

Reverend Moon Plants Seeds for Peace with Speech to Religious Leaders in Istanbul

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Participants of the Divine Winds of Freedom Conference in Istanbul

The Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), delivered the keynote address at the conclusion of the UPF-sponsored Middle East Leadership Conference in Istanbul on Sunday, May 8, 2011. The event was the fourth stop of the Reverend and Mrs. Moon's world peace tour, following speeches in Madrid, Rome and Athens.

Reverend Moon explained his vision of a coming world of peace that will require moral change on the personal and family levels. In the coming new era, he argued, the world will witness a societal transformation, likening such a time to a "noon-time" culture where there are no shadows or hidden transgressions. "If we can all shine as we live such glowing lives, there will be no chance for the shadow of sin to be cast," he said.



A presentation about the progress of the freedom movement in Egypt



Small group discussions ensured that all participants had an opportunity to share

“We are living in a historic time of great cosmic transition,” Reverend Moon said. “It is a time for a great cosmic revolution to change history, to unite the spiritual and physical worlds and to create the ideal kingdom of heaven that God has longed for since the beginning of time.”

More than fifty Ambassadors for Peace, civil society leaders and religious figures from more than twelve countries in the Middle East dedicated three days of their busy lives to discussing vital issues from the perspective of the region. The three-day conference coincided with momentous and surprising developments across the Arab countries and the world. It was themed “Divine Winds of Freedom: New Opportunities and New Responsibilities for the Middle East.”

The conference addressed crucial needs in education, communication, and collaboration across the Middle East region, and Ambassadors for Peace elaborated on strategies for ongoing activities and sustainable outcomes. The program on the second day highlighted the value of interfaith harmony, as participants explored waypoints where shared religious wisdom can serve as key performance indicators for building a better Middle East for all its peoples.



Content sessions on the second day highlighted the value of interfaith harmony



Social sharing was as important the seven main content and three discussion sessions

The conference was rounded off by a Legacy of Peace ceremony, following which all participants had the opportunity to hear Reverend Moon convey his urgent message to Turkey and the entire Middle East. He explained that even the great changes witnessed in the region during recent months were but symptoms of a more fundamental transition to come.

The Universal Peace Federation’s vision for peace leadership through alliances of religious principles was the platform for the deliberations. The wisdom of the three major living faiths that have their origins in the Middle East – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – was a focus of attention throughout the conference.

On the first day, an address by Islamic scholar and researcher, Dr. Hamdi Murad, set the conciliatory tone of seeking mutual values and providing common guidance in shaping the region’s future and keeping the dangers of extremism and mindless violence at bay. The topic was expounded further by UPF International Chairman Rev. Hyung Jin Moon and then deepened through sessions of interfaith dialogue that filled the second day of the conference.



More than 700 came to the program



Dr. Moon introduces his peace message book

The stunning events of the Arab Spring were the topic of several presentations. Young leaders from Egypt and Yemen described how they saw the events of change unfold in their countries. Participants from Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, and Tunisia contributed their experiences, evaluations, and insights to the conference's quest for better understanding. Voices of leaders from host nation Turkey and from Israel added importantly to the understanding.

Following the conclusion of the Istanbul program, the tour moves back to Western Europe, with programs in the coming week scheduled for London, Geneva and Berlin.

Contributed by Dr. Michael Balcomb, Public Affairs Director of the Universal Peace Federation.