

WFWP Conference "Raising the Next Generation of Women Leaders"

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Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) USA poses with the female panelists at the annual National Assembly, titled Learn to Lead: Raising the Next Generation of Women Leaders.

An annual gathering of women showed that world peace is not just a pleasant platitude but may actually be doable — starting with a heart of feminine compassion and maternal wisdom, with the Creator at the center.



North American Continental Director Archbishop Ki Hoon Kim greets the WFWP Assembly participants at the evening banquet.

“Because women have suffered abuse and oppression throughout history more than any other single group of humanity, they have learned how to solve problems in a subtle and quiet way, from the heart,” said Angelika Selle, president of the Women’s Federation for World Peace USA (WFWP), which held its annual National Assembly, titled Learn to Lead: Raising the Next Generation of Women Leaders, on Saturday, October 26, 2013 at the University of Maryland’s Student Union in College Park, Maryland. About 35 women 30 and under participated in the Assembly.

“Therefore,” she assured the 200 or so women present, “you’re going to get your money’s worth today because of the richness of what each lady presenter has to offer.”

This richness manifested in the nuggets of wisdom that just kept dropping all day, as if from a mother lode. It was also apparent in the atmosphere and the following activities of from-the-heart warmth that suffused the entire conference.

There were three “Bridge of Peace” ceremonies, each involving two “enemies” who confess their “sin” that produced conflict, then forgive one another, and finally commit to lifelong reconciliation and

harmonious relations, walking across a “bridge” on the dais and embracing to make the reconciliation publicly visible. The groups that reconciled were: Republican and Democrat, Black and White, and White and American Indian. As part of the White/American Indian reconciliation, a video was shown of 10 or so WFWP members who last Spring retraced the entire 1,000-mile route of the “Trail of Tears.” The Cherokee Indians were forced to walk this trail in 1838 when the U.S. military relocated them from Georgia to Oklahoma, with thousands of Indians dying along the way.



WFWP members who retraced the 1,000-mile "Trail of Tears," with the goal of achieving a measure of White/American Indian reconciliation, recount their experiences.

During the Assembly there was a panel discussion with four highly-qualified professional women to mark the first anniversary of the Global Women’s Peace Network (GWPN), an organization founded by the Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon (who also launched WFWP in 1992, proclaiming “the era of women”). They started the GWPN to help the United Nations to keep its “eyes on the prize” of world peace through empowerment and equality for women around the world.

There were five breakout sessions to provide participants with “Tools to Lead.” The sessions dealt with 1) the elements of leadership in general (presented by Fannie Smith); 2) starting one’s own business and leadership therein (presented by Bishop Ebony Kirkland); 3) how good leadership is developed (or squelched) in the family and how it can be “unsquelched” if it has been squelched (presented by Hilde Reinold); 4) using sexuality in a way that empowers and dignifies a woman (Nandi Moton and Mary Benavitez Holden) and 5) a makeover session with a philosophical dimension to show women how external beauty needs to be supported by internal beauty —“beauty from the inside out” (presented by Linda Clark).



WFWP President Angelika Selle and Vice President Juanita Pierre-Louis (center), along with soprano Seiko Lee (third from left), pose with a number of those at the banquet.

The HerStory Award, which is given every year to an ordinary woman who has accomplished extraordinary things, and who can therefore be a role model for thousands of others, was bestowed to Dr. Aziza Baccouche, who became blind at the age of 8 due to a brain tumor but whose zeal for math and

science led her to acquire her doctorate in theoretical nuclear physics from the University of Maryland. The Silver Spring resident also founded her own media company, Aziza Productions, which allows her to pursue her other passion: creating video products to promote interest in science among the general public, especially within the Black community. She herself is of Black heritage: her mother is a Black American and her father a Tunisian.



WFWP USA President Angelika Selle (eighth from right) with Korean drummer team members (out of costume) and their trainers.

For entertainment, there was a potpourri of breathtaking dancing, drumming, and singing. The women (and some supportive men) were treated to a blood-racing drumming number by the Ha-nul-du-du-rim (Heavenly Drummers) Korean Drum Team; a wildly energetic dance by the Gabroo Punjab De Bhangra, a group from India; a set of four exquisite ballroom dances by Derek Winkler and Aniko Toth; and a series of songs by internationally known soprano Seiko Lee, who ended the evening with an soul-stirring rendition of “To God Be the Glory.”



Participants were able to attend several breakout sessions.

The wisdom for life and for women’s empowerment was just so abundant throughout the day! For example:

Mrs. Selle affirmed that women have innate qualities — such as empathy and win-win thinking — that are uniquely suited to bring positive change and peace and that have been sadly underutilized in the politico-economic world long dominated by men. She said, “The next generation of women leaders must be raised especially in terms of a proper understanding of morality. Immorality is the core problem from which all other problems stem.”

WFWP Vice President Juanita Pierre-Louis Angelika reported to the audience on WFWP’s Day of Service, saying, “Serving others is the best way of developing leadership.”

Jackie Phillips, the former federal co-chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission under presidents

Ronald Reagan and George Herbert Walker Bush, shared opening remarks to encourage women to become authentic leaders. “Plato made a clear distinction between leadership and authority when he stated that authority is bestowed while leadership must be earned by those who serve the people they lead.” She went on to state that leadership begins with service, yet we do not see enough written about “servant leadership.” Mrs. Phillips emphasized how important it is for leaders to pray or meditate every day as a discipline to help maintain balance as a public figure.



Brenda Miller and Dottie Chicquelo, some of whose Cherokee ancestors were forced to tread the "Trail of Tears," emerge after crossing the Bridge of Peace in an effort to deal with sins of the past.

Lecester Johnson, executive director of the Academy of Hope, an adult public charter school in Washington, D.C., shared that her leadership style has been influenced by studying successful leaders (including Steven Covey's “7 Habits of Highly Successful People”) and constantly working on her own leadership skills. She asserted that recent literature in the business field (in Harvard Business Review among other publications) is beginning to publish articles that demonstrate the success of feminine approaches to leadership, including values such as interdependence, mindfulness, and creating connections in the workplace (even celebrating birthdays and mourning deaths together). Ms. Johnson advocates taking risks to promote the greater good by deliberately providing more opportunity for success and achievement for those around us.

Nia Lyte, a Hollywood talk-show host, spoke about ethics and values as a leader. She urged women to define what they stand for and against — and to choose values and ethics over anything else. She related how she started a second career in the entertainment world as a model and eventually became a TV host. She shared her personal testimony that a woman can be successful in show business without compromising her sexual purity and marital fidelity.



A Punjabi Indian group danced at the banquet.

Katherine Duncan, who works with a Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas, tells us that she is always thankful to God, she recognizes that it starts there with a strong personal attitude of gratitude for what God gave her. Her formula for success? “My attitude shapes my ‘altitude,’” she confided. “Spirituality

guides our attitude; and knowledge of a subject shapes spirituality. By studying deeply in an area and putting principles into practice, we will master it completely both physically and spiritually.” She also shared that, in her experience, God will grant a person prosperity if she makes a detailed list of what she wants, reads the list daily, and then — the action step — asks God, “What do you want me to do today?” and does it.



A Korean drumming group, composed of Second Generation Unificationists from New Jersey, performed.

Jennifer Jean, a poet and writer from Salem, Massachusetts, told how she used her poem-writing, which she started at age seven, and her imagination to cope with many family stresses, including an alcoholic father and a mother with mental health issues. She said that not only she is a creator, but “everyone here is a creator. If you can connect to the Divine Mother Source, you can be a creator and a leader. Access your creativity, and you’ll become a power for change in the world.”

Hilde Reinold, a Hagerstown, Maryland, family therapist, spoke on the topic “The Family Is the School for Leadership.” She pointed out that two and three generations ago the village was the center of our cultural model. But in the current age, the culture is different. In many ways it is fragmented and broken, with people not knowing how to make healthy relationships. There were some good points to the village mentality, but also those generations often relied on external authority and force to maintain relationships between parent and child. In the emerging age, the healthy direction we need to take is one that allows children to live free of the fear of expressing who and what they are. We all need to overcome such fears ourselves in order to be “coaching parents.” She said, “We can now ask ourselves, ‘What is God giving me with this child?’ We must think about what the mistakes were of the past in my lineage or family history. And we must consider that we also have much merit and inherited good things from our ancestors and our environment as we grew up.” A great key to raising healthy, happy children, she said, is to keep the connection going. “Engage in conversation by asking relationship-building questions,” she said. “Go deeper. Ask, ‘Are you saying this?’ ‘Is this what you mean when you do such and such or say such and such?’ One thing leads to another, and the relationships build deeper from there.