

UPF and FFWPU Asia's Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) in Bangkok, Thailand

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UPF and FFWPU in Asia hosted the Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) in Bangkok, Thailand from Feb. 24-27, 2017. The 30 participants and international staff from 5 nations represented different religions, political and professional backgrounds. Although small in comparison to other ALC programs, the delegates reflected high-level distinguished guests, including: an advisor to the Prime Minister of Cambodia, provincial directors, the president of a university youth organization, government officials, a school principal from Nepal, political leaders from the Philippines and a pastor from Indonesia

At the Opening Session Dr. Chung Sik Yong, chairman of UPF Asia, Dr. Robert S. Kittel, Education Director of UPF Asia, and Mrs. Ursula McLackland, UPF Asia Secretary General, introduced the conference theme "Providing Vision and Leadership for Nation-Building and Peace."

This was a 4-day (including arrivals and departures) UPF education seminar for VIPs from Asia focusing on public-mindedness, marriage, family and the value of the Blessing. There were 30 participants from four Asian nations: Cambodia -17; Philippines-4; Nepal-2; Indonesia-2; Thailand-2; Germany, USA, Korea-3.



At the end, participants join the Interfaith Peace Blessing Festival (IPBF) and committed to finish the 5 ceremonies of the Blessing which includes the 3-day ceremony. Participants came to understand that not only their own religion but all other faith traditions advocate purity and family values and promised to work together to be an example of good family, help re-build families in their communities and establish a nation of True Love in their nations.

The question-and-answer time following the presentations on the second and third day were lively and engaging. Participants realized that UPF's Principles of Peace can really solve fundamental problems at the individual, social or global levels.

They asked questions about raising children, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, and expanding the foundation of UPF in their country. Most importantly, it became crystal clear that we all had to work together to create a culture of peace; no one can do it alone as everyone must be involved in peace-building.



Reflection

Bijaya Raj Sharma Kadhel from Nepal thanked the organizers and presenters. He noted that the UPF founders, Father and Mother Moon, were well respected throughout Nepal. Concluding his remarks he recited a poem entitled, "My Loving Country." He drew pictures with his words describing the hills and valleys, the yaks and flowers, and the cool Himalayans water rushing down the mountains. Everyone was reminded of the love they have for their own country.

Rolando A. Aya-ay from the Philippines said, "This was the best conference I ever attended. My wife asked me to accompany her and even though I did not know what type of conference this was going to be, I'm so glad I attended. I never imagined in my entire life that people coming from such different religious backgrounds can come together as one... This is the place I discovered this was not impossible." He concluded by saying he would wholeheartedly support UPF in the Philippines.

Rev. Lisar Kumendong from Indonesia explained that he came from a small island that is just 42 kilometers wide but was the scene of some of the most terrible inter-religious fighting in his country where churches and mosques were burned down. Since then it has been their struggle how to revive social harmony. They he continued, saying, "For me personally, it was miracle to attend this high-quality UPF event. The conference gave me hope and I will distribute this content to religious leaders in my community. I hope UPF can come and hold a similar program on my island."

H.E. Say Sorphea, President, World School Cambodia, first thanked highly-respected Father and Mother Moon for holding this UPF program. Originally she strongly resisted coming to this program because she and her husband were very, very busy and especially she wanted to be with her children over the weekend. However, as she explained in the closing session, "But today, what we learned is more important than anything else. It really, really impressed me; it touched my heart deeply. It taught me how to be a good parent and love others. When I return to Cambodia I will share this UPF program with my friends and colleagues."