

World Interfaith Harmony Week Observed in Japan

Seiichi Kikuya
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Tokyo, Japan—To commemorate UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, UPF-Japan organized an event on February 25, 2016, on the topic, “Clarifying the Role of Religious Leaders Toward Peacebuilding.” Approximately 40 Japanese religious leaders, as well as the vice president and board members of the Council of Religious Ambassadors for Peace, attended the program.

World Interfaith Harmony Week was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in resolution 65/5, adopted on October 20, 2010, and is observed annually during the first week of February.

Mr. Sotoji Maeda, an advisor to the Council, spoke on the importance of interreligious dialogue and cooperation, saying that “Religions need to respect other faith traditions [and] promote dialogue for mutual understanding and harmony. This is the very vision advocated by Dr. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of UPF.”

Representatives from five different faith traditions then offered prayers for peace. Ven. Taishu Nara, a Shinto priest and vice president of the Council, offered the first prayer, and was followed by representatives from the Buddhist, Muslim and Christian faiths. Lastly, a prayer for peace by late Dr. Moon was recited by a UPF representative.

A brief report on UPF’s International Leadership Conference (ILC) 2016, which was held in Seoul, Korea from February 12-16, was given by UPF-Japan Secretary General, Mr. Masayoshi Kajikuri. He encouraged the religious leaders in attendance to continue their efforts to promote peace, and quoted one of the speakers at the ILC, Lord Nazir Ahmed, a member of the House of Lords, the upper house of parliament of the United Kingdom, who said: “Originally, religion was oriented to peace. Wars have not been initiated by religion but by humans. Now is the time for religion to play a responsible role for world peace.”

UPF-Japan’s Director of Academic Affairs, Mr. Seiichi Kikuya, called for religion’s active participation in rebuilding the family and said, “I would like religious leaders to show a solution by advancing model families.”

