

NOVEMBER 2008

UPF TODAY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PEACE



GLOBAL PEACE FESTIVAL SPECIAL ISSUE

USA • Kenya • Mongolia • Paraguay • Philippines • Canada • Brazil

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION (UPF)

The UPF Family Is Growing

As reports come in from around the world, we are continually uplifted and encouraged. The UPF family is growing and the forward momentum is building.

The impact of the Global Peace Festival has been dramatic and beyond our expectations. Ambassadors for Peace are leading the way in advancing the vision, mission and work of the UPF, and especially through the Global Peace Festival, from Paraguay, to the USA, to Kenya and beyond.

To an ever-widening audience, the vision of building “one family under God” is becoming synonymous with peace. If we can begin to embody this ideal, the implications of the message start to become manifest. If we are one family under God, then interfaith competition and conflict must be abandoned. If we are one family under God, then a culture of service is required, and the suffering that comes with poverty, disease, and a degraded environment must be abolished. If we are one family under God, then we must each establish our own microcosm of this ideal within our own families, as fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, parents and children.

We build one family under God, one family at a time. Indeed, if we are one family under God, then we understand the value of each and every human being; human rights, therefore, are secured not merely by our membership in a political community, but by the realization that our ultimate origin is most sacred. We share a common heritage, and we share a common legacy.

In the reports that follow in this issue of *UPF Today*, please consider the relevance of this ideal, for it undergirds, inspires, and guides all the efforts of UPF. Let us work together to build one family under God, in every corner of the earth.



Dr. Thomas G. Walsh,
Secretary General,
Universal Peace
Federation

CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 One Family Under God, by Michael Balcomb | 18 A Call for Peace and Unity in Mindanao, by GPF-Philippines |
| 4 We, the Joshua Generation, by Joseph Lowery | 20 Drawn Together by God's Love, by Manoel Ferreira |
| 5 The 21st Century and Peace, by Rev. Sun Myung Moon | 22 Canada's Role as a 'Middle Power,' by GPF-Canada |
| 6 A New Day for Kenya, by GPF-Kenya | 24 A Day for Peace, by Marty Miller |
| 8 A Commitment to Reconciliation, by Raila Odinga | 25 A Million Acts of Service and Kindness, by Miriam Parel |
| 10 Peace Resounds in the Heart of Asia, by GPF-Mongolia | 26 Interfaith Conference Goes Beyond Tolerance, by Carolyn Handschin |
| 12 Building One Family Under God, by Hyun Jin Moon | 27 Geneva Declaration on Interreligious Cooperation |
| 14 One Family Under God in Latin America, by GPF-Paraguay | 28 Youth Forge Paths to Peace in Italy, by Hod Ben Zvi and Giorgio Gasperoni |
| 16 Cattle Drive Spurs a Vision for Peace and Development, by Larry Moffitt | 30 Appreciating the Interfaith Mosaic of the Netherlands, by Carol Pobanz |

UPF TODAY

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UPF Today is the membership magazine of the Universal Peace Federation, founded by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon. Envisioning peace as a state of harmonious interdependence among individuals, families, nations and peoples, UPF advocates constructive and original practices that contribute to achieving a unified world of peace, the hope of all ages. The magazine offers a forum for Ambassadors for Peace fostering human development, good governance, public service, and collaborative peace efforts involving religions, nations and nongovernmental organizations.

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UPF is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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Cover photo:
Global Peace Festival in
Washington, DC, August 9, 2008

ONE FAMILY UNDER GOD

By Michael Balcomb,
Communications Director, UPF

Thousands of peacemakers came to celebrate peace on the lawn of the US Capitol August 9 at the Global Peace Festival USA. The gathering, billed as the largest interfaith and multicultural event ever held in Washington, DC, was the second in a series of 15 Global Peace Festivals this year, with the next planned for late August in Nairobi, Kenya.

“The great thing about the Festival is that it brings people together with neighbors from other faiths and cultures in a safe encounter,” said the Festival’s executive director Paul Murray, pastor of a fast-growing church in Baltimore. “When people see Muslims and Jews from Jerusalem and other trouble spots embracing each other in tears of forgiveness and reconciliation on the stage, they naturally reach out right away with those of other faiths in the crowd.”

Throughout the afternoon, the air vibrated with the sounds of prayers and songs of peace in many different keys. The Black Bear Native American singers called the crowd to order with a traditional prayer dance, and Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi and a large Muslim delegation shared traditional Islamic prayers of peace.

Several speakers reminded the crowd of the parallels with another great gathering in Washington 45 years ago, when Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his immortal message, “I have a dream.” Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, one of King’s closest aides during the sixties, said the time had come to fulfill King’s dream of creating the beloved community.

“We must become the ‘Joshua Generation’ Martin envisioned,” Lowery said, “leading the world into a promised land as One Family Under God.”

Latin Grammy winner Juan Fernando Velasco and gospel superstars Yolanda Adams and David Phelps – with seven Grammys between them – were among the many entertainers keeping the crowd in a festive mood, with additional performances from the 500-voice Global Peace choir and a strong contingent of local youth groups singing the Global Peace Festival theme song “Where Peace Begins.”

The Festival also celebrated the power of service to transform people and communities. “Service is just another way of saying ‘I love you,’” said Rev. Mark Farr of the Points of Light Institute, a lead festival partner. The Institute, along with the Universal Peace Federation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Washington, DC, and more than 242 partner agencies organized a recent citywide day of service. A “Food for Peace” drive helped fill the shelves of the Capitol Area Food Bank, which revealed to the Washington Post that thousands of families were newly at risk of hunger. Festival-goers brought food from as far away as Chicago.

The global theme of the Peace Festival is “One Family Under God” – a world without the barriers of race and religion – and the leadership role of America as the model of interfaith harmony.



Festival organizers included, left to right, Dr. Pyung Hwa Kim, Pastor Debye Swilley, Dr. Julia Kim, Bishop Jim Swilley



WE, THE JOSHUA GENERATION

By Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, President Emeritus, The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, USA

ADDRESS AT THE GLOBAL PEACE FESTIVAL WASHINGTON, DC, USA, AUGUST 9, 2008

I bring you greetings today on behalf of ten of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s fellow laborers in the nonviolent, direct action movement that was launched 45 years ago in the spring of 1963. Included among us are the Hon. Rev. Walter Fauntroy, Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, and Dr. Fred L. Shuttlesworth. We call ourselves the Martin Luther King, Jr., Council of Elders.



Dr. Joseph E. Lowery calls for new leadership for a "Joshua Generation."

It has been 45 years since, at that now "Historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave the world his immortal "I Have a Dream" speech.

It has also been 40 years since Martin told us a day before he was assassinated: "I've been to the mountain top and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you but we as a people will get to the Promised Land!" When he said "we as a people," he meant not just black people or white people, not just Jews or gentiles, but people of every race, creed, ethnicity, and color on this planet.

We declare, therefore, that 40 years is long enough for people of every race, creed, and color on this planet to wander in the wilderness of hate, terror, and estrangement from one another. We appeal to people of courage and conscience to become "the Joshua Generation" that Martin envisioned leading the world



Representing a desire for religions to work together for peace, Tibetan Buddhist monks pour water into a bowl as Sheikh Taysir Tamimi, chief judge of the Sharia Court of Palestine observes.

We appeal to people of courage and conscience to become "the Joshua Generation" leading the world into a Promised Land where we as One Family Under God would work together to end the barbarism of war, the insanity of racism, and the scourge of poverty.



Women pray for peace

into a Promised Land where we as One Family Under God would work together to end the barbarism of war, the insanity of racism, and the scourge of poverty.

I have come here today to thank Dr. Hyun Jin Moon and this unprecedented interfaith coalition for putting on this Global Peace Festival right here in our nation's capital.

Together, let us go forth from this place and this time as a "Joshua Generation" of God's family to do for the entire world on our watch in the 21st century what the nonviolent warriors convened by Dr. King did for America and the world on their watch in the 20th century. We pledge to stand with you and beside you as we, together, take this message to every corner of the earth in the months and years ahead and as we enlist in ever widening numbers people of faith and goodwill in our effort to demonstrate innovative models of cooperative action that concretely advance the work of reconciliation and peace.

God bless you. Peace, *shalom, a salaam alaikam.*

THE 21ST CENTURY AND PEACE

By Rev. Sun Myung Moon
Founder, Universal Peace Federation



Democracy has called for “human freedom” and “human liberation.” In contrast, we must call for “God’s freedom” and “the liberation of God.” When we succeed in relieving God’s sorrow, human liberation and the recovery of human freedom will follow automatically. Each of you should realize that you were born to liberate God and liberate the world.

In many ways, the United States is a country prepared by God’s blessing. The forefathers who built this country were the Pilgrim Fathers, who risked their lives for the sake of the freedom of religion and came to America seeking a land of freedom.

For the sake of their search for true religious freedom, these people left behind their parents, brothers and sisters, and homelands. They were even prepared to cut their ties to their home country as they crossed the Atlantic Ocean at the risk of their lives.

What about America today, though? Prayer in public schools is officially banned. The theory of evolution is given preference to the theory of creation in education. The divorce rate of around 50 percent is obliterating the sanctity of the family.

In 1971, I left my family and homeland to come to America, because I heard the voice of God sharing His concern about the current state of affairs here. Upon arriving here, I cried out that I had come as a fireman to a house that was on fire and as a physician to cure America of disease. Even then, I discovered that God was leaving America. It should be possible to find God everywhere in America, but God was departing from the hearts of people, from the families and from the schools. It seems like only yesterday that I stood on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan

and wept openly as I held on to God to keep Him from leaving America.

The time has come when America must awaken once again. It is time for the country as a whole to create a new movement to build true parents, true families, a true country, and a true world centered on God. In this way, America must keep God from leaving and again become a society that attends Him.

If America attends God properly, America’s family problems, moral problems, youth problems, and racial problems will be solved naturally. When America becomes a place where people of all races can live together in harmony, it will be a model for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

It is time for us to unite together and open the path that humankind must travel. It is time for America to complete its mission as the helmsman that brings the nations of the world to God. I ask you to stand with me in accomplishing this historic task. May God’s blessing be with you and your families. Thank you.

Civilization on the North American continent, rooted in faith, has bequeathed to the world the principles of freedom of religion and respect for equal human rights.

– SUN MYUNG MOON



A luncheon session of the Americas Summit at the Bush Library in College Station, Texas

A NEW DAY FOR KENYA

We are presenting a new, values-based approach to leadership, and many of our delegates see this as a way out of the swamp of corruption, selfishness, and inefficiency that has plagued our nations for years.

The Prime Minister of Kenya, the Hon. Raila Odinga, and his wife Ida Odinga, joined by an international delegation that included seven former heads of state and over 120 members of parliament, spiritual leaders and representatives of civil society, were warmly welcomed by a crowd of over 10,000 enthusiastic Kenyans to the Global Peace Festival in Nairobi on August 31.

“This is an important day for Kenya and for Africa,” said Odinga, “It is a new beginning in the quest for our nation to be once again known as a nation of peace and security.” He came to office earlier this year after a historic power-sharing agreement with political rival President Mwai Kibaki ended a period of post-election violence.

“The Universal Peace Federation and the Global Peace Festival are doing great things in Kenya,”

Odinga said. “Just yesterday, they mobilized thousands of young Kenyans to clean out the Nairobi River.”

Nairobi River Clean Up

The Nairobi River is unbelievably foul, virtually an open sewer, and most citizens of the city have been holding their noses and looking the other way. On August 29, citizens responded to the call to remove debris. Some of the clean-up crews encountered the bodies of infant children, apparently put into the river by slum dwellers without the means to afford proper burial. Others reported a stream of unlicensed dump trucks pouring garbage directly into the river. “More than hard work will be needed,” said project coordinator Edwin Plekhanov. “We need a complete change of heart in our leaders and ourselves.”





Local MP Hon. Ferdinand Waititu promised his Embakassa constituency that he would work to bring the resources and the political support needed. “This is an important development,” said David Anderson, a fellow MP visiting from England. “We elected officials must support the aspirations of our people.”

More than 100 Kenyan and international leaders participated in the International Leadership Conference at the Safari Park Hotel. Conference participants included former heads of state and many current members of parliament.

“We are presenting a new, values-based approach to leadership,” said UPF-Africa Secretary General Mwalagho Kililo, “and many of our delegates see this as a way out of the swamp of corruption, selfishness, and inefficiency that has plagued our nations for years.”

Grand Festival Event

Dr. Hyun Jin Moon, co-chair of the UPF and chairman of the Global Peace Festival Initiative, delivered the GPF keynote address to an enthusiastic

crowd at the Jomo Kenyatta International Conference Center. He urged Kenyans to take pride in their nation and Africa’s role as the cradle of civilization.

“The message of ‘One Family under God’ should be a clarion call for this age,” he said. “The power of one human family united can quell the turmoil of conflict throughout the world – from the conflict in the Middle East, the remnant of the Cold War in Korea, and poverty, disease, and civil strife in Africa.”

The Festival closed with a high-energy concert featuring some of Kenya’s top entertainers, including gospel and rap stars Jua Cali and Bilenge Musica.



A local choir sings the Global Peace Festival Anthem “Where Peace Begins” in Kiswahili.



Thousands of people worked together to clean sections of the Nairobi River, returning it to its former beauty.

COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

Hon. Raila Odinga, Prime Minister, Kenya

ADDRESS TO INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE NAIROBI, KENYA, AUGUST 29-31, 2008



I am very happy to welcome you to Nairobi, because I know that you bring a message of peace as we are emerging from a crisis. My wife Ida and I have been to your conferences in Korea, and we feel that we are among friends. Conferences like this provide a reprieve for our people.

We have lived through a very trying period in which over 1,500 people lost their lives and hundreds of thousands of people became displaced after the disputed presidential elections. The security forces also unleashed a lot of violence. "Shoot to kill" orders were given.

We had lived in an illusion that we were a united country. We had worn the façade of unity, but when

this mask was removed we saw another face of Kenya. Kenyans came to the precipice and looked down into the abyss, but we didn't like what we saw. So we stepped back and decided to talk to each other.

We realized that if nothing was done, the country was going to disintegrate. We thought of other countries where elections were disputed and ended up being divided, and we said that Kenya is greater than all of us.

Today, we are back in business—but not business as usual. We know that to stay united and prosperous we must change in fundamental ways, and we have begun that process. We need to recognize and respect each other and reconcile our society that was torn apart.

Considering people's lives and security and thinking of the unity of our country, I decided that it was time to make compromises. This was part of the lessons that I learned when I participated in the conferences in Seoul, Korea.

We were helped by our African brothers and the international community. World leaders who were concerned about the stability and security of Kenya called me, and several came to Nairobi to talk to both Kibaki and myself. Through the initiative of the African Union, a panel of eminent persons led by the former Secretary-General of the UN, Dr. Kofi Annan, came to Kenya. We set up a team consisting of four people from each side to sit and negotiate under the chairmanship of that panel.

At one point we were completely deadlocked, so Kofi Annan suspended the talks and consulted with President Kibaki and myself. Neither side was willing to make concessions beyond a certain point. Then I

Traditional kings from Benin were among the many international dignitaries at the conference.



said, "Look, for the sake of the country I'm willing to move this part, and I invite President Kibaki to move this part." Ultimately he agreed, and we met somewhere in the middle. It was like the cardinals meeting to elect a pope: the first time we came out, the people saw black smoke and they knew that the pope had not been elected; we went back, and when we came out people saw white smoke and chairs arranged for signing the accord.

Some people on both sides were not happy with the agreement, but it was the best we could come up with and we said it was a good thing for Kenya.

We agreed to form a grand coalition government with a 50-50 power sharing. In the cabinet, 50 percent are my ministers and 50 percent are from President Kibaki's side. We share power equally, with constant consultations. We think that this is the only way to talk, considering the root causes of our nation's ailments. Such a coalition is the first in the country and indeed in Africa. We need every bit of our creativity, generosity, and patience to make sure that we stay united.

The most important key to peace is rapid economic recovery to offset the damage that resulted from the violence. Businesses were destroyed, and planting of crops was suspended, Unemployment soared, and the price of food rose.

This month I convened the first quarterly Prime Minister's conference to transform the relationship between the government and the private sector and in the process transform the economy and the lives of Kenyans. We are on the way to building a seamless relationship between the government and the private sector economy to lift this economy.

I hope that participants in the Global Peace Festival will take this message of a new Kenya to your contacts. We have a collective commitment to find solutions. Despite the terrible trauma of blood-letting, we have shown that we are ready to go beyond boundaries, cultures, and traditions to restore peace.

The Global Peace Festival of "One Family Under God" shows that before we are a member of one nation, tribe, or political faction, we are first and foremost children of the same Creator. Membership in the human family makes us brothers and sisters. Survival, prosperity, and peaceful coexistence for us all require that we never forget this.

I respect Dr. Moon for his enthusiasm in raising up young leaders in public service. I know that he is spearheading activities designed to bring peace by appealing to a generation of young leaders who have the ability to serve others. Left on their own without proper guidance, youth expend their energies doing things which might be self centered. Character education and the belief that young people can transcend any shortcomings to serve peace is essential.

We have joined hands to clean the Nairobi River, with Kenyans of all walks of life participating. I was told that the Han River in Seoul was once as polluted as the Nairobi River but now, through conscious effort, it is a clean river, and I have seen it. We intend to make Nairobi that clean.

It is through forums such as this that the youth of this country will be able to transform into dependable leaders of the future. I want to thank you very much.

The Global Peace Festival of "One Family Under God" shows that before we are a member of one nation, tribe, or political faction, we are first and foremost children of the same Creator.



PEACE RESOUNDS IN THE HEART OF ASIA

Our challenge will be to take this momentum and work for lasting change.

In a dramatic display of national pride and unity, the citizens of Mongolia made a clear commitment to peace and prosperity at the Global Peace Festival in Ulaanbaatar on September 9. Just a few short weeks after disputed elections threatened to bring this historic Asian nation to the brink of civil war, Sukhbaatar Square was once again filled with thousands of noisy Mongolians. But this time, they sang and danced for peace.

The festival marked the culmination of a city-wide service effort; a youth arts competition; speaking, dancing and song contests; and an International Leadership Conference drawing delegates from Asia, Europe, and Oceania.

“Mongolia, Eurasia, and the whole world need a new vision of peace for the 21st century,” said Universal Peace Federation co-chair Dr. Hyun Jin Moon in his keynote

address. “Unlike the secular thinking of our recent past, it should be a spiritual vision, rooted in universal values.”

Building a Culture of Service

With nearly 50 percent of Mongolia’s population now jostling for space in the capital, the children of new arrivals are most at risk. The Women’s Federation for World Peace has been providing schooling, clothing, and meals at the Yargui Kindergarten, which is the only school for hundreds of families living in near slum conditions on Ulaanbaatar’s dusty outskirts. Volunteers from the Global Peace Festival removed rocks from the school grounds and worked with the children to paint cheerful murals pointing to a better future.

This was part of a city-wide



Working with children to landscape the grounds and paint murals at the Yargui Kindergarten



initiative encouraging youth to take responsibility for their neighborhoods and their cities, including a cleanup day that attracted more than 11,000 volunteers. “It’s more than just an aesthetic choice,” said Ulaanbaatar planning director Delger Bayar. “Projects like this can help us all realize that we must take responsibility together.”

The Global Peace Festival is creating a new sense of civic pride in cities around the world. Even small acts of service help create a new culture of cooperation and involvement.

International Leadership Conference

In addition to widespread civic action, the Universal Peace Federation is committed to leadership education as an important step in bringing peace. With the conflict in the South Caucasus on everyone’s mind, the International Leadership Conference, attended by 250 delegates from 38 nations, including more than 20 former heads of state and senior government ministers, considered possible options.

“We need to find a better way to choose better leaders,” said the Hon. Stanislav Shushkevich, former president of Belarus, “and better ways to interact with our neighbors.” The conference also included sessions of the Mongolian Peoples’ Federation for World Peace that



examined the legacy of the golden age of Mongolia under Chinghis Han and the role that Mongolian family traditions might play on a larger regional stage.

Despite rain and a chilly breeze, a large crowd assembled for the finale celebration in Mongolia’s most famous public space. Anxious to help rather than just be spectators, many had participated in the earlier service projects; some had added a donation to their ticket purchases. The event was broadcast by the Ulaanbaatar Broadcasting System.

“This is the start of a better day for our country,” said UPF Mongolia Secretary General Enkhtaivan Chinzorig. “Our challenge will be to take this momentum and work for lasting change.”

An aerial view of the plaza showing festival participants in the formation of a dove, a symbol of peace

BUILDING ONE FAMILY UNDER GOD

By Dr. Hyun Jin Moon, Co-Chairman,
Universal Peace Federation

EXCERPTS OF KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE GLOBAL PEACE FESTIVAL ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA, SEPTEMBER 9, 2008



Esteemed dignitaries, family, friends, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Global Peace Festival in beautiful Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. It is a great honor and pleasure to be with you today in the heartland of Asia with my ethnic cousins to celebrate a vision of everlasting peace.

In August the world gathered in Beijing, China for the Olympic Games, under the theme of “One World, One Dream.” Let me take a moment to congratulate Tuvshinbayar Naidan (Tushvee) and Badar-Uugan Enkhbat for winning the first ever-gold medals for Mongolia in judo and boxing.

Today I want to share a vision of peace for Mongolia and all nations. To begin with, we must admit that we will have to be bold and break new ground in our search for peace and prosperity, if we are to really go beyond the failures of our past. The world needs a new vision of peace for the 21st Century. Unlike the secular thinking of our recent past, it should be a spiritual vision, rooted in time-enduring values. That vision is “One Family under God!”

The one who has taken on the mantle to champion this vision around the world is none other than my father, the Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon. He has devoted his entire life, resources and wealth to the fulfillment of that dream.

The dream to build “One Family under God” is not the dream of just one man, woman or family but belongs to all humanity and, most of all, to God.

As my father explained in one of his recent peace messages, “God, the Creator of all things under the sun, is the true parent of all humanity. He is not a parent in the parochial sense, existing only for a certain religion, a certain race, or the residents of a certain region.

“You may call Him by any name, be it Jehovah, Allah, Heaven, or any other. What is important is that He certainly exists, lives as the true parent of all people, and is carrying on the great work of Creation.”

Why is the family the fundamental building block for peace? First and foremost, the family is universal. Regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality and religious affiliations, we are all members of families. Secondly, the family represents the most intimate of human relationships. Most importantly, the family is the school of love.

Before we call ourselves Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim, before we see ourselves as black, white, or Asian, before we identify ourselves as Mongolian, Russian, or Chinese, we are first and foremost the eternal sons and daughters of God and members of his eternal family. Therefore, we should own the dream to realize “One Family under God” one family at a time, by uplifting all families beyond race, nationality or creed.

The dream to build “One Family under God” should resonate with Mongolia’s spiritual heritage, a heritage that goes all the way back to its pre-history. It was this heritage which prompted the most famous Mongolian, Chinggis Han, and later his family and descendants to undertake the enormous task of uniting the world under One Heaven. Mongolia’s rich historical past is relevant in our age for creating a world of peace.



Visiting the memorial to Chinggis Han (Genghis Khan)

Undecided territorial, ethnic and national divisions and broken economic and social ties all provoke instability, uncertainty and violence. The nations and peoples of this region need a new peace initiative, based upon a common vision. Recognizing the potential challenges of our age, my father founded the Mongolian Peoples' Federation for World Peace in 2004 to "Do away with all the walls and national boundaries and bring together the six billion people of the world, through rallying together the interrelated people of Mongolian descent."

If Mongolia could own the vision of "One Family under God" and align with the mission of the Mongolian Peoples' Federation, it could inspire the entire region to look beyond its narrow interests and recognize its common heritage and, thereby, its common future.

Creating a culture of service is necessary for peace to exist. Here in Mongolia, volunteers from Service for Peace and a dozen other agencies have been working to make the city of Ulaanbaatar a place of beauty and harmony for all its residents.

I'd like to see Mongolia's volunteers and service partners joining with other nations, such as the United States, European nations and Asian nations, to establish a Global Peace Corps. Imagine if young people from enemy nations worked side by side in service with the heart of "living for the sake of others." Any misunderstandings and hatred that existed would fade away as they sweat, cry and laugh together with a common vision to build "One Family under God."

Another goal of the Global Peace Festival is to celebrate the common universal values shared by all faiths. Religious and spiritual leaders must lead the peace process. Instead of advocating their own narrow doctrinal perspec-

tive, they must lead all people of faith to recognize the shared values and principles that come from our common heritage in one God.

Let us be bold today and dare to dream big! You have already heard of the "Mongolian Dream," a dream to endow every child with a good education and a healthy life.

Today, I invite you to aspire to an even greater dream. That dream is "One Family under God." It should be the clarion call for our age. The power of one human family united can quell the turmoil of conflict throughout the world – from the conflict in the Middle East, to the final remnant of the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula, to the poverty and disease of Africa and to the civil, ethnic and national strife in Eurasia.

As we stand under the steadfast gaze of our ancestors, let us make a solemn pledge to lead the world to peace by realizing the dream to create "One Family under God." Then, as surely as light overcomes the darkness, an era of peace and prosperity will emerge from the depths of distrust and hatred both at home and in the far corners of our world.

As we stand under the steadfast gaze of our ancestors, let us make a solemn pledge to lead the world to peace by realizing the dream to create "One Family under God."



ONE FAMILY UNDER GOD IN LATIN AMERICA

By Global Peace Festival – Paraguay

*We must look beyond
our differences
to the things that
unite us and can
bind us together.*

The energetic crowd of 25,000 packed into Asunción's historic Club Olimpia Stadium burst into rowdy and prolonged cheers at the Global Peace Festival (GPF) on July 5th as Founder, Dr. Hyun Jin Moon, told them: "Paraguay will play a leading role in building One Family Under God."

"Before we are Paraguayans, or Americans, or Koreans; before we are Christian, Muslim or Jew, we must understand our fundamental identity as the sons and daughters of God," Moon said. "We must look beyond our differences to the things that unite us and can bind us together."

Faith leaders from many traditions opened the festival with a moving display of unity and affection, culminating with a call for God's blessing by Bishop Manoel Ferreira of Brazil. Ferreira leads an international Assembly of God congregation of several million.

José Luis Chilavert, the extroverted soccer hero who scored more than 60 goals for Paraguay in international competition despite being a goalkeeper, welcomed the international delegates. "We're proud of being Paraguayan," Chilavert said, "but we're even prouder that you have come here to our country to kick off the Global Peace Festival for 2008."



Paraguayan soccer legend
José Luis Chilavert

Factoria (Panama), and Dálmata (Dominican Republic). Earlier in the show, the Paraguayan National Symphony Orchestra and Ballet, and Paraguayan groups Los Ojeda and Generación warmed up the crowd.

Interest in the Paraguay festival reached a fever pitch in Asunción as the limited supply of tickets quickly ran out. When local radio station Popular 103FM ran a contest to give away the last 1,000 tickets to young people who brought a donation for the capital's poorest children, more than 4,000 actually turned out and filled the streets for ten blocks around the station, with cheerful teenagers hoping for the hottest ticket in town.

The work of peacebuilding continues long after the stadium finally fell silent late Saturday evening with GPF organizers announcing a significant investment into a character education and service

Young people brought donations of food and clothing in return for a ticket to the Global Peace Festival main event.



Top musicians perform

The Club Olimpia finale brought together some of the hottest South American groups for a real battle of the bands. Argentine music sensation Alejandro Lerner topped the bill, with strong support from the Cuban rap group Chapa C,





Flags of the nations hosting Global Peace Festivals this year decorated the Club Olimpia stadium.

Seeing these kids making such an effort is an example to all of us adults.

initiative for the Asunción schools. “This is the start of a new chapter in Paraguay’s history,” said Thomas Field of the Victoria Company, one of the leading local backers of the Festival. “The time has come for this nation to shine,” said Senator Lillian Samaniego, the Festival’s organizing co-chair.

Students set an example of service

Thousands of schoolchildren in the Paraguayan capital found a new passion: service to their city and pride in the difference their volunteer efforts can make. Wearing bright blue Global Peace Festival T-shirts with the slogan “Asunción – My City” on the front and “One Family Under God” on the back, students from 15 schools gathered the morning of July 3rd for a final cleanup and celebration along Avenida Projectada 21 in one of Asunción’s poorer neighborhoods.

Teams of kids from the different schools split up to cover the 21 mini parks located along the wide boulevard. Each park had its own character: one was just a dirt football field, another a grass park, and a third was set up for volleyball. But all had similar problems: small mountains of garbage, rocks littered about, and unkempt pavement.

Some teams armed with brushes and whitewash set about painting clean new edges to sidewalks, and then used the same limestone-based paint to apply an insect-repellant layer to the lower trunks of trees. Meanwhile, others cut back branches and

pruned trees, and in a typically Paraguayan scene, the wood was carted away on carts drawn by skinny but patient mule teams.

The cleanup was a joint project of the Global Peace Festival, the Unesco Schools Association, and the City of Asunción, led by Mayor Evanhy de Gallegos. “The Mayor wants to put Asunción on the international map,” said spokesperson Sra. Gilda Medina, “and events like the Global Peace Festival are important to us.” The service project was the first of its type in the country.

Head of a bustling city of over one million, the mayor is trying to strike a balance between tourism and growth while avoiding the drug and crime problems typical of large cities. “We need to find good solutions for our young people,” said Medina. “The mayor would like the cooperation of the whole city – parents, businesses, schools, and government – to keep our children safe. Seeing these kids making such an effort is an example to all of us adults.”



Students from 15 schools cleaned up parks along Avenida Projectada 21.

Leadership Conference

The International Leadership Conference on the eve of the Global Peace Festival brought together 220 participants from 80 nations, including a significant group of Young Ambassadors for Peace convened by the Youth Federation for World Peace.

At a seminar session on the prospects for peace in the Americas, former US Ambassador to Paraguay John F. Keane addressed the need for trust and transparency and said that he hoped Paraguay could set an example for all of Latin America. “Nations do best when they create societies that reward effort and merit over connection and privilege,” Keane said, “and most of all we need to create a culture of mutual trust by working together.”

The conference attracted more than half of the newly elected senators and deputies of the new Paraguayan government. A delegation met with outgoing President Nicanor Duarte at the Presidential palace, congratulating him on the nation’s first peaceful and democratic transition of power.

CATTLE DRIVE SPURS A VISION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

By Larry Moffitt,
The Washington Times Foundation

“You’re crazy.” Not exactly the benediction we were looking for, but it seemed like those were always the first words we heard from people while organizing our “Cattle Drive for Peace and Unity,” through the rugged outback of Paraguay.

We were proposing to drive 150 cattle, all of them pregnant, a distance of 170 kilometers (106 miles) through a thorny forest and iffy roads. June is winter in Paraguay, which is actually a good thing. Summer would be ten times worse. The drovers included people from Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Korea, Japan, and the United States.

Working together to move the cattle was a joint learning experience. It provided an opportunity for people from the city to have a direct encounter with the country people who have very little in the way of material goods.

We wanted to help people have an intimate experience with a part of their country most had never taken time to appreciate because it’s so far from the

capital, and so hard to get in and out of. And finally, the experience served as leadership education on horseback. Our text was the beautiful creation itself.

We began in Fuerte Olimpo on the Paraguay River, a couple of hours north of Asunción by small plane. The first day’s ride was the most stressful because we were all getting used to being on a horse all day, as well as getting acquainted with each horse’s individual personality.

The sun was brutally hot and in its own way it helped us get our priorities straight: water, sunscreen, more water. We helped each other as we rode – sharing water, horse advice, and bits of information about ourselves. But sitting under the star-filled sky, people said what was really on their minds and we got to know each other on a more intimate level.

Ariel, whose family owns a major sugar cane mill in Paraguay, asked Hyun Jin Moon, “We’re inspired about Paraguay, because we are Paraguayan. But we want to know what inspires you about Paraguay.”

He spoke about his early years in post-war Korea. “This is a young country. And though it isn’t wealthy, there is idealism here, and a sense of family. I hope you can keep your vision.” People respond well to him because he genuinely loves the country and makes Paraguayans proud to be Paraguayan. He recognizes their potential and tells them to believe in themselves.

We were jointly responsible for the well-being of each other and all these cattle, and we were challenged to transfer this attitude to feeling responsible for our nations.

One of our more experienced riders had his saddle cinch fail while galloping. The saddle rolled with him and he hit the gravel road hard and fast as the horse ran over him. He had a concussion, six cracked ribs, a cracked shoulder blade, and a punctured lung. There was a medical evacuation procedure for just



such an occasion. We got him to a dirt airstrip and flew him to a hospital in Asunción by small plane. He's home now and recovering nicely.

By the second day we were all getting to know our horses. You quickly bond with someone who is willing to carry you all day on his back, under a hot sun. We originally figured on 20 kilometers per day, but cooler temperatures and strong horses enabled us to do 35 to 40 km. Bottoms and inner thighs were unaccustomed to saddles, which made everyone uncomfortable, but by day three, when we rode a full 40 kilometers, a pride of accomplishment settled over all of us.

After we took care of our horses each evening, the urge to lie down to sleep was strong. It's these small moments that determine whether you really do live for others or think mainly of your own needs. Around the campfire, there were deep talks about horses, love for nature, and love for one's country.

One night, Father Maldonado brought out his guitar and serenaded us with a repertoire of love songs so tenderly rendered that they made even those who don't understand Spanish, wistful.

Breakfast one day was peanuts and hominy floating in hot sugared milk. Another morning it featured baby pig parts with "coquito," a dry breadstick, with cabbage and coffee.

Food led to a poignant incident in the tiny village of Maria Auxiliadora (Mary the Helper). Standing alongside the road were several mothers and children with a letter asking our help in improving their one-room schoolhouse.

Hyun Jin Moon, who has a house full of his own



children, started fishing through his bag lunch for something to give to the kids. Then on impulse, he handed the entire lunch to one of the mothers. The rest of us did the same. Not expecting anything at all, and partly in jest, we asked, "Since we gave you our lunches, can you make a real Paraguayan lunch for us?"

Their house was an open shelter. They had a handful of chickens and ducks in the yard and a half dozen pigs out back. They butchered four chickens and a duck for our lunch. They set up a table and chairs and cooked boribori (chicken soup), mandioca bread, and duck empanadas.

We knew they had fed us several days' worth of food. These women exemplified a traditional culture in which food may be scarce but hospitality and community are always plentiful. Before we left, we gave them a contribution. But we had to offer it; they asked for nothing.

Out in the wilderness of the Chaco, among people who have nothing, we encountered the true heart of Paraguay.

We shared water, horse advice, and bits of information about ourselves as we rode. But sitting under the star-filled sky, we got to know each other on a more intimate level.

The women of Maria Auxiliadora exemplified a traditional culture in which food may be scarce but hospitality and community are always plentiful.



The people of the village of Maria Auxiliadora express concern about their school being able to meet their children's educational needs.

A CALL FOR PEACE AND UNITY IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

The Global Peace Festival brought together tens of thousands of people to celebrate, rather than fight over, their religious and ethnic diversity.

Amid the long-standing armed struggle of radical Islamic groups on the island of Mindanao, a bold new hope for unity has dawned. On September 19-21, Cagayan de Oro City hosted a Global Peace Festival—a big step towards the realization of peace in Mindanao and the entire nation of the Philippines. Each festival component helped convey the grand vision of “One Family Under God.”

Peace Village

A Peace Village was built in 2005 in Tubod, Lanao del Norte. It includes 38 houses accommodating 30 young people each, three guest houses, and one dormitory. A Peace Village project on September 19 brought together 4,000 teachers and 4,000 students representing Christians, Muslims, and indigenous peoples to show a living example of how young Muslims and Christians can live together harmoniously, respecting each others’ religious traditions, customs, and beliefs. It was sponsored by Region X of the Philippines Department of Education, with the support of Governor Mohammad Khalid Dimaporo of Lanao Del Norte, mayors, and provincial officials.

Their experience in the Peace Village offered festival participants living proof that it is possible for people to learn the ways of peace and unlearn the ways of violence.

International Leadership Conference

The International Leadership Conference at the Pryce Plaza Hotel in Cagayan de Oro brought together 287 supervisors and superintendents from the Department of Education, mayors and councilors from local government units, as well as heads of the diverse tribes in Mindanao. With the theme “The Need for Vision and Leadership at a Time of Global Crisis: Building Partnerships among Governments, Faith-Based Organizations and NGOs,” the conference stressed basic universal principles that could lead the people of Mindanao in the realization of peace and harmony.

Festival co-chair Mayor Constantino Jaraula of Cagayan de Oro welcomed everyone to this “City of Golden Friendship.” Former Speaker of the Philippines House of Representatives Jose de Venecia, Jr., gave congratulatory remarks.

International Youth Summit at the Limketkai Atrium, Cagayan de Oro City



International Youth Summit

The theme of “A Culture of Love: The Fuel Towards Peace and Development” called local youth leaders to join forces in offering their time, talent, and treasures for the sake of peace. Around 3,000 youth from different schools, colleges, and universities assembled at Limketkai Mall for musical entertainment and inspirational messages from the Governor of Lanao Del Norte, Mr. Yeqing Victor Lee of the Youth Federation for World Peace, and Mr. Aya Goto of the Global Peace Festival.

On, September 21, young leaders convened at the Dynasty Court Hotel to upgrade their leadership skills and convictions as they listened to presentations by Dr. Ann Montejo-Arevalo and Dr. Robert Kittel. Three hundred leaders were appointed Youth Ambassadors for Peace. The day ended with the launching of the Cagayan de Oro Chapter of the Youth Federation for World Peace. Success was evident in the bonds created among the young leaders of the region.

Main Festival Event

In celebration of the International Day of Peace, September 21, all the vibrant colors of Mindanao were unfurled as 8,000 members of 50 ethnic groups danced along the streets of Cagayan de Oro to the Capitol Building. Their lively performances in colorful costumes added joy to the festivities.

High school students recited a pledge to keep their purity before marriage and be faithful within marriage. The signatures of 1.4 million students who have signed this pledge were presented.

Hon. Oscar Moreno, Governor of the Province of Misamis Oriental, gave the audience of 13,000 a warm welcome. In a prepared statement read by his brother, the president of the Philippines Senate, Hon. Manny Villar, pledged to support the Global Peace Festival’s efforts to bring harmony through realizing the vision of “One Family Under God.” Dr. Hyun Jin Moon’s Global Peace Address was read by Dr. Chung Sik Yong, Regional Chair of UPF-Asia.

Ambassador for Peace certificates were presented to governors, mayors, members of the Armed Forces, and noted musicians Iya Villania, Kris Lawrence, Billy Crawford, Jay-R, and Miguel Escudeta. The evening ended with lighting peace candles and singing together the Global Peace Festival Theme Song, “Where Peace Begins.”



Different tribal groups offer lively dances

PEACEMAKING IN MINDANAO: A RISKY BUSINESS

By Robert Kittel, UPI Correspondent

At the conclusion of the Global Peace Festival in Mindanao on September 21, on a stage constructed on the provincial capital grounds, former Speaker of the House, Jose de Venecia, Jr., called on the Philippine government to renew the peace talks, earmark USD 2.1 billion (Pesos 100 billion), and bring the Universal Peace Federation into the peace process as a neutral partner in the negotiations.

Travel warnings issued by the US government cautioned travelers against going to the southern Mindanao Island, calling the situation there “dangerous or unstable.” It even advised travelers to “hire their own security.” Despite this risk, foreign nationals from the US, Japan, Korea, Italy, Nepal and mainland China participated in the three-day festival.

GPF brought together tens of thousands of people to celebrate, rather than fight over, their religious and ethnic diversity. The peace festival gathered indigenous tribal people from over 50 different tribes, which was the most diverse representation of indigenous peoples ever assembled on the island in recent memory.

UPF seeks to resolve conflict through dialogue, education, and conditions of reconciliation. It has developed a series of presentations entitled Principles of Peace, which are taught to government leaders worldwide as well as to religious leaders and students.

Governor Mohammad Khalid Dimaporo, the youngest governor in the Philippines, 28, was deeply touched by the international delegation. Repeatedly he told participants he expected the program to be cancelled because of the continued fighting on the island and strong travel warnings against coming to Mindanao.

The GPF was jointly sponsored by the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Mayor, the Department of Education, the Fourth Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, and the Universal Peace Federation.

The Peace Village project on the first day brought Christians, Muslims and indigenous people together. Three times a year, 2,000 people come to the Peace Village and live together in this community for four days. “They ‘immerse’ themselves in each others’ culture, to learn the traditions and religious values of the others,” said Dr. Haja Esnaira Estrella Abid-Babano, Regional Director, Department of Education in Mindanao. She was also the GPF organizing Co-Chair.



DRAWN TOGETHER BY GOD'S LOVE

*Interview by Universal Peace Television
with Bishop Manoel Ferreira
Co-Chair, Global Peace Festival-Brazil*

I see this Global Peace Festival as an instrument of integration. Our nations will benefit if we become closer and more woven together.

How do you feel about working for this vision of peace and One Family under God?

This is, I believe, the most important point for all churches in our days. We are living in a moment when there is a big devaluation of the family, or at least an intention to devalue the family.

It is a time of uneasiness and excessive violence in many parts of Brazil. I think that peace and the importance of the family are very important points for these days, because not only Brazil but the world is facing a crisis in the area of family. A message that can bring trust and express the value of the family is the message that we need today.

How can this kind of vision of peace help promote cooperation and harmony among people of all the different faiths of the world?

I think that this integration is for all segments of society, religious and non-religious, evangelical Christians, Catholic Christians, non-evangelical Christians, and other segments that believe in the family. The family is where trust is built. The human being was created to live in a family. The disintegration of the family and the devaluation of this segment of society signifies total defeat. Working in this direction will bring peace, harmony, and calm. This is the message that we want to bring, not only through the word of God, through the Gospel, but through the experiences that this great institution UPF has in spreading this message and this work.

This is the rain that will fall onto this dry soil which is so much in need of God's direction and the word of God that brings comfort and trust. Through peace we will achieve these goals.



Bishop Manoel Ferreira

I think that God has raised up Dr. Hyun Jin Moon at this time to bring this message that addresses so many difficulties and problems. Especially in Brazil, where we are passing through times of insecurity, this great Global Peace Festival will bring an answer that many people desire.

How might the example of bringing people from the Abrahamic faiths together help reduce conflict?

The truth is that we have imprisoned ourselves. We put limits on ourselves and we haven't had communion among the religious segments of the world.

There are divisions between the Orient and the Occident. There are many creeds, divisions, and religions on this side of the world as well. This Global Peace Festival will break this barrier. The purpose is to break this barrier, break this ice, and bring us close together, united under the guidance of God around one objective, which is the family.

I see this moment as an answer to our prayers, because we are all praying for more unity in the search for a greater purpose, which is peace. God made us. There is only one God, who is the God of us all, and I believe this proposal to unite will benefit all of us.

How does the Global Peace Festival represent an opportunity for greater cooperation between North and South?

I see this Global Peace Festival as an instrument of integration. Our nations will benefit if we become closer and more woven together. We all will win, because as we seek to love and unite more fully, drawn together in the bonds of God's love, peace will automatically spread. Peace is where harmony is. If we take advantage of this moment, it will be a very special time for all nations, for all peoples, and a great response from God to all our lives.



At a Global Peace Festival planning meeting, left to right: Pastor Abigail Carlos de Almeida, pastor of an Assembly of God Church in Goiania and vice president of the National Convention of the Assemblies of God of Brazil; Bishop Manoel Ferreira; Helena Di Camargo, mother of famous sertanejo singer Zezé Di Camargo; Zezé Di Camargo's brother.

What is your sense of the vision of peace behind the Global Peace Festival? What is your own sense of that vision of peacebuilding?

It is an age-old dream brought by a person who has a vision and an answer from God for this moment. I think Dr. Hyun Jin Moon experiences a deep communion with God and much closeness with God. He is striving to manifest God's will. Furthermore, his father, whom I met many years ago, has been a great proponent of unity and communion, and now we are seeing the instruments that can bring this dream to fulfillment. I see that God's time for this to happen is now.

What is your sense of the value of service projects?

Especially in Brazil, service projects have extraordinary relevance. Today we are living in a very good moment in Brazil, when things are beginning to balance out, but there are still huge deficiencies. The distance between rich and poor is very big. There are enormous social inequalities in Brazil.

I think this proposal will bring enlightenment and help us find solutions for these problems. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, where there is no social justice, where there is social inequality, discrimination, and division there can hardly be peace. Therefore, this proposal to unite in the search for peace will decrease this distance and enable God's love to spread in the hearts of the people.

Would you comment on your experiences, to encourage people in your country to participate in the Global Peace Festival?

Many festivals have been organized, including in Paraguay and Washington, DC. In December we plan to do things on a large scale in Brazil. We count on your presence to carry out this great work, which will bring a new vision of integration among the religious and non-religious people.

Brazilian leaders from all segments need to unite in brotherhood so we can show people who we are and what we are able to do. When we unite for the sake of peace, we will truly have one large family of God, under His guidance.

Bishop Manoel Ferreira is a member of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil, chairman of the National Council of Bishops of Brazil, and president of the National Convention of the Assemblies of God in Brazil.

People from the government, NGOs and the community work together to clean up along a river in Gama, near Brasilia



CANADIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

CANADA'S ROLE AS A 'MIDDLE POWER'

The Global Peace Festival is bringing together people of passion and insight who share the vision of creating “One Family Under God.” The idea of being part of a larger global community of peace is obviously particularly attractive in nations that are still developing, or that are coping with recent challenges of violence and conflict. But what about nations of the First World that are perhaps more settled, perhaps even satisfied with the way things are?

These were among the challenging questions debated at the recent Canadian Leadership Conference on the theme “Educating for Peace.” It took place in Ottawa, the seat of Canadian government and home to 126 embassies and high commissions, along with universities, high-tech industries, news media, and NGOs from around the nation and the world.

A recent report by the United Nations suggested that progress towards the Millennium Development Goals – aimed at improving the lives of more than half of the world’s population – has all but stalled out, not least because the developed nations are not keeping their promises to deliver the needed development aid and expertise.

Indeed, there are many challenges in making constructive connections among different global sectors, among them the inherent contradictions in First World societies. For example, the First World is wealthy and intent on remaining so. The recent financial crisis in America has created waves throughout the world that show just how deeply this rather self-centered concern runs. First World institutions are expected to be well organized and well managed, and professionalism is valued. When these expectations are not met, unease is widespread.

There is currently a confusion of values in Western societies. Many are experiencing a post-religious moral decline, accompanied by the rise of secular humanistic thinking and even a certain neo-paganism. In contrast, new immigrant communities tend to retain strong moral and religious views, which can lead to domestic tensions. Many nations find themselves threatened and dominated by an American-centric popular culture in which public morality is in a downward spiral—although there are significant, if somewhat maligned, pockets of resistance.

True integration and harmonization have not been easy, despite the prevalence of democratic institutions and structures that are meant to provide equal access to everyone. In reality, society is tiered by levels of economic-based elitism in which

people identify themselves in part by dress code, personal etiquette, and schools where they were educated. It gives lip service to certain values, such as human rights, racial equality, religious tolerance, equality of the genders, etc., but only reluctantly and slowly accommodates minorities when they have won favor in the popular media and become the *cause célèbre*.

*Both our geography
and the cultural
heritage of our people
give us significant
linkages to most
countries on earth.*

CANADA'S POTENTIAL ROLE

How can Canada help foster beneficial connections among the different global sectors? Because history and geography have sandwiched us into asymmetrical relations with powerful nations, Canada has led in the development of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and holds significant positions in a large number of international organizations.

As a member of the United Nations, Canada participates in all of its agencies and its peacekeeping missions. It is

CANADIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

part of the G7 and G8 groups of industrialized nations and also a member of regional associations that include Second and Third World countries. These include NATO to the east, NAFTA and the Organization of American States to the south, and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation to the west. Its historic links with Great Britain and France are reflected in its membership in the far-reaching networks of the British Commonwealth of Nations and *La Francophonie*.

To the north, we are a polar-cap nation deeply involved in issues of sovereignty in the Arctic. A traveler of the future might be able to traverse the Bering Strait from Russia to Alaska, but would have to travel through Canada to get further!

Canada has a good reputation internationally both as a leader in peace movements and an honest broker. While many First-World countries were colonizing powers, Canada has no imperialist past. A Canadian, Lester B. Pearson, earned a Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his role in shaping the UN's peacekeeping missions, and Canada has participated in every one of them. The central tower of our Parliament Buildings is called the Peace Tower. Canada has extensive NGO and government-sponsored Third World development projects around the globe.

Canada has active peace and interfaith movements. UPF-Canada's National Peace Council meets monthly

in key cities, sponsoring projects and working in partnership with other peace and interfaith groups. For example, there is a growing international movement for the creation of departments of peace in each nation. Canada, with its long history of peacekeeping and negotiated outcomes to conflict, stands in a unique position to become the first country to proclaim a Department and Minister for Peace. The Canadian Leadership Conference showcased the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative, which is spearheaded by 19 organizations.

Another focus of the conference was the role of police in preventing and resolving conflict before it results in violence. In one conference session, law enforcement and military personnel discussed the role of traditional policing from the perspective of a culture of peace. Policing involves a complex array of responses and activities in different contexts, and in a culture of peace, dialogue, and negotiation should form the core of conflict prevention and resolution.

The conference also challenged youth and people of faith to invest themselves in conflict resolution and peace-building, offering insights, model programs, and curricula that can be applied in many settings. A Peace Awards Gala on October 4 showcased outstanding groups and individuals who are truly making a difference through their efforts to make this world a better place.



Canadian Parliament buildings in Ottawa

A DAY FOR PEACE

By Marty Miller, Coordinator for Ambassadors for Peace,
Mid-Hudson Valley, New York State, USA

*What can a
small group,
in a small town,
of highly motivated
and empowered
people do?*

What can a small group, in a small town, of highly motivated and empowered people do? A lot, if you look at the work done by the Mid-Hudson Valley Ambassadors for Peace on the UN International Day of Peace, September 21.

A core of 12 people pushed hard to create programs for the Barrytown, Tivoli, and Red Hook communities, an area with a population of less than 10,000, because they believe that peacebuilding is a compelling cause.

It started early this summer at the United Nations when Jeremy Gilley, the founder of Peace One Day, showed his powerful movie “The Day After,” showing how in Afghanistan, one of the most war-ravaged countries, fighting stopped for one day. Peace for this one day, September 21, 2007, allowed UNESCO workers to travel to remote areas of the country and inoculate 1.3 million children against polio.

Instead of focusing on one possibility, our group queried each other about our “signature strength areas.” Nine potential projects emerged, each with different leadership. On the actual day, people participated in and led the projects they were most attached to emotionally.

The story in images – We contacted Jeremy Gilley and got permission to duplicate his YouTube video, “Peace One Day,” and distributed copies to classrooms. His 88-minute movie, “The Day After,” has been called the most powerful peace movie ever

made. With permission, we made duplicates to give out in the local communities.

The story in words – Another team went into the community and spread the message to clergy, politicians, and local merchants. Clergy were encouraged to give “peace sermons.” The local town supervisor issued a proclamation; fliers were given to 40 local merchants, and the day before the event team members handed out a thousand fliers.

Peace vigil – One hundred and twenty people participated. The children assembled on a stage in semicircles, with the women behind them. Our purpose was to acknowledge and empower children and women as peacemakers. A moment of silence connected us with the rest of the world celebrating peace on this day.

Kite flying for peace – About 60 children and adults ran up and down a field pulling kites of all sizes and shapes. Seeing the program leader running back and forth helping the children was what this event was about.

Peace concert – A world-renowned soprano was joined by peace troubadour Cecilia St. King and *Sound Machine*. Each performer inspired the audience in a different way. One man said, “Hearing Seiko, an opera singer, do a classic peace song was awesome.”

Peace sanctuary/labyrinth walk – A pot-luck dinner was planned, to be followed by a peace flag ceremony with flag-bearers wearing traditional national costumes and a candlelight labyrinth walk. When a sudden rain after dinner canceled the remaining events, not one person left. Together everyone huddled under the tents, and for the next hour we talked and shared. A day of peace activities had produced a quiet calm in the midst of a thunderous downpour. It was a model of what this event was created for.

So, can a small committed group of people affect their community today? Yes. And the world tomorrow? Of course.

For video of the events, contact mmiller@upf.org. See also www.peaceday.org.



A MILLION ACTS OF SERVICE AND KINDNESS

By Miriam Parel, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships,
Points of Light and Hands On Network, USA

In the International Leadership Conferences, we delve deeply into the vision and the ideals of service. We create a nurturing environment for our common values and hopefully a safe environment to discuss our disagreements.



I want to tell how this vision and these ideals have come to fruition through the Points of Light partnership with UPF, and I'm going to challenge every one of you to participate.

But first, let me briefly tell you about Points of Light and Hands On Network. The Points of Light Foundation was created in 1990 by President Bush, the father, as a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonreligious organization to promote volunteering and service. In 2007, the Points of Light merged with the Hands On Network, and it now has 370 affiliates in the US and nearly 30 abroad.

The vision of Points of Light and Hands On Network is that "One day every person will discover the power to make a difference, creating healthy communities in vibrant democracies around the world." At the core of our values is citizen action, building civic infrastructures, and mobilizing people through impact campaigns. We inspire, equip, and mobilize people to take action and change the world.

And that's what we did in 2005 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which displaced more than 1,000,000 people from the Gulf of Mexico. Help for Katrina victims came from all over the world; even poor countries and poor individuals were remarkably generous. But it was through our partnership with UPF that the Points of Light Foundation had the most impact.

Working with 37 affiliates, we recruited nearly 180,000 volunteers who worked with hundreds of

thousands of evacuees fixing and rebuilding homes and helping families get a new life, children enroll in new schools, and parents get new jobs.

More importantly, our joint work is helping communities, through planning, training, and exercises, to prepare for the next disaster that we know will come. We recently created a new affiliate in Selma, Alabama, under Rev. Carl Rawls' leadership.

And our partnership continues. On August 9, the Global Peace Festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC, organized jointly by many groups, brought 10,000 people together to celebrate the human family, promote peace, encourage interfaith cooperation, and call citizens to service.

We want to ensure that this is not about a single day but long-term change. So here comes the challenge: a call to "A Million Acts of Service and Kindness." You are invited to be part of this campaign. You're invited to join forces to build a movement of kindness and service that seeks to simply live for the sake of others and make a difference.

An act of service can be taking part in organized acts of service to benefit others: help build a house, feed the elderly, or organize a blood drive at your church.

An act of kindness may be a less-organized activity but just as meaningful – or more. If you have had a fight with someone, take the first step to reconcile with that person. Or call someone you've been meaning to tell you love or are grateful for, but keep putting it off. Or even doing that home chore you've been avoiding – and doing it gratefully.

Visit our website: www.millionacts.org. I count on you for 1,000,000 acts of service and kindness.

*We inspire, equip,
and mobilize people
to take action and
change the world.*

**Children made quilts
for peace as part of the
Children's Cloth of Many
Colors project.**



INTERFAITH CONFERENCE GOES BEYOND TOLERANCE

By Carolyn Handschin, Coordinator,
Geneva Office for UN Relations, UPF

Politics and religion should relate like two sides of the same coin, each reinforcing the other.

The “Geneva Conference on Interfaith Cooperation and the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity” took place September 1 and 2. Nearly 280 civil society and religious leaders, diplomats, and UN representatives came together to address the contribution of faiths to peace and human dignity. Discussion focused on the potential role of an interfaith advisory council within the United Nations.

Geneva, Switzerland, is regarded as a global city, being the headquarters of numerous international charitable and religious organizations including UN agencies.

Former president of the UN Human Rights Commission, Ambassador Makarim Wibisono of Indonesia, presided. This event marked the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sponsors of the conference were the Permanent Missions of Indonesia and the Philippines, together with the UPF and the Geneva Interfaith Intercultural Alliance.

Opening remarks by Ambassador Erlinda Basilio of the Philippines were followed by a session on “Vision for an Interreligious Council at the United Nations.” Ambassador Wibisono set a tone of unity as he stated, “Politics and religion should relate like two sides of the same coin, each reinforcing the other.” He described interfaith work as a priority for the world as well as the UN.

Rev. Dr. William McComish, former dean of the main Protestant cathedral in Geneva, confirmed his trust in his partner in interfaith, Mr. Hafid Ouardiri,



Dr. William McComish

a spokesman for the Islamic community in Geneva who had once substituted for Dr. McCormish as a preacher at the cathedral pulpit.

Mahaupasika Dr. Bongkot Sittipol, founder of the Daen Mahanongkol Meditation Center,

gave a warm message about “ordaining the heart for world peace.” Dr. Thomas Walsh, Secretary General of UPF, explained the vision and guidelines that Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon expressed when he announced the idea of an interreligious council within the United Nations in 2000.

Five round-table discussions comprised the main conference, where eminent religious leaders, experts on human rights and interfaith relations, theologians, and other religious scholars joined interfaith practitioners. Discussion topics included “The United Nations, Religion, and Peace” and “The Role of Faith in the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity.” It was a notably rare day at a UN venue with so little disagreement and so much hopeful determination among those with the capacity to implement decisions.

Resounding throughout the conference was a depth of commitment to nothing less than interfaith cooperation and the change of mindset and lifestyle that accompany it. Rabbi Joseph Abbitan and Imam Othmane Aissauoi from France offered a spontaneous embrace as they greeted each other, exemplifying their commitment interfaith engagement. For the youth delegates, that happy embrace was “worth a thousand words.”

In the style of a Model UN, two sessions simulated how an “Interreligious Council” might function. Minister Jesus Domingo of the Philippines and Carolyn Handschin, Coordinator of the UPF Office for UN Relations in Geneva, served as the

Conference organizers (left to right): Heiner Handschin, Carolyn Handschin, Minister Jesus Domingo, and Ambassador Makarim Wibisono



Council Bureau. The representatives of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Unificationism were role-played by 16 youth representatives of these faiths. These youths had been selected in many cases by their religious leaders, who assisted as observers for the council sessions.

This combination of youths and elders made for a very serious and enthusiastic atmosphere where delegates drafted a Declaration on Interreligious Cooperation, which was signed by all participants.

This landmark conference and the youth council were inaugural projects of the Geneva Interfaith Intercultural Alliance, an international network of organizations with headquarters in Geneva, with links to the International Leadership Conference and Ambassadors for Peace network of UPF. Goals



include learning by experience about other faiths and building deep and trusting familial bonds among people from diverse religious and cultural communities.

People from several religions participated in the conference and helped draft the Declaration on Interreligious Cooperation.

GENEVA DECLARATION ON INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION

September 1, 2008

We, the assembled leaders of the world's religions and faith communities, united in the conviction that world peace is attainable, conscious of our responsibilities towards this goal, affirming the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, determined to go beyond relationships of tolerance to embrace diversity and work to create a global family, hereby declare that religions and faiths can and should:

1. Positively contribute to the furtherance of world peace, development, and human rights;
2. Encourage the appreciation of human and spiritual values by all persons;
3. Live and work together in the spirit of mutual respect, understanding, tolerance, harmony, and cooperation by first living the example;
4. Collaborate with the United Nations, international organizations, governments, and civil society, through the good functioning of this inter-religious council, towards creating a better world;
5. Include discussion and awareness of broader social issues in basic religious teachings;
6. Work towards the completion of the Millennium Development Goals through concrete and specific actions;
7. Promote respect and protection of the environment;
8. Exert more effort in bringing peace in the troubled areas of the world;
9. Condemn acts of violence, discrimination, and exploitation of others, committed in the name of religions and faiths;
10. Establish multi-sectoral mechanisms to help ensure transparency and prevent extremism in religious affairs;
11. Support education for youth emphasizing respect and appreciation of all creeds, faiths, and cultures;
12. Encourage comprehensive teaching of world religions (by representatives of those religions), ethics, cultures, and human rights in both secular and non-secular schools at all levels and in collaboration with government educational agencies, in order to improve mutual understanding;
13. Cooperate further in the defense of human rights, as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
14. Support good governance for our leaders, nations, and societies;
15. Celebrate the 1st of September as the world "Interreligious Cooperation Day";
16. Promote further dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among followers of religions and the non-religious, to walk hand in hand towards peace; and
17. Promulgate a Program of Action for the world's religions and faiths to fulfill this Declaration.

YOUTH FORGE PATHS TO PEACE IN ITALY

By Hod Ben Zvi and Giorgio Gasperoni

Competing together in a soccer match against a semi-pro local team demonstrated to the Italians that Israelis and Palestinians can work cooperatively.

Israeli and Palestinian youth engaged Italian students in discussions.



Twenty-three young Israelis and Palestinians traveled together to northern and central Italy from September 1-10, 2008, seeking to develop new leadership capabilities.

At first, people had a tendency to stay within their own groups during this International Leadership Tour. As Marina, one of the Israeli participants, said, “Living and traveling for ten days together can be difficult sometimes, because of the complicated group dynamics that are naturally created.”

Gradually, however, the Israelis and Palestinians began to mingle as they engaged in conversations and discussions, shared meals, went shopping, and enjoyed outings. When political issues were raised in more formal gatherings, the discussion heated up, especially since quite a few political science graduates were among the delegates. As a result, everyone soon realized that some of the more fruitful interactions were the informal ones.

Such experiences are attempts to create a new paradigm of understanding and peace, giving young leaders an opportunity to take part in shaping a better future for their families, communities, and nations.

In January 2008, two UPF secretaries general, Giorgio Gasperoni from the Republic of San Marino and Hod Ben Zvi from Israel, organized a fact-finding tour and cross-cultural dialogues in Israel and Palestine for 20 Italian youth leaders. This trip to Italy by Israelis and Palestinians was a reciprocal visit. Two senior participants,

Dr. Azmi Abu-Soud and Dr. Shuki Ben Ami, served as guides and mentors to the Palestinian and the Israeli youths.

The first stop was beautiful Bergamo. Host Carlo Zonato did a great job providing the delegation with accommodations, transportation, and exciting sight-seeing opportunities, with help from the municipal Office for Peace Affairs headed by Dr. Maggioni. Meetings took place at the town hall with local NGOs dedicated to promoting peace in the Middle East. Several of the large labor unions expressed a sincere desire for long-term involvement in the peacemaking process. This created an opportunity for the youth to convey their respective viewpoints.

One of the highlights of the visit was a football game between the Israeli-Palestinian team and a local semi-professional Italian team. The town people cheered the teams, and although the guests were beaten 12 to 4, they all celebrated together joyfully in a pizza restaurant after the match. Eyal commented: “As the goalie, I only allowed eight goals to get past me. Amazingly, we lost by eight. We did, however, play as a team of sportsmen and demonstrated to the crowd that Israelis and Palestinians can play together.”

In San Marino, an incident occurred during an evening presentation by two representatives, an Israeli and a Palestinian. Certain disputable political issues were brought up that created an uproar among the delegation and severely damaged the delicate balance that had been maintained throughout their trip until then, making it impossible to continue with the regular schedule. The next day, time was given to all the delegates to recuperate and come back to their senses. Gradually things started to warm up again after a beautiful tour around San Marino hosted by the local Scouts.

In Rimini, a key local Ambassador for Peace, Anna Marie, hosted the delegation. She performed

beautiful songs accompanied by her brother, a gifted guitarist. A local Italian blues group brought the spirit of Memphis alive—a truly exceptional experience.

Palestinian participants prepared a delicious Middle Eastern meal for everyone that evening at the Gasperoni family's home. Marina shared that this "revealed a special atmosphere of friendship and cooperation. Something meaningful happened in the kitchen, and there we were all in a melting pot." Giorgio's children took care of the entire delegation: driving, guiding, and translating for them. They were joined by a group of six young volunteers from Service For Peace-Europe, who brought their youthful energy. Before the time to leave, everyone joined hands in the cleanup tasks, restoring the place from a Middle Eastern restaurant back to the Gasperoni home.

Back to Pesaro, bicycles provided a ride around town, where the youth were greeted by the mayor and their host, Mrs. Pecchia. A glorious day at the beach full of fun and relaxation helped participants face their next challenge: the accommodations for the night at a scout center outside of town, which seemed like an army barracks to some of the young people. This created a commotion among those who felt a bit too challenged. Despite the initial shock and after some encouragement from their fellow-travelers, the young people felt it was best to stay,



Bicycling along Italy's coastline

Rome through the countryside of Italy from region to region, spending the final evening walking around Rome, seeing the major sites.

The next morning, employees of Israel's national airline, El-Al (known for its strict security policies), were inspired by the peace tour and allowed the Israelis and Palestinians to go together through the same standard check-in procedures.

Overall, this entire ten-day experience challenged the delegates on all levels. Beyond their differences and strong political views, they began to feel like brothers and sisters with similar dreams and hopes. One of the participants commented: "There are universal connections among people, even if they don't have a common language or culture. Even a historical conflict cannot separate us when there is true sympathy among us as human beings. Obviously, our growing friendships challenged the members of the delegation; however, we felt that such an outcome was exactly the purpose of joining this project."



Working together to prepare a meal created special bonds among the youth.

work things out together, and make the best of it.

The next day included a visit to a care center for mentally handicapped people, one of the prides of Pesaro due to its unique approach based on full integration into society. Students from a branch of the University of Urbino met with delegates for a roundtable discussion.

On the last day, they traveled from Pesaro to

Italy is close to the Middle East in geography and people's hearts. While some Italians are more drawn to either the Palestinian or the Israeli side, most Italians have balanced feelings towards both peoples. Palestinians and Israelis generally have a warm regard for the Italians. The Republic of San Marino is a small country but has always cared about freedom and peace. Its people are happy to offer a neutral meeting place for Palestinians and Israelis.

APPRECIATING THE INTERFAITH MOSAIC OF THE NETHERLANDS

By Carol Pobanz, Director of Peace Parks, Religious Youth Service

As Europe's most densely populated country, the Netherlands' survival and well-being depend on people's ability to live side by side in mutual respect.

Simple acts such as a Sikh leader wrapping a turban for someone can be expressions of religious love and faith.

The small girl watched quietly as green mosaic tiles were laid to form the scarf and dress of a Muslim child. "What's that?" she asked shyly, pointing to the figure. "It's a little Muslim girl. You see she is standing together with two other Dutch children," a participant in the Religious Youth Service (RYS) explained. The girl, herself wearing a scarf, smiled in delighted understanding. "Oh, I see!" she exclaimed. "They are different, but one!" This simple message of the mosaic-covered bench will be proclaimed at the Lucas School in a largely Turkish and Moroccan section of Utrecht, the Netherlands.

With globalization, our exposure to people and cultures from all over the world is increasing. Yet, it's difficult for relationships among people of different cultures to go beyond tolerance and perhaps respect; it is rare for the average person to develop a sincere curiosity and appreciation for each other's differences. Rather than living together in an intercultural society, we are creating communities of different cultures which exist side by side. Is this really valuing our diversity?

Such issues are very prominent in the Netherlands. As Europe's most densely populated country with 16 million people, its survival and well-being depend on people's ability to live side by side in mutual respect. The Netherlands reportedly has the second-largest proportion of Muslims in Europe (6 percent), and in such a country interreligious comprehension and friendships are crucial.

However, religiously motivated violence, especially the murder of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh by a Muslim fanatic in 2004, drew attention to the need for interreligious comprehension, dialogue, and friendships. There are tensions among the Moroccan and Turkish communities in Utrecht in relation to the larger Dutch society. Integrating immigrants into a "mosaic culture" is a topic of discussion in cities such as Den Haag, but young people from different religions and cultures do not have frequent opportunities to meet and mix.

Religious Youth Service, a project of the Universal Peace Federation, creates opportunities for youth of different religions, cultures, and backgrounds to engage in dialogue, learn to know each other, and spend time living together with a common purpose of serving the community. In strengthening the deepest values that are common to most religions, RYS encourages people to practice their faith through contributing to the community and connecting with other faiths and cultures.

This year's July 7-16 intercultural youth project brought national and international participants to a Moroccan and Turkish immigrant section of Utrecht to help promote integration of immigrants into the Dutch culture, building on the 2007 project in Utrecht in collaboration with Kerk en Wereld [Church and World] and Youth Service Initiative. This year, participants worked much more closely with the local mosques and community organizations to meet local needs.

There were many opportunities for the youth of





The combinations of colors and images convey the message that we may seem different, but we are one.



the area to interact with our intercultural group. School children visited daily with their teachers and on their own after school. They joined in designing and creating mosaics on benches and a wall. One design integrates the Dutch flag with the crescent moon and star (symbols of Morocco) and the Turkish five-pointed star. At the center of the bench are three figures: a Dutch boy and girl together with a little girl in a long dress and head scarf. A second project, a dialogue bench, involved putting mosaics on three facing benches. The head bench features a sun with rays streaming from it, a symbol of life and hope, while the two supportive benches depict many colored hands raised together integrated into the rays of hope. The benches are designed to facilitate communication. Inspirational quotes on creativity are planned as a contemplative centerpiece

for the benches. The third project, a large wall mural, sports symbols of joy, laughter, and music.

Participants shared in aspects of the local and immigrant cultures. The youth cultural center arranged three workshops: in rap, Mid-eastern drumming, and Bollywood dancing. A cultural evening program allowed everyone to share their newly acquired abilities and also talents reflective of their native culture. A



visit to Gouda, the famed cheese market, tempted the adventurous to taste traditional foods of the area including raw herring dipped in onions. A four-hour bike ride, employing the most common means of travel in the Netherlands, was a memorable experience together with a boat ride through the canals.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect were the many visits to religious sites. We attended the services of Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Hindu, and Universal Sufi faiths to more deeply understand their beliefs and their related worship ceremonies. Members of each of the faith traditions shared their unique way of worshipping the Divine, allowing the visiting youth a chance to take part in their worship if they desired, observe the devotions, ask questions, and discover for themselves what and why each group worshipped as they did.

Each religion expressed warmth and sincerity toward the group. A special highlight to these visits was the gracious service of a Sikh priest in wrapping turbans around the heads of the participants. It seems it is the simple acts of joy and friendship that are the true expressions of religious love and faith. They are the embodiment and expressions of true loving relationship, the essence of all faith traditions.

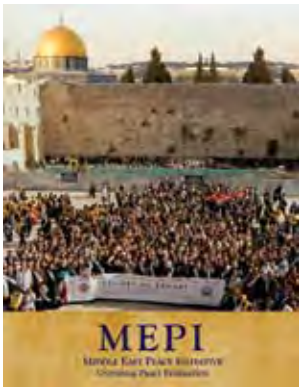
For more information, see rys.net and youthserviceinitiative.org.



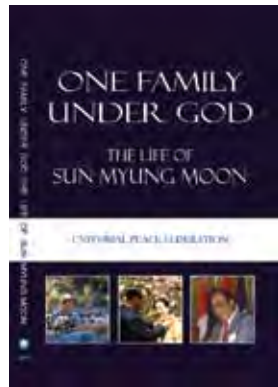
With every new place of worship that we visited, my mind became more and more open to the new experiences and concepts. I left with the desire to continue to expand my knowledge and experience of other faiths.

— AIKA WATANABE

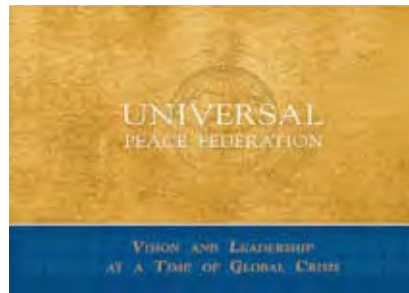
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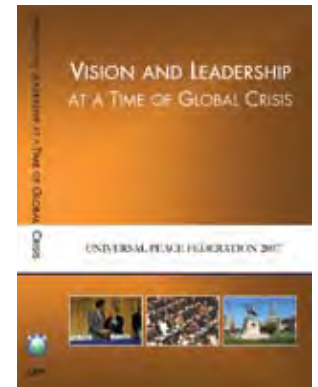
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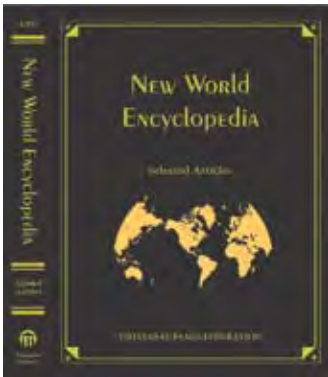
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The present time marks an important milestone in the development of civilization. We stand at a critical junction of human history where we can complete the providence of building God's fatherland and peace kingdom.
— Dr. Sun Myung Moon

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