

Youth Convene in a Nation Rich in Culture

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The International Youth Convention at the University of North Sumatra

"Good news for all of us who are in the city of Medan!," began an internet message sent in advance of the International Youth Convention (IYC) that brought together more than three thousand young people on October 8. To attract Indonesian students, it appealed to their deep desire to connect to people from abroad: The speakers came from Korea, America, Germany and Japan. Dozens of participants from abroad will attend the event! So you also have the opportunity to develop relationships with them, and interact to improve your English language skills."

Medan is a major city of more than 2 million inhabitants on the island of Sumatra, which alone (among Indonesia's six thousand inhabited islands) is home to forty-six million people. Indonesian youth in Medan, who have been described as "college-educated, trendy and well-traveled," responded well.

The International Youth Convention took place at *Universitas Sumatera Utara* (the University of North Sumatra, USU). USU is a highly developed institution of higher learning with faculties of Medicine, Law, Mathematics, Political Science, Public Health, Pharmacy, Psychology and Nursing, among others. It also operates a teaching hospital. Several other institutions, especially the Universitas Nergi Medan (State University of Medan or Uni-Med, whose motto is "The character building university"), collaborated in this event and greatly contributed to its marvelous success. In the early morning of October 8, over three thousand students lined up to enter USU's main auditorium for the International Youth Convention on the theme "Young People of Character -- The Hope of the Future," cohosted by the Universal Peace Federation of Indonesia (UPF-Indonesia) and *Universitas Sumatera Utara* (USU).

No room whatsoever



New ambassadors for peace

Since the auditorium has a maximum seating capacity of fewer than two thousand, many students chose to sit in the aisles throughout the program rather than having to turn away. What was the attraction? Almost a hundred participants from thirteen different countries attended this youth convention in addition to several UPF keynote speakers from various countries, who addressed critical issues for young people today.

After rousing opening remarks by Dr. Raja Bonsu Hutagalung, vice-rector of USU, Dr. Robert Kittel, education director of UPF-Asia, asked all young

people present to remain pure until marriage as the foundation for a happy married life in the future. The students responded emphatically making a Pledge of Purity guided by two young people, Ms. Elvi and Mr. Giscard. Dr. Yong Chung-sik, chairman of UPF Asia, introduced UPF's core principles of peace based on Father Moon's motto, "Let us live for the sake of others." The audience responded well to his powerful explanation that giving precedes receiving in order to establish true, loving relationships.

Mrs. Ursula McLackland, secretary general of UPF Asia, expanded on this concept in her presentation on "Raising Public-Minded Leaders" asking the young people to become model leaders by putting public interests above private matters. The vice-governor of the Province of North Sumatra, Tengku Erry Nuradi, is a graduate Faculty of Engineering, University of North Sumatra, who worked as a young man for some years in Japan. The governor had rushed from a previous engagement in order to learn about UPF and he acknowledged the value of UPF's principles of peace in his address.

All the presentations were interspersed with cultural presentations, such as song and dance by talented students from Uni-Med and a renowned Indonesian country singer (an aficionado of American country music). These performances were crowned with several martial arts demonstrations in order to keep the young audience engaged throughout the program. Mr. Saito Hajime, secretary general of UPF Indochina and instructor in three different martial arts, explained the value of practicing martial arts for the sake of character building.

Afterward, students of the Unified Martial Arts (Tongil Moodo), Aikido, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Merah Putih (Pencak Silat-an, indigenous Indonesian martial art form) gave astonishing demonstrations.



Nearly two thousand students pledge to remain pure

Recognizing peacemakers

The program concluded with the presentation of certificates recognizing twenty members of faculties at collaborating institutions as ambassador for peace and another twenty recognizing outstanding students from Indonesia and other participating nations as collegiate ambassador for peace. The ensuing photo session with Dr. Yong and other UPF leaders and Indonesian youngsters who wished to have their photo taken with the international dignitaries was an experience not to be missed. Four newspapers and a local television station reported supportively on this International Youth Conference.

They especially stressed the importance for those in the younger generation to keep their purity and respect family values -- concepts very close to the heart of Indonesian parents and teachers but ones fast eroding among young people; they are some of the more pernicious aspects of otherwise generally helpful trends of modernization and globalization.

Harmonizing afterward



Collegiate ambassadors for peace

Following the IYC, more than a hundred and twenty participants celebrated its success at the Old Tree Garden Restaurant the same evening. This was an opportunity for the over seventy Indonesian student volunteers that had assisted our convention to bond more deeply with the foreign participants and for UPF to recognize the young Indonesians' contributions and efforts for the success of the event. Dr. Yong presented each of them with an international volunteer certificate during the celebration.

Afterward, eighty-five participants, from within and without Indonesia, moved to the Cinta Alam Retreat Center for a four-day workshop, which included teaching the Divine Principle from multireligious perspectives, and a day of adventure and training spent

climbing Mt. Sibayak, a nearby active volcano. For many of the participants, it was their first opportunity to listen to the entire course of the Divine Principle, while for others, it was a revision to give them a deeper understanding of this central text. Dr. Yong's passionate explanations of the meaning of true love and the need to sacrifice in order to experience true love in one's life seemed to have made deep impressions on all the participants.



Eighty people attended the workshop following the event.

Some reflections on the workshop

Mrs. Shanta Venugopal, the Religious Youth Service director from Malaysia, said that though she had joined many UPF events before, she had never understood Father Moon's teachings and life-style as deeply before. She was very grateful for this opportunity to attend the workshop after the IYC. Brother Winson, a member of the Asian Leadership Training (ALT) course from Malaysia, said, "I am so happy to see my Muslim brothers from Malaysia have the opportunity to study Divine Principle and learn about True Father here. This would not have been possible in Malaysia."

Ms. Hillery Sitanggang, a CARP member in Medan, reflected, "I heard Dr. Yong's lecture. It made me cry all night. He said, 'Don't say you love God but you don't love your nation. Loving your nation means you would sacrifice your life for your nation, for the world. It's very clear... God, you have waited for me for a long time. I have no reason to make you wait again, to make you look for another person. I want to sacrifice my life for you, my Heavenly Parent and True Parents.'"