

WFWP Northern Virginia's conference: Role of Women of Faith in Building Peace

Zena Ruf
November 29, 2018



The Virginia chapter of the Women's Federation for World Peace hosted a one day conference on "The Role of Women of Faith in Building Peace" on October 27th, 2018 at the Northern Virginia Family Church's Learning Center.

The conference brought together about 15 participants from the community to discuss how women of faith can contribute to building peace. There was general agreement that women have a God-given tendency towards reconciliation and concern for the welfare of the family, which is a critical foundation for true and lasting peace.

Zena Ruf, WFWP Chairwoman, Northern Virginia Chapter opened with an introduction of the mission and goals of the WFWP, which was founded in 1992 by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her husband, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

The morning program featured two exceptional speakers: Myrna Lapres, WFWP, Southeast Chairwoman and Love and Logic Parent Facilitator, and Fawzia Etemadi, Founder and Director of Windows of Peace.

In Ms. Lapres' presentation she shared, "We need peace leaders who understand that peace begins with us." She further explained how there is a need to bring together both masculine and feminine styles of leadership because "each is different and both are needed to end the divisions and pain that exist in our families and communities."

Ms. Etemadi shared her testimony as an Afghan refugee who came to the United States after the Soviet Union invaded her homeland. She testified to her faith which helped her deal with the trauma of being a dislocated refugee. "God healed me," she said, and "guided me to develop programs to help other diaspora victims to have healthier and happier futures."



After the presentations, participants separated into small groups to discuss and share their understandings of the content. Many valuable ideas emerged about what we can do in our own families and communities to contribute toward peace and reconciliation.

To close the morning portion of the conference, we participated in a Water Ceremony where each person poured water into a bowl, symbolizing unity and harmony in our diversity. A Blessing Toast was then shared, before holding hands and singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth."

During the afternoon session on "Walking Together on a Spiritual Path," Myrna Lapres led a deep and quieting meditation, followed by a presentation on the different feminine qualities. She further explained that although we still need the goal oriented male qualities of leadership, the more nurturing, empathetic, and caring feminine qualities are incredibly important to bring about peace in ourselves, our families, communities, and world.

Myrna led the group through discussions based on the 22 feminine qualities she presented, as well as an activity identifying personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and blocks.

It was an empowering day with time for bonding, growing, and bringing out the best in ourselves, to become catalysts for a peace-filled world.