

The Responsibility of Albanian People for Creating Lasting Peace in the Balkans

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April 29, 2012



Congressional Palace, Tirana, Albania European Leadership Conference April 29, 2012

In the presence of distinguished Albanian former and current parliamentarians and former President Moisiu, Dr Song pointed to the longstanding Albanian tradition of good interfaith harmony that probably still cannot be found in any other European nation and the truly extraordinary example demonstrated by the life of Mother Teresa which has so inspired the entire world, as profound qualities other nations should study and inherit.

"President Moisiu, Your Excellency, Jozefina Topalli, Chair of the Albanian Parliament, Distinguished Guests, Ambassadors for Peace, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends!

First of all, I want to extend a very warm welcome to you to this European Leadership Conference. I am very happy to be back in Albania once more and to have the pleasure of meeting so many precious old friends once again, as well as the opportunity to meet some of you for the very first time.

I am very glad to be back in a city and nation where Universal Peace Federation has held so many memorable and successful events in the past, which were supported by many of Albania's most distinguished citizens and of which I have very warm memories. Foremost among these memories is definitely the visit that Father and Mother Moon paid here in 2005 when they were so warmly welcomed by then President Moisiu and by Prime Minister Sali Berisha. I also remember vividly that right here in this very building, Father and Mother Moon were introduced to an enthusiastic capacity crowd of over 3000 in a most warm and welcoming way by President Moisiu's predecessor as President, Professor Rexhep Meidani, at an event that was broadcast on national T.V.

As you know, both President Meidani and President Moisiu have honoured us with their presence here today and I am deeply grateful to them both for that. I would like to ask them to please rise and to be acknowledged by you all with warm applause!

I would also like to recognize another highly distinguished participant here this afternoon. I refer to the former President of Kosovo, Dr Fatmir Sejdiu, who has also done so much to support the work of Father and Mother Moon and of The Universal Peace Federation in this region. President Sejdiu please stand and allow us to welcome and recognize you here today!

Of course, I also remember fondly many other occasions here in Albania. One that I can hardly forget was when this great City of Tirana so very generously awarded me its "Citizen of The Year Award". Even though of course I realize that this was not so much an award to me personally as a recognition of the value of the work of Father and Mother Moon and of

UPF as a whole, it always makes me feel deeply connected to Tirana and to Albania and gives me a very warm feeling each time I return.



However, please understand that I do not mention these incidents simply because they were meaningful or memorable to me personally. I believe that they were far more significant than that! My main reason for mentioning them is that I think that they relate deeply to the main theme and substance of our conference here today, namely "The Responsibility of Albanian People for Creating Lasting Peace in the Balkans"

I think that they show that Albanian People at all levels were prepared by God to be able to recognise the value and the importance of the work of Father and Mother Moon and of how God is working through them to bring lasting peace to our deeply troubled and confused world. I sense that many of you here understand that wholeheartedly supporting their work will bring great grace and blessing both to this region and to The Albanian People in the future and elevate them greatly in the eyes of the world.

As I know that many of you have come to understand, Father and Mother Moon are by no means ordinary religious leaders. They have been inspired by God to realise nothing less than his vision for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth in the role and position of The True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind. They are people of utterly selfless devotion to God and his Providence and to the betterment of Humankind and Almighty God is fully with and working through them. They have realised within themselves the realm of true love and true parental heart that God expected our original human ancestors, Adam and Eve, to realise within themselves. Tragically, however, Adam and Eve were unable to do so and instead they separated from God through The Fall, thus bringing great suffering and tribulation into human life in succeeding generations down to the present day.

I know that Father and Mother Moon feel that the Albanian People are truly a nation prepared by God to work with them and that they have outstanding potential to create an ideal society within this nation and to be peacemakers and unifiers beyond its borders. Whenever Father and Mother Moon come to Albania they always feel great hope because they feel the immense potential of this nation. Of course, they are well aware that it is still at the lower end of Europe's economic league tables and that it is faced by many difficult problems such as high unemployment, under-investment and poor growth and that it has many social problems of all kinds such as corruption, organized crime and many others. However, they see beyond all these difficulties to the deep resources of character and heart that they sense in its population and it is these resources above all else which give them tremendous hope for this nation's future.

Let me give you two main illustrations of what I mean in this regard both of which have deep roots in Albanian history.

The first concerns the state of interfaith relations in this country. Father Moon has long said that the nations that most embody principles of interfaith harmony and cooperation will become the leading nations in Europe. Here in Albania you have succeeded for generations now in achieving a remarkable degree of cooperation and harmony among the many faiths that live and work side by side. I believe that the extent of interfaith harmony that exists here can probably still not be found in any other European nation. Father Moon sees clearly from this that Albanian character is not narrow and sectarian, getting caught up in the relatively small differences of belief and practice that tend to divide faith communities from each other and bring them into conflict. Albanians can see the commonalities that bind different faith groups

together and make all believers like children of the one God. They are a people of heart and also they are a tolerant people. This is such an important cultural model not only for Albania but also for the rest of Europe and the whole world to learn from.

The second concerns the truly extraordinary example demonstrated by the life of Mother Teresa which has so moved and inspired the entire world. Her life exhibited so many deep qualities and embodied so many of the highest principles that Father and Mother Moon teach and themselves live by.

Having dedicated her life to God, from a young age, she lived single mindedly for the will of God and for the sake of others, always with deep faith in God. She never allowed herself to stay within whatever comfort zones she might be experiencing for the time being, but always sought to move forward in absolute obedience to God's will, however hard that might be for her. Having gone to India in her youth she spent 20 years or so as a teacher in a mission school, eventually becoming its headmistress. But it was at this time (in 1946) when she was in a sense established and comfortable in her role that she received the call to her higher and far more challenging role that was to make her world famous – that of bringing God's love and compassion to the poor, the destitute and the unloved of this world.

One of Mother Teresa's great qualities was that she by no means lived just for Albanians but spent over 60 of her 87 year life serving others away from Albania and mostly away from Europe.

Another and perhaps her greatest quality was that in taking on the great challenge to love the otherwise "unloved", she showed an immense heart of unconditional love, embracing the most needy, the most deprived and the most destitute. Her ability to love others was not dependent on their ability to love her.

Also, she loved others far beyond the boundaries of her own religious, racial and ethnic background. Although a pious and deeply committed catholic, she loved people of other faiths and of none and people of other races (be they Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, Jew, Jain, Protestant or Orthodox Christian, black, brown, white or yellow). She loved them wholeheartedly and equally, without distinction as to creed or race – simply as God's Children one and all!

By the time of her death in 1997 The Missionaries of Charity, which she founded had 610 missions in 123 countries including hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, children's and family counselling programmes, orphanages and schools and had over 1 million Co-Workers. And of course, in recognition of all this she had received many of the world's highest honours, including the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize.

What a truly amazing and inspiring example she was to us all! Her life exhibits so much of the greatness in the Albanian Soul and the potential of Albanian People to be peacemakers, as was pointed out by former U.N. Secretary-General and current UPF Peace Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar when he said of Mother Teresa "*She is the United Nations. She is peace in the world.*" Father Moon's way of saying that is that "*True and Lasting Peace can only be created by people of true love*". Ladies and gentlemen, we all need to become such people!

Of course, in one sense Mother Teresa was unique and without equal among Albanians and we may never see her like again. In another sense, Father Moon feels that she merely reflected qualities of heart that are to be found in greater or lesser degree in every individual Albanian. It is the realization of that enormous potential more than any other that would qualify Albanians to be bringers of peace to others and Father Moon strongly encourages Albanian People to develop themselves as peace makers in that way

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, the history of God's Providence is littered with examples of those who were prepared by God but who could not understand fully what God was expecting of them or fully answer his call, thus leaving an important part of his work undone and failing to realise his will and his ideal in their time. So all those who are particularly prepared by God do need to be careful. God's grace and God's Blessing may come down to an individual, a community or a nation but it can also so easily be lost if we don't constantly check ourselves and deepen our understanding of our own responsibility.

To become a so-called "chosen person" or "chosen people" requires grace from God and for there to have been some significant historical foundation laid by our ancestors. However, it also requires us to fulfill our God-given portion of responsibility in the present day. So, as individuals, peoples and nations we of course need to be aware of our

qualifications but we also need to be aware of our limitations and weaknesses and strive sincerely to overcome them, lest they interfere with our ability to do God's Will. Therefore, we need to think and pray deeply about our responsibility and we need to think about and devote ourselves to others more than ever before.

We also need to keep checking ourselves continuously to see whether we are truly moving in oneness with God's will or whether subtly and almost imperceptibly we are merely taking our own direction. Truly, to be "chosen by God" is a weighty responsibility that, like Father and Mother Moon, we have to be very careful to fulfill exactly according to the will of God.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you that my dream is to bring Father Moon to Albania at least one more time in his long and truly extraordinary life and I believe that if we work together and make real progress in developing the foundation of UPF, that he will come and that it could even be within this year! But please understand that he never just goes where he wants but only where he is guided to go by God based on the preparedness of the nation in question to receive him. Father Moon senses these things very deeply.

I believe that the mission of UPF here in Albania is nothing less than to support the Albanian People in realising and fulfilling their God-given role as peace makers and unifiers. I want to urge you to study the principles of UPF and the teachings of Father Moon more deeply and to involve yourselves more and more fully as Ambassadors for Peace in UPF's projects and activities here in Albania and abroad. Let us work tirelessly together to elevate this nation in every way in the months to come to fulfil its destiny in front of God. If we do that, I am confident that we will move Father and Mother Moon to visit us here one more time and that they will bring with them to this nation great blessing and good fortune!

Thank you very much and God bless you!"

Keynote address of Dr Yong Cheon Song: Chair, Universal Peace Federation, Europe