

## A Bowl of Colored Sand: Colorado International Day of Peace Gathering

Gale Alves  
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People from a variety of faith backgrounds, including Muslim, Methodist, Mormon, Buddhist, Hindu, Unificationist, Pentecostal, and 7th Day Adventist, all joyfully gathered to commemorate International Day of Peace on September 21st in the sunny courtyard of the Grace United Methodist Church. We stood outdoors together in a large circle and each person had an opportunity to share their unique message of peace, through a prayer, a poem, a song, scripture, a quote, an original peace message, or an interactive exercise. Padma, a young Buddhist nun, encouraged, "We should strive to see each other's potential rather than each

other's weak points." Pastor Oyedeji, a Nigerian Pentecostal minister explained, "In marriage, I council the couples in my church to learn to compromise so that there can be peace in marriage." Karen del Peno offered, "From a Muslim's perspective, I believe our egos often get in the way of harmonious relationships."



Participants had the opportunity to reflect together on the origins of both the International Day of Peace and Women's Federation for World Peace. The International Day of Peace was unanimously voted into existence by the UN General Assembly in 1981. It is a day "commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples." WFWP was founded in 1992 by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, because they believe women are natural peacemakers: "Enlightened women are the center of the love, peace, and service that preserve the family, and a sound, healthy family is the school of love and virtue. The starting point of world peace lies within the mothers at the center of such families, families that perfect and bring to fruition God's true love." WFWP also believes men and women need to work together for peace. Each brings a special attribute from God which

the other does not possess. Together, united, they can express God's heart more fully within their families, their places of worship, their communities, nations and the world.



It was a beautiful, warm day in Colorado as we celebrated the International Day of Peace. Prisca Mbuyi, a Christian/Unificationist, reminded us through her powerful prayer that many people are suffering around the world. People are suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma. People are suffering in North Korea under the yoke of communism. People in America are suffering because of violence, racism, and unemployment. People in the Middle East are suffering because of war. People in Africa are suffering because of poverty, lack of education, and political unrest. Prisca's prayer helped us take our minds and our hearts out beyond the borders of Colorado, and beyond the borders of our country. Chaitanya Das, representing Hinduism, then offered a beautiful chant expressing the Hindus' yearning for a life where there is no more war, no more pain. Andriette Jordan-Fields of the Park Avenue Methodist Church treated us to an uplifting hymn revealing Jesus' healing power.

Then Dr. Michael Hentrich of the Colorado Family Church stepped into the circle. He placed a large bowl of white sand on a table. Around the bowl he put 10 small cups, each filled with a different color of sand. He asked each person to grab a partner from another religion, to choose a cup of colorful sand, and together pour the content into the large bowl. It was wonderful to see people of different faiths joining together in this exercise of unity. Dr. Hentrich then swirled all the colors of sand together. "This is how God sees us. As one family. As His children."

No one wanted to leave at the conclusion of our peace gathering. Everyone was so happy to have a chance to talk with a person from a different religious background, as we sipped coffee and munched on cookies. We all decided that we need to keep this going!