

Building a World of Universal Peace at a Time of Global Crisis - Madrid, Spain

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Madrid, Spain - The more than 700 people who attended the opening program of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's tour in Europe are unlikely to soon forget the compelling sight of a man giving all he had despite being well into his tenth decade of life. His vitality, his parental love expressed through his caring words, profound insights, joyful stories, sad reflections, thrilling moments, facial expressions—all this drama brought the audience to an intimate closeness. "Spain is a land of passion," Dr. Sun Myung Moon kept repeating, "and you should use this passion for God's will."

The program opened with musical offerings from Raul Thais Antequera, a pianist who became blind in the middle of his piano career yet turned disaster into victory by developing a very sensitive way to create music. Raul improvised a tapestry of peaceful music while people were filling the hall. Later on, he played, together with the soprano Monica Luz, an improvised theme for voice and piano bringing heaven closer to us.

Three UPF Ambassadors for Peace offered prayers for peace and blessing: Silvia Cerrada, a young Muslim woman who is very active in different interfaith forums; Abraham Haim, a Jewish historian representing the ancient Sephardic tradition; and Fr. Isidro Hernandez, a Catholic monk of the Trinitarian Order, who has been Media Director of the Spanish Federation of Catholic Orders.



Interfaith prayers from Silvia Cerrada (Islam) Abraham Haim (Judaism) and Fr. Isidro Hernandez. (Catholicism)



Songs of Peace from soprano Monica Luz and Raul Thais Antequera, piano

Next, three speakers gave congratulatory remarks. Dr. Thomas Walsh, President of UPF International, greeted the audience with some words in Spanish, a gesture appreciated by the audience. Professor Jose M. Laureiro, director of a public school in Madrid, shared his experiences about peace and multicultural education. In his school 90 percent of the students are non-Spaniards, many of them are Muslim and he himself is a Jew. He commented on his impression the first time he heard Father Moon speak some years ago and the good results he has had by including peace education in the curriculum of a school with more than 30 nationalities.

The third speaker was Prof. Xabier Pikaza, one of the most prominent Catholic theologians in the Spanish language, with over 30 books written, many of them used as text books on comparative religions in Spain and Latin America. Pikaza revealed that he has been studying Father Moon and the Divine Principle together with generations of his students for the past 30 years at the Pontifical University of Salamanca. Pikaza explained how Father Moon came to liberate men and women so they can find in their relationship a divine mission, a way to develop their own divinity—a way back to Eden. Pikaza continued saying that Father Moon came to liberate God, whether we believe or not. God has to go back to the state before the fall.



The Westin Palace Hotel, Madrid, venue for the first program of the UPF Founder's Tour in Europe



A large and diverse audience was in attendance

Pikaza's remarks served as a fitting introduction for Dr. Hyung Jin Moon, the UPF International Chairman, who came to the stage to give a heartfelt introduction to his parents, both from the perspective of a loving son for an exceptional father and also a faithful believer coming to terms with exceptional beliefs. It was all very moving and truly set the tone for an extraordinary speech by the UPF Founder.

Father Moon's intention in his speech went far beyond the proclamation expressed in the printed text "Building a World of Universal Peace at a Time of Global Crisis" and became a much more intimate time of sharing and reflection with what felt like one family in the hall. "I care for all of you as your true Father," he said.



The UPF International Chairman, Rev. Hyung Jin Moon introduces his parents.



Dr. and Mrs. Moon returned to Spain after a two-year absence since "Peace Cup 2009" hosted by Real Madrid

By the time the program ended at 11:30 in the night, there was a feeling that we had gone through something exceptional and that it would take some time to come to terms with all that had happened. On their way out of the hall, people were given Father Moon's autobiography, "As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen," in the new Spanish edition.

Five and half hours is well beyond the standard or accepted length of time for a lecture, sermon, or book presentation. But people didn't seem to mind that much. All I heard after the event were words of gratitude and joy for having had the chance to meet an extraordinary person filled with God's grace.