

50 attend the Second American Leadership Conference 2017 in Washington D.C.

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May 20, 2017



Washington D.C. – The Second American Leadership Conference 2017 was held in the Beech room at the Washington Times Building on Saturday, May 20, from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Rev. Zagery Oliver, UPF USA served as the facilitator of the conference. Around 50 guests, who were served with delicious full course breakfast joined the exciting program to “*discover a new paradigm to address our critical challenges*” in the United States.

Mrs. Tomiko Duggan, Director of Public Affairs, UPF USA greeted the attendees and urged them to work together to find common ground and solutions to the suffering of our society. Mr. Richard de Sena, President, UPF USA, also greeted the guests and encouraged them to apply themselves for the best experience.

Session I: True Character, Leadership, and Good Governance began with various readings offered by Mrs. Susan Fefferman, UPF Ambassadors for Peace Program Manager, concluding with words from Helen Keller: “*Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.*”

Father Emmanuel Effah, Church at Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church gave comments focusing on the aspects of good character for leadership. He spoke about the need to sacrifice for others, and to listen more than talk. He also said a person who is humble can relate to any kind of person better. He said a person without good character can never bring people together no matter the position, confusion, tension, and unhappiness will follow a lack of good character and urged the audience to develop a good character so as to bring peace and tranquility to our homes, nation, and the world.

Lively roundtable discussions followed at each table and then two groups reported on their discussions. Table One talked about a good person versus a person of good Biblical character. The former may do good things to help others but may not have a good motivation or actions, but the latter is guided by universal principles set down by God. Rev. Radell said that the church is under attack and is the last remnant of a moral center in the US. Everyone agreed that America needs a redirect to a clear moral code of conduct exhibiting respect for others.

Session II: America as God’s Hope – Building Community and Civil Society Beyond the Boundaries of Race and Religion began with readings given by Mr. Henry Schaffler, followed by comments given by Rev. John Radell, President of Faith & Freedom Coalition of Delaware. The readings included words about America’s founding spirit by Alexis de Tocqueville, America’s mission to the world, by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and why ‘living for the sake of others’ is so important from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Radell stated that faith, God, liberty, and justice were the founding ideals of America. In a crisis, all denominations were moved beyond their differences toward resolution of the Civil War because they prayed on their knees together, for God’s guidance and intervention. He said that currently God has been removed from every facet of American life so as not to “offend” anyone’s sensitivities. He concluded with the urging of Christian pastors from Africa, “If America falls as a Christian nation there is no hope for Christians worldwide.” Roundtable discussions followed and deep points of conversations

were shared openly and honestly.

Session III: Marriage and Family as our Essential Resource readings were given by Mrs. Libby Henkin and included words from the founder, Rev. Moon, Charles Malik, UN Ambassador of Lebanon, Wade Horn, US Representative, Pope Francis and President Henry Eyring, of the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Rev. Moon said, *“Only through the experience of two becoming one can we know the highest level of love. At the place where husband and wife become completely one, the ideal couple will be created. In that place, absolute love exists. That place of love, which is absolutely unchanging, is the dwelling place of God. God is absolute, but His ideal of true love cannot be realized by Himself. That is because love always requires an object – a beloved.”*

Pastor Jim Boothby of the New Hope Family church and President of the Citizen Action Network responded with statistics of out of wedlock births in America. 73% African-American, 54% Hispanic, and 43% White. He said that this shows that American culture is unraveling. He said there are so many advocacy groups out demonstrating for their cause but who is demonstrating to save the marriage and the family which hold the fabric of society together? He said we “good” people are standing on the edge of a cliff where 40% have already fallen off, we must do more to rebuild our society. Discussions and reports followed.

Rev. Owen stated that he realized that the term “It takes a village to raise a child” to mean that the past government meant that only the government can raise and educate a child. The family is being broken down by the government, especially the Black family, he said, since the time of President Johnson. We must rebuild all of America’s families.

Pastor Jim Boothby concluded with the Interfaith Peace Blessing Toast. A “toast” of juice was held to dedicate ourselves to lasting marriages and the spiritual revival of America.

The final aspect of the program was to appoint four new Ambassadors for Peace: Rev. John Radell, Mr. Phenchang Soundara and Mrs. Wilaiwan Soundara, who escaped from brutality of war in Vietnam and embraced the American dream, while establishing a solid family within the Buddhist tradition, and Rev. Bill Owens, President and Founder of the Coalition of African-American Pastors (CAAP), a grass-roots movement of Christians from all denominations, who believe in traditional family values: such as supporting the role of religion in American public life, protecting the lives of the unborn, and advancing the sacred institution of marriage.

