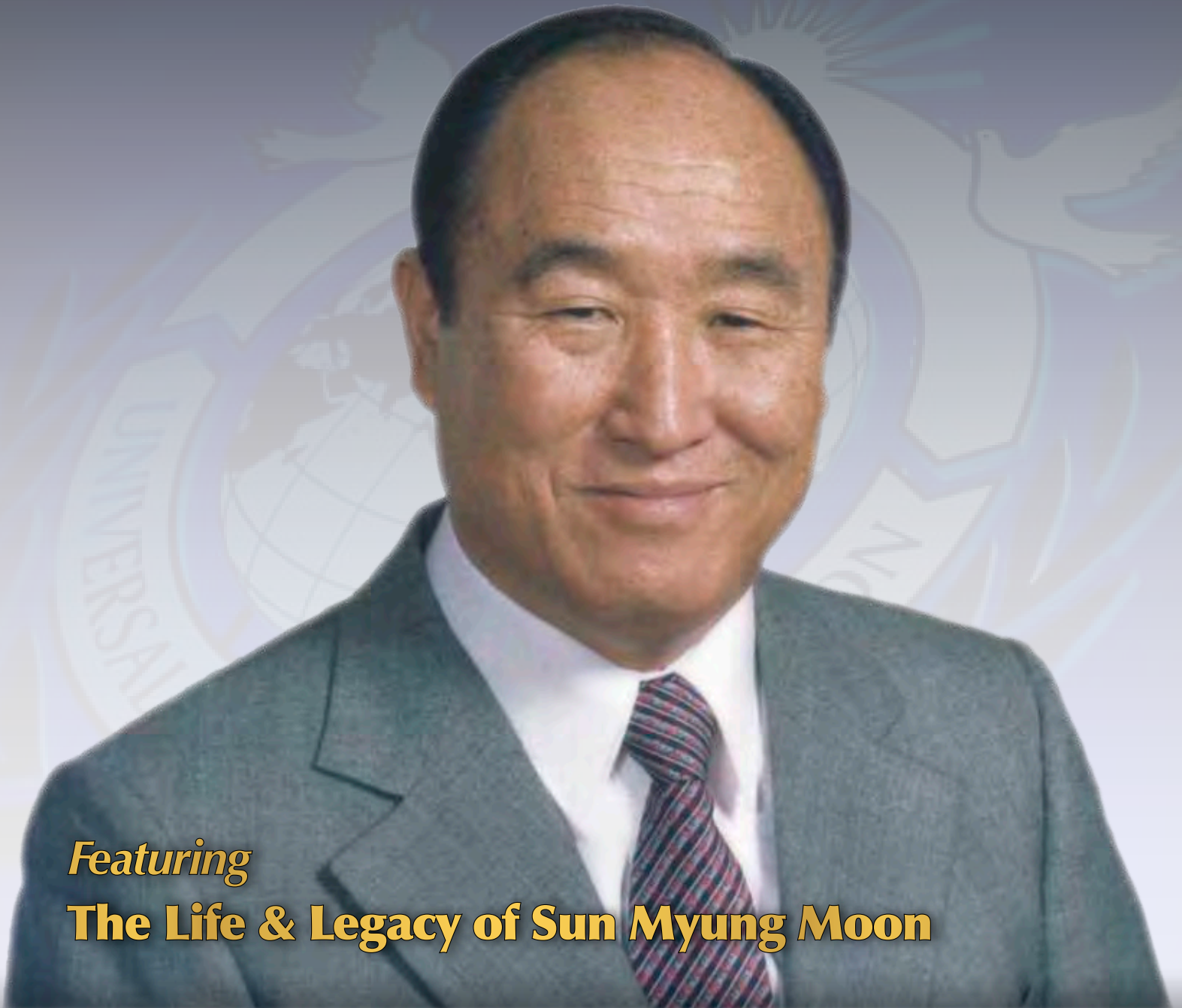


VOL. 6, NO. 3, 2012

UPF TODAY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PEACE



Featuring

The Life & Legacy of Sun Myung Moon

Also in this issue:

**International Day of Peace
2012**

**Middle East Peace Initiative
Jerusalem**

**Religious Youth Service
Programs**

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION | UPF.ORG

FROM THE PUBLISHER



UPF TODAY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PEACE

FAMILY, friends, colleagues and devoted followers of the vision and teachings of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon turned out in the tens of thousands to pay their respects to the “peace loving global citizen” and founder of the Universal Peace Federation who passed away on September 3, 2012 at the age of 92.

Tributes poured in from around the world, offering condolences and expressions of appreciation for the man who had devoted his life to creating “one family under God,” bringing together people from every race, religion, nationality and culture to “live for the sake of others.”

In addition to its coverage of the memorial service for Father Moon, with reflections on his lasting legacy, this issue provides a report on UPF Chapter programs in honor of the United Nations’ International Day of Peace, a tradition that has become a significant part of UPF’s annual report. In addition, in continuation of its efforts to promote peace in the “holy land,” UPF organized a conference in Jerusalem on “Religion and Peace in the Middle East.”

This issue also features reports on important programs from UPF Europe, as well as a series of RYS youth service programs and a report from UPF’s Washington DC Office of Peace and Security Affairs. We hope you enjoy this issue, and we appreciate your ongoing support for UPF and its important mission to build a world of lasting peace.



Dr. Thomas G. Walsh
President, UPF

Chairman
Hyung Jin Moon

President
Thomas G. Walsh

Secretary General
Tageldin Hamad

Executive Editor
Michael Balcomb

Editor
Joy Pople

Layout and Design
Alberto G. Faccion

TABLE OF CONTENTS

50,000 Gather to Say Farewell to Dr. Sun Myung Moon 3

By Michael Balcomb

Even in Death, Working for Unification 5

By UPF International

One Family under God A Lasting Legacy 6

By Michael Balcomb

International Day of Peace 8

By Joy Pople

Interfaith Cooperation 10

By UPF Israel

European Leadership Conferences. 12

By UPF-Europe

Russia’s Role in Stability in Eurasia and the Far East 14

By William Selig

Toward a “Third Way” in the International Market System . . 15

By William Selig

Summer of Service. 16

By Joy Pople

Borderless Goodwill 19

By UPF–Russia

CHAPTERS FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Afghanistan
Albania
Argentina
Australia
Brazil
Cambodia
Czech Republic
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Estonia

Ethiopia
Georgia
Germany
India
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Kosovo
Latvia

Malaysia
Moldova
Nepal
New Zealand
North Korea
Norway
Peru
Russia
Scotland
South Korea

Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Lucia
Switzerland
Taiwan
Thailand
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States
Zambia

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.

Copyright © 2012, Universal Peace Federation
All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part prohibited except by written permission. Periodicals postage is paid at Tarrytown, New York, and additional mailing offices.

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

Universal Peace Federation
200 White Plains Road, Floor 1
Tarrytown, NY 10591, USA
info@upf.org
www.upf.org

COVER:
Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon,
Founder of the Universal
Peace Federation
(Photo credit: Ken Owens/NFP)

50,000 GATHER TO SAY FAREWELL TO DR. SUN MYUNG MOON

By Michael Balcomb, UPF International

REV. Sun Myung Moon, the international religious leader and founder of the Unification Church and the Universal Peace Federation, was laid to rest on September 15 in a series of moving ceremonies held in the mountainous countryside just outside Seoul that he loved so much in life.

In addition to the 50,000 mourners packed in and around the Cheongshim Peace Stadium, church officials estimated that several millions more participated in the ceremony through live web broadcast and satellite programs in over 100 nations.

After a selection of messages of support and condolence received from Korean and world leaders were shown to the mourners on the giant video screens, live coverage began. Father Moon's body, which had been lying in state for eight days at a small chapel at the nearby Cheon Jeong Goong museum, was reverently led out to the waiting vehicles.

Slowly, the flower-bedecked procession wound its way down the mountainside, through wisps of fog and cloud, to the stadium where the tens of thousands of mourners—women dressed in white and cream and men with dark suits and white ties—were waiting in somber silence.

The casket was met at the entrance by an honor guard of pallbearers, and then began the dignified processional entry through the center of the arena and up to the main stage, transformed into a garden of roses, lilies, and chrysanthemums. Three of Rev. Moon's sons led the procession, followed by Mother Moon, supported by her daughters. Grave but composed, she took her seat next to her husband for the last time.

A moving representative prayer was offered by Dr. Bo Hi Pak, who met Father Moon when a young army officer in the 1950s and was among the first international missionaries to the United States. A wave of muted sobs quietly filled the arena as Pak emotionally and poetically recalled the fruits of a life of love lived for heaven.



"Let us offer everything for the ideal world of freedom he envisioned for this earth." Rev. Hyung Jin Moon

The Seonghwa (memorial) Address was delivered by Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, the Moons' youngest son and chairman of the Universal Peace Federation. Frequently pausing to wipe away tears, he called on all present to join together to realize his father's vision of a kingdom of peace. "It is only today that we realize the meaning of his words," he said. "As he asked us to do, let us offer everything for the ideal world of freedom he envisioned for this earth."

Three speakers offered eulogies reflecting the scope of Father Moon's life. The first was Dong-Suk Kang, Chairman of Expo 2012 in Yeosu, the coastal town where Dr. Moon had spent a great deal of time and effort in his final years. Kang noted his contribution to Yeosu and his lifelong commitment to the ocean. "He was proud to be a Korean," Kang said, "and invested so much to raise the profile of Korea in the world."

The next speaker was Lord Tarsem King, the first Sikh member of the British House of Lords and Patron of UPF in the UK. King, who had welcomed the Moons to Britain and to the Parliament buildings just last year, offered condolences and encouragement. "On the one hand, this is a day of sadness, as we reflect on the loss of a man we all came to know and love," King said. "But we should also be proud of his life, passion, and conviction. He was always ready to risk his life for the sake of God's will."

"I can think of no one who has devoted himself more thoroughly to the promotion of interfaith understanding and cooperation," King continued. "Long before interfaith had become a mainstream idea, Father Moon had been its champion. He has even called upon the United Nations to take interfaith more seriously and to establish an interfaith council within the United Nations system."

The final eulogist was Alfred Moisiu, who as President of Albania had welcomed Dr. and Mrs. Moon to his country during the 2005 UPF peace tour. "During our conversation I was moved by his great vision and hope for my country," Moisiu said. "I felt he came to give selflessly for the sake of the Albanian people and that his visit was truly an unforgettable moment in our history. The vision he outlined has been consistently implemented and now has wide support across Albanian society and has made a real difference." Moisiu and King were among 300 foreign dignitaries from 80 nations who joined the UPF in paying their final respects.

"During our conversation I was moved by his great vision and hope for my country. I felt he came to give selflessly for the sake of the Albanian people and that his visit was truly an unforgettable moment in our history. The vision he outlined has been consistently implemented and now has wide support across Albanian society and has made a real difference."

— Alfred Moisiu



Distinguished leaders paid tribute to a man they called a "gifted spiritual leader," a "beacon of hope," and an "exceptional friend."

Media coverage of the program was extensive, with frequent reports on BBC Asia, Al-Jazeera, Reuters, AFP, and more. A number of the UPF delegates were asked for comments. "We are very grateful for his work," said General Malimba Masheke, the former Zambian Prime Minister, interviewed on Korean television. "He managed to bring people together from so many nations, beyond the barriers of nationality and religion that so often and so unnecessarily divide us." Jose de Venecia, the five-time speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives, commented that Father Moon's vision of an interfaith council at the United Nations was needed more than ever, given the conflicts and violence raging in the Middle East.

After the main ceremony concluded, Father Moon began his final journey. Leaving the Peace Stadium, the funeral procession wound its way back up the narrow mountain roads lined with flag-waving supporters, arriving at last at the tranquil and private burial site in the grounds of



EVEN IN DEATH, WORKING FOR UNIFICATION

UPF International Chair Hyung Jin Moon visited Pyongyang the week before his father's memorial services to accept condolences from relatives residing in North Korea. A simple family visit that in other parts of the world would be routine was in fact quite exceptional, in light of the heightened tensions between the two Koreas. Millions of families remain divided with no possibility of visiting each other across the heavily fortified 38th parallel.

This was more than just a family visit. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un extended his condolence letter to Moon's family in the South over the North's official news media, extolling Dr. Moon's efforts for reconciliation and unity between the Koreas that extend back over several decades. In 1991, Dr. Moon met with then leader Kim Il Sung on a visit to Pyongyang, and more recently Hyung Jin Moon visited the North to offer condolences to Kim Jong-un when his father, Kim Jong-il, passed away.

The North also awarded Moon what it calls the National Reunification Prize in recognition of his contribution to inter-Korean reconciliation and unity, according to reports from the North's Central News Agency.



"I can think of no one who has devoted himself more thoroughly to the promotion of interfaith understanding and cooperation."

– Lord Tarsem King, *House of Lords, UK*

the Cheon Jeong Goong museum.

There, close family and friends gathered tightly around the Wonjeon, or gravesite, to hear some final words, taken from the teachings of Rev. Moon, about the spirit world and our eternal home with God. Finally each one offered flowers and sprinkled dirt onto the casket as it was gently lowered into the waiting earth.

"Although this is the end of his earthly life, it is not by any means the end of his impact and legacy on this world," said Ambassador Krishna Rajan, who had made the journey from India to be at the services. "I am convinced that today is in fact the beginning of a new chapter in his work that will definitely bring our world to peace."

The prize was presented to Hyung Jin Moon by Kim Jong-un's uncle, Jang Song-thaek, a senior figure in the North Korean government.



ONE FAMILY UNDER GOD A LASTING LEGACY



By Michael Balcomb

It's often said that you really know who your friends are in a time of crisis, and the more than 300 UPF Ambassadors for Peace who made the long journey to Korea to attend the memorial services for Father Moon proved that we are more than just friends: we are indeed one family under God. The UPF delegation shared tears, memories, determination, and also plenty of laughter and smiles as we comforted each other and shared testimony as to the many ways that this extraordinary man of God had touched all our lives.

Nowhere was this more evident than at the celebratory memorial banquet held after the memorial services that night back in Seoul's bustling Gangnam district at the Intercontinental Grand Hotel, fittingly located next to the COEX Exhibition Center where just three years ago Dr. Moon launched his best-selling autobiography, *As a Peace Loving Global Citizen*.

The banquet guests were warmly welcomed by the UPF International Chair, Hyung Jin Moon and his wife Yeon Ah Lee, President Dr. Thomas Walsh, Secretary General Taj Hamad, and UPF Presiding Council member Dr. Stansislav Shushkevich from Belarus, who once led the landlocked Eurasian nation and who played a major role in the early post-Soviet era.

Long after his much-celebrated meetings with former President Mikhail Gorbachev, Dr. Moon continued to invest in the region and particular in its youth. In recognition of this contribution, two universities which had invited him some time ago to come and speak and receive an honorary doctorate took the opportunity to offer the awards posthumously, in a short but moving ceremony in which Hyung Jin Moon and his wife accepted the award on behalf of Dr. Moon.

Father Moon's impact on interfaith relations was evident from the heartfelt benedictions offered by representatives from the religious community. Prayers were offered by Bishop Riah al Assal, the immediate past Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Dr. Hamdi Mohammed Murad, the co-founder of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center, and Dr. Srivatsa Goswami from India.

The Asian regional delegation was among the largest, with several governmental representatives from Nepal including Lokendra

Bahadur Chand, former Prime Minister, and Cabinet Minister Ek Nath Dhakal, who has spearheaded UPF's peacemaking work in the region. Other prominent political, academic, and military leaders included Jose de Venecia, Jr., Founding Chairman of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties, from the Philippines; Police Lt. Gen. Thaveesak Tuchinda, Senate advisor and Bangkok Election Commissioner; and Gen. Terdsak Marrome, Special aide-de-camp to the King, Ministry of Defense from Thailand. UPF was also honored by the presence of Mrs. Sinta Nuriyah Wahid, the widow of the late Abdurrahman "Gus Dur" Wahid, former President of Indonesia.

Other continents were also well represented. Two Europeans, Lord Tarsem King from Great Britain and H.E. Alfred Moisiu from Albania, were selected to offer eulogies at the main ceremony, and there was a strong representation of academics, civil leaders, and scholars from across Europe. There were also scholars, diplomats, and political figures from Africa, many of whom had fond memories of welcoming Father and Mother Moon to their nations on one of the many peace tours that took place in the years following the foundation of UPF, including former Zambian Prime Minister Malimba Masheke and Ugandan Minister for Minerals, Peter Lokeris, who had both been together with Father and Mother Moon during their historic visit to Nigeria last year.

Oceania, South America, and the Caribbean were also well represented. Former Marshall Islands President Kessai Note, who had welcomed Father and Mother Moon to his low-lying island both to fish for big game and to speak to the nation, appreciated their support for youth education. Note was among more than a dozen former presidents and prime ministers who came to pay their respects in person, but UPF also received more than 450 written, internet, and video messages of support in the week before the memorial, including messages from seven heads of state and dozens of parliamentary leaders.

The United States sent a strong delegation, with 72 pastors and religious leaders from the American Clergy Leadership Conference. "When we heard that Father Moon had passed, we felt we just had to come to his home-going service," said Jesse Edwards and George Stallings. "He was truly our spiritual father; we are all his children, and we are all one family."





Nepal

By Joy Pople

Inspired by the theme “Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future” for the 2012 observances of the UN International Day of Peace, UPF in more than 30 nations planned programs ranging from academic forums to interreligious ceremonies to poetry contests. They engaged youth in promoting a culture of peace through service, sports, music, dance, crafts, and public information campaigns.

UPF chapters helped organize conferences in the houses of parliament of **Norway**, **Peru**, **Scotland**, and **Sri Lanka** (where the Youth Parliament devoted two days to issues of sustainable peace). Additional government venues for programs included city halls in **Brazil** and **Ecuador**. At the African Union headquarters in **Addis Ababa**, Ethiopian Ambassadors for Peace distributed literature about the fundamental role of families in peacebuilding.



Argentina



Brazil



Cambodia

Some of the most passionate speakers came from conflict zones. H.E. Roman Kirn, Ambassador of Slovenia to the United States, recalled the genocide in the former Yugoslavia. He appealed to not only the audience in **Washington DC** but also the entire global community to “protect the people and save peace.” At the program in **Madrid**, Professor Emilio Asti from the University of Milan in Italy called the Mediterranean zone with its remarkable migratory and cultural flows a “compendium of the great questions facing the world.” He envisions a free circulation of people and ideas between the northern and southern shores enabling people of different religions and backgrounds to live in peace and prosperity centered on shared spiritual values.

One year ago on the International Day of Peace, a national Interreligious Peace Council was formed in **Thailand**, and the council has been addressing issues of terrorism by Muslim separatists in the southern region of this predominately Buddhist nation. The interreligious vision is taking root elsewhere. For example, in **Australia**, this year’s International Day of Peace observance focused on prospects for forming an interreligious peace council in this increasingly diverse nation.

Academic deliberations took place at universities in **Afghanistan**, **Australia**, the **Dominican Republic**, and **Georgia**. Additional forums were held in the **Czech Republic**, **Latvia**, **Moldova**, the **United States**, and **Zambia**. Hon. Jaroslav Doubrava, a member of the Czech Senate, emphasized the value of human life. “War is always a bad solution,” he said, lamenting that much more money is invested in destruction than on improving living conditions.

Some speakers on the International Day of Peace also emphasized peace within. “We need to know what it is to feel inner

peace,” said Mrs. Rute Cardoso, a therapist in **Sao Paulo, Brazil**. “Inner peace is our inner light and our best company, the most important knowledge that we can acquire.”

Recognizing that religious people and their insights can make important contributions to peace, UPF organizers incorporated interreligious prayers, ceremonies, and forums during events in **Brazil, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Nepal, and New Zealand**. As is traditional during International Day of Peace observances, many programs encouraged time for silent reflection. Attention was drawn to noted people who had dedicated their lives to peace, such as UPF Founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, who had passed away on September 3.

To inspire young people with a vision of a world of peace and harmony, there were also service projects, sports competitions, classroom lessons, and cultural programs.

This year’s focus on a sustainable future led to tree planting in rural **Cambodia** and **Nepal** as well as an environmental clean-up in **Japan**. A Cambodian student, Kim Ratank, said, “Even though our contribution



Estonia



Ethiopia



Georgia



India



New Zealand



Scotland



Perú



Spain

is small, it will be an encouragement for the villagers.” For organizers in **Nepal, Russia, and Ukraine**, the Day of Peace became an occasion to distribute food and gifts to the less fortunate. In **Spain**, the annual “Helping Your Neighbor” awards were presented to two community activists whose daily lives are devoted to service.

A culture of peace was promoted in a variety of other ways. For example, Play Football Make Peace competitions brought together diverse teams of young people in **Moscow** and **New Delhi**. Nepalese students competed in a speech contest on “Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future.” At program in **Tokyo**, one person reported a memorable comment by an Afghan youth he had met during a service project in South Asia: “Peacebuilding begins when one can open his/her heart to digest others’ minds and embrace them.”

Music and dance helped create a harmonious atmosphere in places as diverse as **Germany, the Dominican Republic, and the United States**. Educational activities took place in classrooms in **Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine, and many cities in Russia**. Cards and messages of peace were distributed to the public in **Israel and Russia**. “We met people of different nationalities, faiths, and ages,” reported Ksenya Kolpakova about UPF-Siberia’s Give a Smile to the World project. “Their smiles warmed our hearts.”

Perhaps the poet’s pen best captures the spirit of this year’s observances. The winners of an international poetry contest on the theme of “Words of Meeting and Universal Consciousness” were announced on the Day of Peace in **Buenos Aires**. In her prize-winning entry entitled “It Is Time Now...” visionary Argentinian author Irma Droz invites people to “reach out to our friend to look each other in the eyes and offer our arms outstretched. It is time to lift our faces and see that dawn has finally arrived!”



The Significance of Interfaith Cooperation

by UPF Israel

As civilian casualties mount in Syria, Israel's northern neighbor, and concerns over militant groups operating in the Sinai trouble governments both in Cairo and Jerusalem, UPF's Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) took another step forward with an interfaith seminar on the topic "Religion and Peace in the Middle East: the significance of Interfaith Cooperation." The conference was the latest of 37 MEPI programs since the spring of 2003.

The proceedings, held August 26-28 at the Olive Tree Hotel in Jerusalem on an intimate scale, brought together 20 participants from Israel, the United States, and Europe, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Druze religious leaders and scholars of religion, diplomats, and political and community leaders.

The seminar began with a review of both the opportunities and the limitations of religious and interreligious intervention in the region. Dr. Thomas Walsh, UPF President, spoke about the field of "Track Two" diplomacy in general, noting the need for a balance between "soft" approaches involving ideas and beliefs and the "hard" political, military, and economic forces that shape and transform the

uneasy relations among all nations in the region. Yet he was ultimately cautious about the prospects for change. "The ongoing presence of religion does not represent an unqualified plus for humanity," he said. "After all, religion not only fosters humility, hospitality, and self-sacrifice for noble ideals, but also often goes hand in hand with unwarranted yet passionate convictions, and a whole range of tempting pathologies."

Imam Dr. Abdujalil Sajid, a Muslim leader from the United Kingdom, suggested that more could be done to explore the common ground between the major faiths in the region. "Muslims have failed to publicize the pluralistic vision of Islam," Sajid said, noting that as a result Islam is often portrayed in the media as a force of instability and even terrorism. Dr. Marco Frenschkowski, a scholar of religion from Leipzig University in Germany, cautioned that although scholars could and should do their best to enhance knowledge and understanding between religious traditions, there are always powerful emotional and social forces involved in religion that defy simple rational analysis.

Israel and its Neighbors

A second session reviewed Israel's relations with its Muslim neighbors. Ran Cohen, former long-term member of the Israeli Knesset, spoke of both hope and disappointment with the "Arab Spring." Despite the possible increase in extremist perspectives, he said, the people of many Islamic states are at least beginning to question their own leaders and traditions, rather than (as in the past) taking the easy route of blaming Israel for all their difficulties. However, Israelis themselves should question their own deeper commitment to peace, because despite overwhelming support in opinion polls for peace with the Palestinians, the public continues to elect government officials who are opposed to the most likely solutions.

Dr. Eldad Pardo, a noted scholar of Iranian political culture, pointed out that Israel and Iran need not be enemies, despite the current rhetoric of annihilation. In fact, for a long period of time, up until the early 1990s, Iran had been an ally of Israel and had looked with interest and appreciation on the successful Israeli integration of the interests of faith and democracy, particularly with regard to the handling of religious political parties. Today the Iranian experiment with religious oversight of political life is under great stress and already several potential internal uprisings had been tried. "Israel need not and should not attempt to intervene," Pardo said.

Ambassador Sam Zakhem, former US Ambassador to Bahrain, called for a renewed role for the United Nations in the region. Reviewing the major political developments from the British Mandate to the present day, Zakhem noted that disagreement between the former cold-war Security Council superpowers Russia and the USA had led to excessive use of the veto, preventing potential progress in the region. He called on non-governmental actors to continue working to find common ground that would allow regional powers to exert a calming influence.

Another session examined the particular contribution that could be made by religious leaders. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths, called for religious leaders to take more initiative in exorcizing ancient and recent resentments and injuries, perhaps taking a leaf from Archbishop Desmond Tutu's book *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Mr. Joseph Montville, who teaches at George Mason University in the US and formerly worked for the US State Department, drew

attention to the disproportionate impact on policy of religious extremists from all faiths.

Dr. Michael Balcomb, UPF Communications Director, questioned whether a multifaith pluralistic future is the only viable alternative to increased polarization. "In the United States, pluralism has also led to individualism and relativism," he said, "and the resulting moral decay in the US national culture—at least as portrayed in the media—may well be acting as a catalyst to further incite a rejection of western values by more and more sectors of Islamic society."

The UPF group was joined by an equivalent number of local UPF Ambassadors for Peace and other community figures, including a number of college professors, imams, leaders of the Druze community, and families from both East and West Jerusalem for a roundtable discussion followed by dinner.

Next Steps

A final session the following morning examined "best practices" and initiatives in Israel and worldwide. Several spoke of the importance of personal example, including Jabur Manzur, a Druze leader from Usfyeh who spoke of the principles of peace and harmony in the Druze religion as a foundation for interfaith. Imam Omar Kayal from Jedyeh said he made it a point to regularly visit with and support the Christian priest in his village and to make sure that Christian families, even though very much in the minority, were properly respected and supported during times of difficulty. Both Manzur and Kayal were recommended to the conference by the Ministry of Religions.

Two Jewish women scholars participated. Dr. Shelley Elkayam spoke about the impact of the MEPI interfaith pilgrimages in 2003 and 2004 during the peak of the second Intifadah. "Whether there is a relationship of cause and effect or not, the fact is that violence declined after these efforts, and it is worth continuing to invest in them," said Elkayam. Dr. Nurit Hirschfeld spoke of plans to establish a new interfaith council or think tank in Jerusalem that could offer leadership training to religious leaders based on the foundation of the seminar.

Dr. Eldad Pardo, a noted scholar of Iranian political culture, pointed out that Israel and Iran need not be enemies, despite the current rhetoric of annihilation.

EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES: KOSOVO, UK, SWITZERLAND, NORWAY



UPF European Leadership Conferences address issues of pressing concern for Europe and the world. Participants include politicians, academics, NGO leaders, and youth activists.

KOSOVO: PEACE AND SECURITY IN KOSOVO AND THE BALKANS



Taking into consideration the complicated relations of European Union countries with this part of the Balkans (which is now something of a “hot potato” in the hands of the international peacekeeping forces that police the country), many challenges had to be overcome in order to finalize the program for the May 28-29 conference in Pristina, which included 23 speakers from 12 nations.

The government of Kosovo and its Ministry of Justice, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Hajredin Kuçi (who is one of more than 300 Ambassadors for Peace in Kosovo), was the main partner in this conference on “Principles and Practices for Sustainable Peace and Security in Kosovo and in the Wider Balkans.” Aware of UPF’s work in the Balkans and beyond, the government offered its best meeting hall and ensured the participation of high-level representatives from the Serb community living in Kosovo, something rare in gatherings in Kosovo.

A UPF delegation chaired by president Thomas G. Walsh was welcomed by the Speaker of the Kosovo Parliament, Mr. Jakup Krasniqi. Later on, he was one of the conference speakers, sitting beside the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Slobodan Petrović.

U.K.: HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UN-EMPOWERED

A European Human Rights Conference jointly sponsored by UPF and the Women’s Federation for World Peace drew distinguished delegates from many European countries to London June 15-17. The spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights resonates strongly with UPF’s sense of the sacred value of humanity, irrespective of a particular individual’s belief or non-belief, as ‘one family under God.’

The program convened the first day in the House of Lords with speakers including Baroness Sandip Verma (UK government spokesperson for Business, Innovation and Skills), Willy Fautré (Human Rights Without Frontiers International), Keith Best (C.E.O. of Freedom from Torture), Imam Dr. Abduljalil Sajid, and hosted by UPF-UK Patron, Lord Tarsem King of West Bromwich. The second day of the program took place at the Royal National Hotel and explored insights into education for human rights and dignity. A Youth Training Day on the final day was entitled: Real Rights: Let’s Make Dignity a Reality.

Dr. Sonia Ramzi, former head of the promotion of cultural heritage at UNESCO, called for awareness campaigns that promote a culture of democracy, human rights, and citizen engagement. She suggested that meetings between young people and adults from different countries on topics of common interest can “reinforce bonds of cooperation by the exchange of ideas and experiences linked to democracy and development.”



U.K.



SWITZERLAND: FAMILIES, PEACE, DEVELOPMENT & PROSPERITY

The July 5-6 conference in the Palais des Nations in Geneva had special status as a Side Event of the 20th Human Rights Council. It was remarkable both for the rich variety of speakers and topics and for the substantial contribution of religious perspectives.

“A strong country needs strong families,” said Dr. Rudolf Gehring, Chair of the Christian Party of Austria. “Young people wish for family and friendship as a foundation for security, stability, and support.” Dr. Katrien Beeckman, Director of the Principles and Values Department of the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, echoed the concern for youth. “We owe our children a life free from violence and fear and full of love and care,” she said.

“The evidence of studies is overwhelming that children who grow up in intact families do better at school, have better mental and physical health, and are less likely to live in poverty,” reported Dennis Stoica, Chair of Healthy Relationships in California, USA. “Moreover they have improved lifetime earnings prospects, and are more likely to get married and stay married.”

Dr. Tariq Ramadan, Professor of Islamic Studies at Oxford University in the UK, said “The family should be a school of humility whose objective is peace. First, we should be at peace internally; finding God involves meeting our need for spiritual well being through truth. Then we need to think of how this applies in our family.”

The evidence of studies is overwhelming that children who grow up in intact families do better at school, have better mental and physical health, and are less likely to live in poverty

NORWAY: SUSTAINABLE PEACE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A September 20-22 conference benefited from the sponsorship of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs, and some sessions took place in the Stortinget (Parliament). Mr. Jan Egeland, the European Director for Human Rights Watch, began by asking whether progress is being made towards peace and human rights. He noted that there are fewer armed conflicts in the world today than ever before and a smaller risk of facing violent death. “The number of democracies has more than doubled and the number of dictatorships more than halved since the end of World War II,” he said. “However, there is no common standard on human rights. Some nations are reluctant to implement human rights because they are afraid of being punished for past mistakes.”

Sylvia Escobar, former Human Rights Ambassador of Spain, offered suggestions about how civil society can promote respect for human rights: “It must provide human rights education, and it must teach peaceful co-existence,” she said. “That is essential for governance building. There is no genuine democracy unless based on human rights. There must be accountability. Civil society must enable the individual to become an agent of change.”

Eyal Bloch, cofounder of the Institute of Education for Sustainable Development, called for a more positive contribution from the media. “Conflicts are always news,” he said, “but people working together to build something good don’t get covered by the news media.”



RUSSIA'S ROLE IN STABILITY IN EURASIA AND THE FAR EAST

By William Selig

A June 28 roundtable in Washington DC brought together an array of experts on the subject from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, the Eurasian Center, as well as representatives of the diplomatic community from the embassies of Mongolia, Mali, and Lithuania.

The roundtable addressed prospects for the Russian Federation to promote stability in Eurasia and Northeast Asia, especially this year when Russia is hosting the Asia Pacific

Economic Cooperation Summit in Vladivostok. In the context of Russia's multi-vector foreign policy, security and stability in Eurasia and Northeast Asia is of growing importance along with hopes for the social, technological, and economic development in Siberia and Far-East Russia.

Moscow-based Konstantin Krylov, Secretary General of UPF-Russia, was in Washington DC following a series of meetings with diplomats at the United Nations in New York. "The history of American democracy is nearly 300 years old, but the history of democracy in Russia is barely 30 years old," he said. "It would be

interesting to compare Russia today with where America was 30 years after its founding, especially remembering that slavery was still institutionalized in American society. Russia and America are not alike in many senses, but in the long term they are like brothers."

The majority of the participants felt that the relationship between Russia and the US is basically solid and that the two countries will remain allies for the foreseeable future. Russia definitely must play a role in maintaining stability in Eurasia and the Far East, but it is hoped that it will be in conjunction with the US.





TOWARD A “THIRD WAY” IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET SYSTEM

By William Selig

“In 1991, upon the collapse of the socialist and Communist experiment in the Soviet Union after more than 70 years of a state-command economy, there were great pronouncements that capitalism had triumphed over Communism and socialism,” said Dr. Antonio Betancourt at the August 29 roundtable. “Yet in recent years we have been reminded again and again that the traditional capitalist system is not equipped to resolve the grievances, social conditions, lack of opportunities, and need for participation in the economy that gave birth to the socialist and

Communist systems in the first place.”

In fact, many people consider the capitalist system itself to be exhausted and in need of renewal and reform. Rich private interests and powerful government bureaucrats have divided the world between them and are manipulating each other. Corrupt or easily influenced politicians pass laws to perpetuate monopoly interests, within a system that still excludes large numbers of people from participation in national economical decisions.

“This ‘ownership gap’ is the most obvious symptom of what is wrong with the global economy,” said Dr. Norman Kurland, director

of the Center for Economic and Social Justice. Most people simply do not understand why property and capital — an institution that Marx would have abolished — are so important. They fail to grasp the fact that “property” is not just about things to be owned, but about the natural right to be an owner and the socially determined bundle of rights and powers that define how an owner may enjoy the fruits of his efforts while not harming others or the common good.

The session concluded with a number of recommendations for expanded economic opportunities proposed by the Center for Economic and Social Justice.

SUMMER OF SERVICE

By Joy Pople, UPF International

UPF chapters organize Religious Youth Service projects that offer service-learning opportunities with a special focus on developing personal leadership and peacemaking skills. Through living together and providing altruistic service within a community, participants demonstrate that it is possible for our global human family to come together in peace for our mutual well being.

TIRANA, ALBANIA

First Lady Liri Berisha warmly welcomed the RYS participants to the Albania Children's Center for Autism. The Vice Mayor of Tirana sponsored a tree-planting project and welcomed participants to the City Hall. Current Members of Parliament also gave inspirational speeches.

In addition to meetings with officials, the August 20-26 program included many experiential-learning activities about leadership, goal-setting, and cooperation. "Work gives a lot of joy and creates harmony among people," said Marsel, one of the young volunteers. "Everyone made a very sincere commitment, and this impressed me the most."

PILISTVERE, ESTONIA

The Lutheran parish in the village of Pilistvere hosted a RYS project August 13-22. Young people from Estonia, Europe and Russia—whose parents' and grandparents' generations had strained relations—attended Sunday service at the Lutheran church and met with the pastor, learning about the significance of religious life, traditions, and the impact that religious people are making in peacebuilding.



Albania



Estonia

The main service activity was renovating a monument to the victims of communist repression and making improvements at the Lutheran church's summer café. Volunteers also visited Tartu, the second largest city of Estonia and site of the nation's oldest and most renowned university.

ZUGDIDI, GEORGIA

Participants from Georgia and neighboring South Caucasus countries, as well as England and the Netherlands, lived and worked as an interfaith and international community from July 21 to 30. They represented Armenian, Georgian, and Russian Orthodox Christianity as well as Islam and the Unification faith. Lectures, readings, group discussions, work activities, visits to places of worship, sightseeing, reflection, and spiritual practices were combined to provide insights into the culture, life, and faith of the people of Georgia.



Georgia

They renovated the Center for Continuing Education and the Museum of the famous Georgian scholar Ignate Pipia. They also did ecological work in the Zugdidi Botanical Garden and the famous tourist site of Mukhuri. “Through our experiences of living and working together we became real friends,” said UPF’s Vitaly Maksimov. “Even in a small way, we felt we showed how diverse people can live together in peace.”

PORTLAND PARISH, JAMAICA

Seventeen youth assembled on August 3 for two weeks of service-learning at a school in Buff Bay on Jamaica’s northeast coast.

Introductions and ice-breaker exercises the first evening helped build a community spirit. Young people from five other nations joined Jamaicans in celebrating their 50th anniversary of independence from Britain.

Work tasks included cleaning classrooms, repairing and replacing a picket fence, and landscaping. No repairs had been made at the school for the previous five years, due to budget constraints, and the face lift provided by volunteers was much needed and appreciated. While some were daunted by the tasks, Rila from Guyana didn’t mind, commenting: “Lots of work, that’s good for me.”

When the heat became too much, outings to Dunn’s River Falls for a hike and swimming and to Somerset Falls for relaxation and writing reflections helped everyone cool down.



Jamaica

IALOVENI, MOLDOVA

The first RYS project in Moldova brought together 14 young people to do a major cleanup at a Geriatric Services Center August 5-12. The staff and elderly people were moved that such a diverse group could come together and work for the benefit of the elderly with so much enthusiasm. Overcoming challenges of the summer heat forged bonds of friendship and mutual support, and a five-year old horse called Star carried trimmings and trash to the dumpster and gave some of the volunteers their first horseback ride.

The program also included hikes in the scenic countryside and visits to a synagogue, a mosque, and various churches as well as the ancient holy site of Orheiul Vechi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Trainings, presentations, readings, group discussions, reflection, and spiritual practices contributed insights into the culture, life, and faith of the people of Moldova.



Moldova



Nepal

CHITLANG, NEPAL

Thirty-six young people participated in service-learning activities in which they developed leadership and communication skills, experienced Nepal's rich and diverse faith traditions, and helped build a school library, plant rice, and renovate the community drinking water system.

The June 2-9 project brought together young people from different regions and religious traditions, including Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Baha'i, resulting in unique interfaith and intercultural experiences. The community welcomed them with traditional dances and drums, and community leaders, school staff, and local government officials, students, and mothers

offered support.

"RYS provided us the common platform to realize things about ourselves. I never will forget this opportunity and will pass this experience on to my family, children, and community," reported one participant from Mauritius.

KRYMSK, RUSSIA

On July 19, ten people from various parts of Russia arrived in southern Russia to help clean up from the July 7 flood. They saw streets filled with mud as well as destroyed houses, scattered household debris, and damaged cars.

In collaboration with Rotary Club members, they set up temporary shelters provided by ShelterBox, a UK-based charity. They set up 150 tents and taught others how to assemble them. People with nowhere to live expressed their warm gratitude. They also worked at the humanitarian aid storage facility in Nizhnebakanskaya. "I felt proud that our fellow citizens could send so many good, new donations, including ample supplies of water and food," said organizer Dmitry Oficerov, who traveled two days each way by train from Novosibirsk to lead the project.



Russia

CASTRIES, ST. LUCIA

Eight young Americans joined six youth from St. Lucia on August 2 for 12 days of service and learning in spite of predictions that the Caribbean island nation would be hit by tropical storm Ernesto. Activities went ahead as planned. Some youth did painting at the school and others organized activities for the students. The program included a day of sports with local youth and a talent show for the community.

"I saw how even one child could deeply affect me," said Elizabeth, from the US. "I realized the potential that lies in each of us. We all have the ability to change another's life significantly by just deeply loving and caring for others."

BAAN DADTHONGCHAREON, THAILAND

Seventy Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian youth worked together March 15-19 to improve a children's playground, build vegetable and fruit gardens, repair a road, and build a water drainage system in northern Thailand. They learned about the village's success in applying the King's principles of economic sufficiency and saw its rice mill, mushroom farm, and irrigation system.

In addition, they visited a Buddhist temple, a mosque, and a Catholic church. Many of the Muslims commented that this was their first time to enter a temple and listen to a monk's teaching. Most of the Buddhists also said it was their first time to enter a mosque and attend Friday prayers. Participants reported being inspired by the atmosphere of love, sincerity, and harmony beyond boundaries of religions and cultures.



Thailand

BORDERLESS GOODWILL

By UPF–Russia

A small delegation of volunteers from UPF Russia recently visited Holon, Israel on the return leg of the “Goodwill without borders” project. Previously Israeli teenagers had been invited to visit the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk. Young Ambassadors for Peace from five different cities of Russia (Moscow, Nizhniy Novgorod, Izhevsk, Nizhnevartovsk and Kazan) were warmly welcomed by the group of active, kind people from Holon and youth from the Israeli NGO “Shemet.”

The Russian visitors were hosted by the Mayor of Holon, Moti Sasson, who accepted an appointment as an Ambassador for Peace. During their visit, they had several insights into the Israeli way of life, including visits with some Israeli youth their own age currently serving in the army.

They also visited the Peres Peace House, founded in 2009. In this center people from Palestine can get free medical care. Another notable point was that volunteers of this center organize various educational and sports activities in which Palestinian and Israeli children play and learn together without focusing on political differences.

Another memorable part of the project was the visit of the Young Ambassadors for Peace to the Russian/Israeli veterans of the Second World War. The veterans told their interesting stories and sang songs with the young people of Russia.

Later, a “Play Football Make Peace” match took place in the park dedicated to the Georgian writer Shota Rustaveli.



Running for peace



Alley of Peace and Friendship



Program with soldiers



Program with veterans



Play soccer make peace

WORLD SUMMIT ^{Seoul} 2013

Peace | Security | Development

Seoul, Korea | February 21-25, 2013

worldsummit2013.org