

Peace Road 2017 in Toledo, Spain includes Islam, Christianity and Judaism

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Toledo, Spain -- A Peace Road event in the historic city of Toledo included visits to holy sites of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Taking place two weeks after the terrorist attack in Barcelona that killed 14 persons, this event of September 2, 2017, was envisaged as a response to that act of hatred.

In planning the event, we recalled the words of UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon in his autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*:

When we look at human history, we see that the most brutal and cruel wars were not fought between nations but those between races. Among these, the worst were between races where religions were used as a pretext.

What makes people hate and kill each other like this? Of course, there are many reasons on the surface, but when we dig deeper to find the underlying causes, we come across religion in virtually every case.

Religious wars continue to occur because many politicians use the enmity between religions to satisfy their selfish designs. In the face of political objectives, religions lose their way and vacillate. Religions exist for the sake of peace.

Rev. Dr. Moon was a person who dedicated his whole life to building bridges of peace between races,

cultures, nations, and religions.



The idea behind this Peace Road event was to become closer to each other, even though we have different religions. We planned to visit Toledo, a small city south of Madrid that is known as "the City of the Three Cultures," where Christians, Muslims and Jews have lived together in peace while maintaining their own traditions. Rev. Dr. Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon visited Toledo in 2011.

We rented two buses to bring around 80 people from Madrid to Toledo, including 26 Muslims, Evangelicals and Catholics.

Our first stop was *Mirador del Valle*, a famous place at the top of a hill overlooking the city. There we took a picture of the whole group.

The buses left us at the entrance to the city, and we walked on the typically narrow streets of this beautiful, historic and famous city.

We gathered near the Mosque of Cristo de la Luz, the only mosque that still exists in the city. We wanted to enter the gardens of the mosque but could not receive permission, so we went to a small square nearby, where our Muslim friends sang Muslim songs, offered prayers of Koranic verses, and read Muslim texts for peace. We could feel God's presence as we listened to Arab poems and verses of the Quran.

We continued walking through the narrow streets of the city and arrived at the Convent of the Discalced ("shoeless") Carmelites, a Catholic order, where we were welcomed by Brother Miguel. He explained to us about the history of this congregation and its founder, Saint Teresa of Ávila. We sang some Catholic songs and Unificationist songs and were given a tour of the convent and its beautiful garden before having lunch together in the convent dining room. Once again, we were moved by the spirituality of this place and the kindness of the Carmelites.

After the meal, we continued walking until we arrived at the Synagogue of *El Transito*, a famous and historic building now used as a museum. We had organized a Sephardic song recital by Ana Alcaide and her husband, who are very good friends of UPF, and thanks to her help we received permission, as Ana is well known in Toledo.

Before embarking on the road back to Madrid, we had one hour of free time in which to enjoy this famous city together with our guests.

It was a wonderful experience, and we felt God's desire to break down the walls between people of different beliefs.