

UPF Tokyo, Japan: Interreligious Forum Remembers the East Japan Earthquake

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March 12, 2021



Tokyo, Japan -- On March 12, 2021, UPF and the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) in Japan virtually convened the 114th Interreligious Forum, under the theme, "The 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake, 10 Years of Prayer: Let's Create a New Bond between God and People and People and People." Around 150 people, including scholars and Ambassadors for Peace representing the Shinto, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian faiths, participated in the event to remember the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake, support the areas that were affected by the disaster and pray for world peace.

Prior to the forum, on March 5 and 6, Mr. Shinobu Ishimaru, coordinator of IAPD-Japan, visited the areas in Miyagi prefecture that were impacted by the earthquake, and together with the co-chair of the Miyagi Prefecture Association of Ambassadors for Peace, prayed for the victims. At the beginning of the event, a video about the visit was shown. Following this, religious representatives from five areas in Japan, Taiwan and the United States offered prayers. At the end of the ceremony, a chorus comprised of members from the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, sang "Hana wa Saku" ("Flowers Bloom" in English).



In his keynote address, "Restoration of Love," the chairman of UPF-Japan, Mr. Masayoshi Kajikuri, emphasized the importance of prayer and the power of bonds.

Mr. Kajikuri shared his experience of delivering relief supplies to areas that were hit hard by the

earthquake immediately after it struck. At that time, he realized that the bonds that were formed between people who were supporting one another through this difficult period encouraged the hearts of the Japanese people and fostered resilience and recovery. He said that this lesson needs to be applied today and that this is what will truly console the souls of the 20,000 victims.

He also added: "Prayer plays an extremely important role in making bonds the axis of recovery. Prayer is offered to God and the peace of the soul is given only by God. The power of bonds becomes the power to revive and restore mankind when we strengthen our relationship with God and people. In order to overcome Covid and bring mankind together, it is now time for prayer and the restoration of love."



UPF-Taiwan president, Dr. Yen-Po Tang said, "Japan and Taiwan, which have built a deep friendship over the years, will continue to be good partners forever. I express my deepest condolences to the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear power plant accident, and I believe that the spirit of 'living for the sake of others' advocated by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the founders of the UPF, will keep on spreading."

After the keynote address, Mr. Seishi Moriyama, a monk and nuclear power expert who lives in Shimane prefecture, spoke about what he experienced after hearing of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. He felt prayers from religious people would be needed so that the person leading the management of the crisis could handle it calmly, and called on religious Ambassadors for Peace to pray.

Responding to this, Mr. Ishimaru said, "Mr. Moriyama's call started prayers of condolences and recovery by religious Ambassadors for Peace, and a 10-year history of prayer began. The victims expressed their gratitude towards this."

Mr. Kawakami Yoshio, president of IAPD-Japan, also commented, saying: Mr. Kajikuri's "keynote speech itself was a 'prayer.' Prayer is a bond. When interest in others increases, a heart of love develops, which leads to actions for others. I want to keep working for the sake of people and God by praying and working together with you."

The forum concluded with the participants affirming UPF's vision by reading a passage from the keynote speech Rev. Sun Myung Moon gave at an event commemorating the founding of UPF.