know the real you, causing unnecessary pain and suffering and leaving behind emotional wounds that will take time to heal. Of course, off-line dating has its advantage too, as getting to know someone face-to-face first instead of through webcams and chatrooms has its perks. I am someone who is more trusting of others, and I am also attracted to others who are trusting. Nemo is a person who is willing to open her heart. I can see her innocence and loveliness. All these things work to attract me to her. If we both do not hold the trusting attitude when we started our online meeting, then maybe we won't be where we are today.

Our romance is still growing. We still pray about it, searching for our Lord's guidance. This romance let me learn a great lesson: In this long-distance relationship, though I cannot control much, due to the pandemic and my passport problems I cannot travel back to China, I know we plot our own plans, but our path is determined by God. I do what I can and leave the rest to our Lord, for I know He will bring to fruition what is good according to His perfect will.