

Ki Hoon Kim opens Building a Nation and World of Peace conference

Tomiko Duggan
November 16, 2013



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, chairman, UPF-North America, welcomes participants

Los Angeles – The third in a series of UPF-USA conferences entitled “The USA at a Turning Point: Building a Nation and a World of Peace” was held in El Segundo, southwest of Los Angeles, on Nov. 15 and 16.

Mrs. Tomiko Duggan, acting secretary general of UPF-North America, welcomed the 70 participants. She quoted former US President John F. Kennedy, saying the work we do “is right” and we shouldn’t quit until God says, “Job well done.”

Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, chairman of UPF-North America, greeted the guests and said there is a real need to remove barriers between people, religions and nationalities in order to create lasting peace. He described how UPF Founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon encouraged people from former enemy nations to marry across boundaries to create lasting peace.



Session I: Nation-Building, Good Governance and the United Nations

Dr. Thomas Walsh, president of UPF International, spoke about the complex international relations that have developed after the end of the Cold War, including increased tensions between Islam and the West, plus China emerging as a global power.

In 2000, he said, Rev. Moon had urged the United Nations to adopt an interreligious council. “The next year on September 11, the US was attacked. Rev. Moon could see the potential for violence unless greater interfaith effort was undertaken,” Dr. Walsh said.

Dialogue and cross-cultural understanding are essential, he added. “A month ago we had an interfaith consultation in Amman [Jordan] about the crisis in Syria, with Sunni and Shia speakers. Further conferences with religious leaders are planned in Jerusalem and Geneva,” Dr. Walsh said. “UPF is

becoming a respected partner not only by religious leaders but political and social scientists,” he continued. He encouraged the audience to develop UPF in the US.

Mr. Ricardo de Sena from UPF International's Office of UN Relations, citing Rev. Moon's advice to “Marry someone outside your tribe,” said: “One nation which my native Argentina doesn't like is Brazil, where my wife is from! But we love each other centered on God.”



Session II: The USA at a Turning Point: Building a Nation and a World of Peace

Mrs. Diana Olga Elizarraras Kim of the National Council of Women's Rights in Mexico, said, “We can only keep peace by keeping love in the family. Of course, women are important to teach these values, love and caring for one another. A nuclear family with an atmosphere of love and understanding and tolerance will bring peace.”

Mr. Philip Hellmich, director of peace at the Shift Network and the creator of a Peace Ambassador course to train people in peacebuilding, said that science, spirituality and inner peace are needed to systematically map out ways to create peace.

Professor David McGuffey, president of InterConsult USA and leader of the workshop Swords into Plowshares: Enemies into Friends, suggested that a basic restructuring of the US economy is needed to foster peace. “Serious inequality leads to frustration, which leads to anger, and anger leads to violence,” he said. “Drastic immigration reform is needed,” he added. “The vast majority came to the US for the same reason our ancestors came to this country.”

Dr. McGuffey also warned of the dangers of rising sea levels resulting from climate change. “If we work together, we can find solutions—working together in the same leaky boat to help the human family.”

Dr. Gary Spanovich, founder of the Wholistic Peace Institute, said, “Like Mahatma Gandhi, we must take responsibility in order to build our nation and a world of peace, and we too must use a spiritual approach,” he said, adding that Jesus had done the same. “If we choose good words and actions, we grow our spirit,” he said.

“Listen to the voice of the Lord within. Give our spiritual nature a voice at the decision-making table. It will guide us to create a culture of peace,” Dr. Spanovich said.

Rev. Kevin Thompson, pastor of the Family Federation for World Peace San Francisco, referred to the words of Rev. Moon that in order to build a world of peace, each person must transform into a peaceful person “If we can focus on one nation under God, we will do well,” he said.

After dinner, El Segundo City Councilwoman Marie Fellhauer welcomed participants and a proclamation from Chris Holden, majority whip of the California State Assembly, was read, commending the participants for their work for peace. Keynote speaker Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca said, “UPF is a necessary organization. The ideas of this international organization need to permeate into the hearts and the minds of the people of this nation.” The head of the largest sheriff's department in the United States, Lee Baca was appointed Ambassador for Peace.

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Prof. David C McGaffey, President of InterConsult USA; Hon. Keith McCarthy, former Mayor of Downey, and Rev. Mutima Imani

Session III: The Significance of Marriage and Family for a Stable and Prosperous Society

Rev. Michelene Millsap, co-pastor with her husband at Sadoc Christian Peace Family Church, said, "You can make a difference, because your decisions impact those around you." She recommended: "Be committed to personal change. Begin with Christ, and with that commitment you can make good relationships, including with your spouse. Abide in Christ and let him guide you in your path."

Mr. Nat Nehdar, Pasadena city commissioner, said that Rev. Moon had commissioned many high-quality gardeners and asked them to plant many seeds. "They believed in him and passed those seeds along, cultivating them and spreading them throughout the world."

Dr. David Burgess, former coordinator of UPF in the Northwestern US, called the family the most important human institution. He said there has been a tidal wave of change in the family structure: a 700 percent increase in births outside marriage since the 1960s and an exponential increase in the incarceration rate, with the greatest number of inmates coming from broken families.

"Social science research indicates that children who feel parental love feel less hostility or aggression, have a healthy independence, positive self-esteem, and positive self-adequacy," Dr. Burgess said. "That self-esteem comes from the parents, and when it is internalized they grow well."

Mr. Frank Sepehrnia encouraged the participants to use social media to get the message of UPF out. He noted that many Muslims were in fear after the 9/11 attacks due to the media reports about Muslims. "If we don't speak up for ourselves, someone else will do it for you. If you don't stand up for yourselves, who will?" he concluded.

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Mr. George Kazakos, Family Federation for World Peace-Northern California; Miss Hanna Nilson, UPF-Staff; Mrs. Patricia Fleischman, Women's Federation for World Peace, San Francisco

Session IV: The Need for Interfaith Dialogue, Mutual Respect and Cooperation and the Vision for Youth

Rev. Tom Cutts, president of the American Clergy Leadership Conference, said he learned from an imam not to pray just for peace but for God's peace. Religion has been sidelined because believers couldn't work together, he said. Yet religion transmits values and teaches people how to cooperate with one another.

Imam Seyed Shamshad Nasir of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in the Southwestern US said it was important to bring youth to such meetings. “God put it in us to love one another,” he said. “Ahmadiyya Muslims believe that from anyone’s mouth and heart can come words that will guide people to God. We all must respect one another and all the prophets of God to have a peaceful world,” he concluded.

Mr. Naokimi Ushiroda, head of the Unification movement's campus organization, the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, talked about inviting leaders of various religious groups on campus to an interfaith dialogue. Through such dialogue, he said, “We can give God a voice on campus; we need to take the initiative to embrace one another in peace. If we model what we believe in, the youth can begin to trust what we say.”



Reflections

Mr. Arin Ghosh encouraged youth to work together through joint service projects “within our faith and expand to other faiths, allowing self-realization.” From the youth perspective, “we must push the bar higher; if not, someone else will pull it down,” he said.

Mr. Teddy Choi, a Korean-American, said, “I am a proud Ambassador for Peace at 72 years old. I escaped from North Korea during the Korean War. I followed my father, who was a doctor. We were born-again Christians, and he prayed before he served each patient.” He continued: “We must invest in youth. They are our assets. Without our youth we cannot have peace.”



Ambassador for Peace appointments

Four new appointments were made: Mr. Joseph Campbell, Ms. Joanie English, Rev. Mutima Imani and Mr. Philip Hellmich. At lunch another Ambassador for Peace was appointed: Mr. Mehdi Zokaei, an Iranian businessman and chief editor of Javanan Magazine, the most widely-read Iranian magazine, with an international distribution of 280,000.

The final conference in the series will be held in Chicago on Dec. 13 and 14.

Using Mahatma Gandhi's Spiritual Model to Create Cultures of Peace

Gary Alan Spanovich

Executive Director, Wholistic Peace Institute, USA

November 15, 2013

Address at a Conference on "The USA at a Turning Point: Building a Nation and a World of Peace"

Los Angeles, California



"It is not enough to teach children how to read, write and count. Education has to cultivate mutual respect for others and the worlds in which we live, and help people forge more just, inclusive and peaceful societies." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The USA is at a turning point, and we must work now to build our nation of peace and our world of peace; we can no longer wait for others to do that work for us. We must begin now, today and including everyone in this room and we must start by building "cultures of peace" in our homes, in our schools and in our communities. It must spread out from there, and we must be dedicated to this course and our work with it, for the other side, the arms industry, operates 24/7 – never sleeping, constantly producing missiles, bombs, guns, bullets and expanding the nuclear arsenal. So we too must never stop building our "culture of peace"; we too must work 24/7.

We must work as junior Mahatma Gandhis against all those who would have use military violence to suppress basic human rights – something both Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield and the Amnesty Executive Director Dr. Schulz told me was the reason war exists – due to the violation of basic human rights.

One simple Indian man, a deeply spiritual Hindu, took on the full might of the most powerful military machine on the planet at the time. Mahatma Gandhi confronted the British Raj (British rule in the Indian subcontinent between 1858 and 1947) seeking independence from Great Britain. He was a deeply spiritual human being. God and his faith in God gave him his fearlessness, and his ability to fast for long periods of time allowed him to cleanse himself of normal worldly concerns so that he was able to pull from his Divinity within to know what to do and when to do it. A reporter camped outside his hut while he undertook a long fast, asking Gandhi what the next step was. Gandhi also took a vow of silence, and after weeks of silent meditation came out and announced, "I will make salt." The reporter felt maybe he has lost it; but Gandhi began a march to the ocean and in his pre-TV, pre-radio era attracted millions of people who also marched to the ocean and made salt. It was a crime under the British law, but the British could not put millions of people in jail. Historians say that this action broke the back of the British Raj, and after that it was only a matter of time before Great Britain left India!

We must each personally take on the responsibility that Mahatma Gandhi took on; we must become responsible for building our nation of peace and our world of peace. Like Mahatma we must also use a spiritual approach, for the spiritual approach is the most powerful. Mahatma was not the only one who proved that. Jesus was another, so were the many saints and martyrs throughout Christian history. Today the Nobel Peace laureates are in fact our living Mahatmas – our peace saints. Kim Dae-jung endured three years of torture in prison on death row, Nelson Mandela spent decades in prison and Adolfo Perez Esquivel endured torture in prison. What they all had in common was that each was not afraid to look evil in the eye. Evil blinked and the peace work changed history.

Sometimes people ask me if Satan is real. I usually answer by saying you can see Satan's face in every war: his teeth are the bombs and the missiles, and he delights in all the killing that occurs. There can be no doubt that its terrible spirit is alive and revels in destruction and killing on a grand scale.

So what can we all do today if we accept the calling of God to create "cultures of peace"? Are we ready to help the Lord create "cultures of peace" on the Earth today so that the idea of war and using war to settle differences becomes so patently absurd and illogical that it will be banished to the dust bin of history as a dinosaur?

So how do we do that? I would like to suggest that we need a new approach – a wholistic approach to end conflict and prevent war; one that recognizes our inherent humanness, our inherent spirituality and the Divinity that dwells at the core of all human beings. The 1989 Nobel Peace Laureate, the Dalai Lama, says we need a "human approach" to world peace, for when we are fully human we are naturally spiritual and spirituality is part and parcel of being a human being. He also recommends a two-step approach to peacemaking: (1) rebuild the relationship which has been damaged, and (2) talk about the specific issues. He says the relationship healing must come first.

Over the years I have developed a Wholistic Approach© to mediation and conflict resolution and am now writing a book: *Using a Wholistic Approach© to End Conflict and Prevent War*. To use this approach to develop "cultures of peace" and to heal our human-to-human interaction, we must understand that we are whole and our wholeness has four major dimensions:

We have a mental dimension, which is characterized by our thoughts and our intellect and all of our words and actions that flow from them – good or bad;

We have an emotional dimension, which is reflected in our heart feelings and our emotions and all of our words and actions that flow from them as well – good or bad; we cannot choose anger or hatred and expect to build a "culture of peace," but forgiveness and reconciliation, on the other hand, will build a new culture of peace;

We have a physical dimension, a physical body that is either healthy or unhealthy – sick or well – and which affects our words and actions; for again we are one whole, and we must take care of our bodies daily;

Finally, we have a spiritual dimension, which is as much if not more important than our other three dimensions and which is really where our Divinity resides; if we have a strong soul and choose words and actions that are good, our soul is strengthened and so can take on historical juggernauts, as did the Mahatma and Jesus and many others.

The Dalai Lama has said we have to use right thinking to see clearly and properly; we have to choose positive thought and thus speak from that place. We also have to trust our heart and our intuitive feelings and act from the values of compassion, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and hope. This is how we personally can work to build "cultures of peace" all around us.

Years ago I was watching a Los Angeles Times reporter debate with the Dalai Lama about the potency of compassion. The reporter said: "What is this fluffy stuff on compassion? It won't create anything, but the force of anger will get things moving and it is an American value." The Dalai Lama was quiet for a while and then said "I don't think so." He continued: "You can never know the potency of compassion unless you practice it; you can't think about it and think that is it. No, you must become compassionate and act compassionately, surrendering your anger and hate; then you will see its potency and then you will see it can overcome all anger and all hatred." We must overcome our internal anger and hate, for only then are we fully prepared to help the Lord build "cultures of peace"!

Most importantly, we must call on the Divine within us and we must listen to the Lord speak to us as a still small voice of the within. We can hear the still small voice speak when we are silent or in meditation or prayer. We must give our spiritual knowledge a voice at our personal decision-making table, for through silence and meditation on the Lord's voice within, the still small voice will guide us how to create "cultures of peace" and to perhaps affect a million people, as the blessed Mahatma did, and change history. The power of the Divine is within us and is waiting for our silence, in order to speak to us.

I have brought Arun Gandhi, a grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, many times to Portland, Oregon; once I asked him over dinner if the Mahatma ever talked about the still small voice and Arun said: "My grandfather talked about the still small voice all the time and felt it was so important to hear that he devoted one full day to silence each week."

There you have one of Mahatma's greatest tools for his work; you too have the same tool.