WFWP Arizona USA: Building Bridges From the Heart - Follow-up

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From the moment we walked into the breathtakingly beautiful home of Rev. Dave Vieweg and Rev. Tina Brown, we knew that a special experience of the heart was waiting for us. Not only was every room graced with spiritual paintings and statues of saintly figures from the world's major religions, but the magnificent two-story entryway was decorated with fresh flowers, a banner, a podium, and chairs for about 53 onlookers for a Bridge of Peace Ceremony put on by the Arizona GWPN Arizona planning committee.

An article was presented on this in the last Logic of Love Newsletter, but this is a follow-up personal testimony about the same event.

As already reported, two local TV stations, invited by WFWP participant Gloria Peterson, sent camera crews to cover part of the Ceremony and interviewed WFWP USA President Angelika Selle. But the internal highlight of it all was the keynote message delivered by President Angelika, who explained more in depth about Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han's vision, heart, and example of living by the logic of love and loving one's enemy. She explained in detail how the Bridge of Peace is not only a tool to bring two former enemies together but also a vehicle for changing our hearts before we get on the Bridge. The more that individuals prepare their hearts and understand whom they represent (not only themselves but also maybe the race, religion, or gender of the person being reconciled with) the more meaningful the experience is, not only for those who cross the Bridge but also for the participants.

So, in this case, some women and men, younger and older, had a profound experience of peacebuilding in the Bridge of Peace setting. Rev. Tina set the atmosphere by singing a beautiful rendition of "Love Can Build a Bridge." The reconciling pairs positioned themselves one on either side of the marble entryway.

At the podium, the emcee, who was Mrs. Glenda Lambert, Arizona's Global Women's Peace Network Coordinator, signaled the pairs to walk toward one another. They met in the middle in front of the podium, bowed to one another, exchanged their scarves as a sign of friendship and embraced with deep feeling.

Two such reconciliations were particularly moving. In one, WFWP Chapter Chairwoman Rhia Luz, representing South Korea, wearing a traditional Korean chimachogori, and holding a Republic of Korea flag, and another woman, representing North Korea and holding a Democratic People's Republic of Korea flag, met in the middle of the Bridge, exchanged flags, and embraced.

In my case, I represented Russia and held a Russian flag, while my counterpart, Rev. Dave, represented Ukraine and held a Ukrainian flag. Prior to the start of the Ceremony, we had spoken together about the Ukrainian and Russian people. We came to a meeting of the minds and hearts about what we were about to do, who we were representing, and the importance of contributing even an iota of spiritual energy to establishing peace between those two warring brother nations. Thus, when we walked to the middle of the entryway, exchanged flags, and embraced, it was with genuine emotion and sincere commitment to forging a loving peace.

A surprise award ceremony followed the emotional crescendo of the Bridge of Peace. Dr. Susan Taffer, a professor at Arizona State University and founder and CEO of World Connections Foundation, accompanied by Glenda Lambert, GWPN Planning Committee chair, and Kim Evans of the Bridge of Peace Planning Committee called President Selle to the podium. Mrs. Taffer then on behalf of the GWPN Arizona presented Mrs. Selle with a crystal globe award for "Exemplary Leadership."

Rev. Tina set the perfect concluding tone of the event by singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth." Afterward, all celebrated with a cake cutting and joyful fellowship, because that is also part of the Bridge of Peace. When people are reconciled, there is joy, there is deeper connection. In this case, I would say, even the peace of Heaven was felt.