

UPF Manila, Philippines organizes two-day Interreligious Leadership Conference

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January 7, 2020



Manila, Philippines -- Building on the successful World Clergy Leadership Conference (WCLC) held in New York City at the end of 2019, UPF-Philippines organized a two-day Interreligious Leadership Conference on January 7–8, 2020.

The theme was, "Providing Vision and Leadership for Nation-building and Peace: The Role of Religious Leaders." The program was held at the UPF Peace Embassy building in the capital, Manila. The 36 participants included eight couples and represented 18 different Christian denominations.

The largest delegation of 12 participants came from the Filipino island of Palawan, where UPF held a conference in the middle of December immediately following the First Ladies Summit in Palau in early December.

Video and PowerPoint images from the New York WCLC inspired the Filipino religious leaders as they could see such a large, diverse group of international and interreligious clergy gathered from around the world supporting the work and vision of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to create "One Family Under God."

Presentations at the Manila conference focused on sharing with the clergy deeper insights into the teachings of UPF's founders and how these are uniquely positioned to address critical challenges faced in nations around the world, including the Philippines.

The Filipino clergy understood their moral responsibility and the need to address the large number of unwed teenage pregnancies and escalating HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in their country. Sadly, in both of these statistics, this nation leads the world. To begin to tackle this problem, the moral and ethical values in the family need to be strengthened.

Particularly unique to this conference was a focus on the mission of Jesus; two separate presentations addressed this topic. The first was Jesus' role as the "last Adam." It was explained that since it was not good for the first Adam to be alone (Gen. 2:18–19), then it stands to reason that Jesus, as the last Adam, should also not have been alone. In other words, Jesus should have been married.



The second presentation on Jesus examined the value and purpose of his sacrifice on the cross. Unique insights from the founders' teachings are simple, profound and biblical, providing powerful and compelling arguments for understanding the significance of Jesus' extraordinary sacrifice and its impact on world history.

Although the content was new and sometimes challenging, the humility of the Filipino clergy dominated the atmosphere of the conference. Questions were asked respectfully, and the audience sincerely invested their heart in the short two days together.

A special case study was presented on activities and projects in the Philippines, the Asia-Pacific region, and the UPF's global providence. The clergy could more clearly see their role as guardians of a nation's moral character and their responsibility in protecting and reviving the institutions of marriage and family.

At the closing session, reflections from the participants were heartfelt and introspective. There were prayers of repentance and an eager willingness to take responsibility, with an urgency to move forward quickly. Already a follow-up program has been planned for the fourth week of February after the delegates and staff return from the World Summit in Korea.

Concluding the closing session, there was unanimous consent among participants to use this conference as the launching pad for WCLC in the Philippines.