

True Parents' World Tour 2011 - Geneva, Switzerland, May 12-13

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Marking the UN International Day of Families

A New Paradigm for a Global Family in a Culture of Peace

Chapel of the World Council of Churches, May 13 (morning)

The Chapel of the World Council of Churches in Geneva was over-flowing with an exciting inter-generational, international and inter-religious mix to explore the theme: *A New Paradigm for Global Family in a Culture of Peace*. Young people in their late teens and early twenties, parents with young children of their own, and older couples filled with maturity, wisdom accrued through parenting, grand-parenting and lifelong practice of spiritual principles, were gathered together in this international place of worship to explore the importance of a family for peace. Carolyn and Heiner Handschin, respectively European Officers of WFWP and UPF and also a married couple with seven children and one grandchild, charmed us as co-hosts. Carolyn asked that we consider family not only at risk and victim of the various global crises referred to by Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in his message for this day, but also as a very valuable resource through which a most fundamental contribution can be made for peace.

Bob Dylan's *To Make You Feel My Love*, sung by the Lovin' Life Ministries band, *Sonic Cult*, from New York guided our hearts towards love and family as we prepared for inter-religious prayers to mark the International Day of Families. A long line of religious representatives took to the platform mingling the saffron of Buddhism with the turban of Sikhism, the robes of North Africa and the chants, sung and spoken and poetic prayers of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism and Unificationism. We were reminded that the World Council of Churches, where we were gathered, had its roots in the early ecumenical movement and the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, a century earlier, as we called upon God to bless such interfaith efforts to bring religions together to work for world peace.



Dr. Krishna Ahojapatel, Vice-President of the NGO-Committee on the Status of Women and Professor at Ghandi University, spoke of the importance of women assuming leadership roles in matters of family policy and how the dignity and rights of women, so often trampled upon, are central to all positive development. We must recognize the potential of women and the need to invest in their education.

Mr. Arun Pabari, President Sathya Sai in Switzerland, emphasized that peace begins in the home, based on love and from there spreads out to the world. At the same time all global problems begin in the family. Hence, if we bring greater peace into our homes there will be peace in the world. In the family, let peace begin with me. He also referred to the profound experience that he and his wife had when they participated in one of the World Peace Blessings of UPF.

Prof. Julie Rich, President of the World Wide Organization for Women (WOW), explained that the culture of peace, integrity and virtue begins in the home. Families can be improved by awareness of key principles: accepting responsibility as parents, the vital leadership role of fathers and mothers, children as priceless treasures, disciplining our children with love and teaching them values, including the value of work, and worshipping together in the family as a source of strength.

Mr. Sidney Weill, CEO of Open Hearts International Multimedia, part of the Jewish community in Baden, spoke of music as the universal language through which we can work for peace. Open Hearts International organizes campaigns for peace and understanding. Their latest project is concerned with Iran and Israel – organizing a conference for Israeli and Iranian musicians in the UN Geneva. They already have confirmation from top bands from both nations and will transmit the event world-wide, inviting both UPF and WFWPI to partner.

Dr. Thomas Walsh, UPF International President, spoke insightfully about the often overlooked but very significant role of the family in the most fundamental matters of peace-building. He also emphasized that finding the right balance between the contribution of religious and secular institutions is very important – “in a sense it is akin to a marriage.”

“I applaud the UN for marking this day, the International Day of Families, and want to recognize the family as an underappreciated asset which should be so much more a part of our strategic planning. We should not fail to see it just because it is so close to us; it is not only a haven of peace, of love and embrace away from the world, but also the centre

that shapes individuals and from them society and the world, such that the hand that rocks the cradle shapes the world.



We are aware that peace is not achieved by hard power alone – we need soft power to resolve conflict. Peace requires a cultural shift which addresses moving the heart not just political and military solutions.

The family is a training ground where men and women learn the demanding task of maintaining love beyond romance and acquire the ability to apply these skills in their wider lives. It is the family that secures our ability to deliver our civic responsibility.

We should not separate our religious life and divine love from our daily practice in the family which is the school of love, ethics and citizenship, the school of responsibility and of the work ethic. Such teachings on family are a central part of the work of UPF which has actively supported Father and Mother Moon in their great work, through the World Peace Blessing, for peace through families and One Family under God.”

Palais des Nations, United Nations, Geneva, May 13 (afternoon)

In the afternoon delegates moved to the United Nations to explore the topic further. The majestic circular room, one of the larger of the UN’s meeting rooms, was filled to its capacity of 720. The atmosphere was one of anticipation and excitement as participants had travelled from throughout Switzerland and neighboring countries to experience firsthand the first occasion on which the Rev. Dr, Sun Myung Moon would be speaking at the United Nations in Geneva. Heiner and Carolyn Handschin co-chaired the introductory panel. Heiner opened it by describing the correlation between a true global human security and the root of inner security provided by a nourishing, intact family, as depicted by the Norwegian Artist who created the mural in the UN Security Council chamber in New York.

Contributions from the Panelists:

Dr. Jesus Domingo, Minister for Disarmament and Humanitarian Affairs for the Permanent Mission of the

Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva, always jovial, is a very active Ambassador for Peace especially in the Interreligious Council Youth Program of UPF and the Geneva Interreligious Intercultural Alliance (GIIA). He remarked: *“I am regularly working in this very room on the banning of cluster munitions. In those meetings I do not see the many eager, smiling faces that I see here today. Yet even those discussions are linked to our issue here today. Marriage and family are fundamental and the primary school of love and character. In the Philippines the state recognizes the family as the foundation for the nation. Can you have a United Nations without united families?”*

Dr. Domingo, who is himself a father to a young daughter, spoke to the delegates about family as an important unit to effectively address major issues of concern to the UN. He mentioned a recent joint winner of the Sasakawa Award, a community in the Philippines, where the mayor initiated a system of waste management which worked well precisely because it was drawing upon cooperation at the most elementary level, the level of groups of families.

Dr. Astrid Stuckelberger, Professor, University of Geneva, also an Ambassador for Peace and an expert in health studies and the elderly spoke of how today people are living longer, keeping healthier and in this sense closer to peace than ever before in human history. The family has spread out through space and time and its members are living up to 100 years of age. We must consider the impact of trans-generational factors. Parental behaviors and habits impact children not just in terms of physical habits such as smoking, but also in issues of exploitation and violence and in establishing positive peaceful models.

At the end, she folded her written text and explained with emotion that she was very grateful that Rev. Moon continues his active and admirable work. *“Each event he inspires has a great impact, many people come and I am always impressed by the work that is accomplished,”* said Dr. Stuckelberger.

Rev. Dr. William McComish, Dean Emeritus of St. Peter’s Cathedral, Geneva and a Presbyterian Minister, chairs the Geneva Spiritual Appeal Association which is devoted to interfaith harmony. The principles of this Association include a refusal to invoke power or to justify violence or exploitation. Dr. Mc Comish expressed that Jesus referred to God as *Abba* – which might best be translated as *Daddy* and that while Christian faith is often thought of as a personal matter; in fact the family is a key arena for its practice.

Dr. Hyung Jin Moon, Chairman of UPF International came to the platform and thanked the UN Human Rights Council for raising the issue of the abuse of the human rights of Unification Church members in Japan and for the UN forces who had liberated his father from a forced labor camp in North Korea at the time of the Korean War. Without their sacrifices his father would not have survived and he would never have been born!



He spoke of the value of human beings springing from their origins as children of the creator and, preparing us for the Founder’s Address, informed us that like Jesus, Father Moon does not speak to stroke our egos but to help us overcome our egos. He asked that we open our spiritual eyes to see a God who is calling us to receive His love and wisdom through tonight’s Founder’s Address.

The Founder’s Address

Father Moon sat alone on the head table in the magnificent UN auditorium of Chamber XIX with the huge UN symbol above his head and engaged us all as if we were a family directly in the spirit of the UN Day of Families:

Speaking calmly, but firmly, as if discussing among close family members, he said:

“I am a Grandfather of 93 sitting here today...we are all one family here, let’s think of it that way, let’s think of each other as brothers and sisters. My title today is about something I lived and experienced in the world and all the content that I have experienced with God. I have blessed so many in marriage. As you know, I am famous for officiating at mass marriages!

Sons and daughters resemble their parents – do not just think of yourselves as guests here, but rather as my family members – as my brothers and sisters. We are sons and daughters of God. True Parents are grateful and happy to see you as they are your great, great, grandparents.

...the children have to resemble the father – we are making a promise between you and me today. However, I cannot just speak I must also practice. Please build on my achievements. You too should become a bridge for others to reach Heaven.”



Knowing that time was running short, and feeling that he had still so much to add to the content of the prepared speech, True Father then called True Mother to the podium. He asked that she continue reading the printed text on his behalf, which she graciously accepted. As she read in a serene voice, he nodded and occasionally added a remark. How moving it was to see this couple of fifty years and more, who have passed through so much together in their desire to liberate God and humanity, sharing their heart and wisdom with the world at the United Nations in Geneva!