

FFWPU's Interfaith Peace Blessing Festival in the Philippines

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[Weekly Korea] Family Federation for World Peace and Unification Holds Interfaith Peace Blessing Festival in the Philippines

“Transcending religion and nation to become one family”

Sports stadium holds biggest crowd since its construction...the fruit of local effort.

Political and religious leaders from various countries in attendance of 50,000 couple blessing

Ties with the Asian Summit

The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification and the Universal Peace Federation held the “Interfaith Peace Blessing Festival” on the 1st at the Sports Complex in Marikina City, Manila, Philippines. The purpose of the event was to create a world of peace through true families.

UPF is a special consultative institution of the UN Social and Economic Council. It is a non-profit organization which was established by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in 2005 in New York. UPF currently manages a network of peace ambassadors spanning 154 nations, and works to connect with the leaders in each nation to resolve conflict.

Event Draws Massive Crowd of 144,000 People

The event drew a massive crowd of 144,000 people. The stadium had been completely filled even before the event began. Even afterwards, the crowd rushed through the stadium like a condensed sea of people. There were even rumors of totally gridlocked pedestrian traffic.

According to a local representative, the number of people occupying the stadium that day exceeded the maximum seating capacity for the first time since the stadium’s opening. The immense turnout and overwhelmingly positive response symbolized the fruit of UPF’s hard work in the Philippines.

According to UPF Asian Continental Director Chung-Shik Yong, UPF toured 15 cities around the Philippines and blessed a total of 50,000 couples. UPF has also worked to bring religious harmony to more turbulent regions in the Philippines rife with religious conflict, such as Mindanao and Sultan Kudarat.

UPF has also invested four billion won into service projects supplying free medical aid and founded the four-year course “International Peace Leader University.” The school accommodates 1,200 people, and with 420 students currently enrolled, the number continues to grow.

Blessing Ceremony of 50,000 Couples

The festival's main event was the Blessing Ceremony. The Blessing refers to the start of a true family based on the will of God. It is a celebration established by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to establish religious harmony and peace centered on the family. And these families are centered on the ideal model of the family and marriage which transcends nations, race and religion.

"We are one family. If the family becomes stronger, the Philippines will become stronger as well, and we will be able to contribute to world peace," said Marikina Mayor Del de Guzman in the preliminary event. "I want to bestow my wishes for the greatest blessing to the brides and grooms who have made a new start as true families today."

50,000 couples participated in the Blessing ceremony on this day. Including families, the number of total people blessed reached about 150,000 people. The couples participated in the Purity Vows, Holy Wine Ceremony, Interfaith Reconciliation Ceremony, Holy Water Ceremony, Declaration of Holy Marriage, Exchange of Rings and the Proclamation of Holy Marriage. The couples then made a promise to build a world of peace through pure true families.

About 500 leaders from 30 different nations attended the event to congratulate the couples on their new beginning. Representatives from 20 different religions of the world, including Hinduism and Islam, brought water from each of their respective nations together, as a symbol of humankind as one family that overcomes religion and nationality.

The religious representatives then proclaimed a resolution to love their enemies, live for the sake of world peace and put society before their families, their nation before their society, God before their nation and to proclaim all of humankind as one family under God.

UPF Asian Continental Director Chung-Shik Yong and his wife stood in Dr. Han's place as the officiators of the festival. Twelve representative brides and grooms came to the stage, reborn as new families, and were blessed in the holy water ceremony, making the promise to live a life of transparency. Then, four questions of holy marriage were posed to the couples, who answered "Yes!" in a loud, resounding chorus.

Rev. Moon and Dr. Han's 5th daughter, Family Federation International Headquarters Director-General Sun Jin Moon spoke at the event. "Peace begins in the family. We can build a peaceful ideal society and nation when countless families from all denominations, races and religions come together in peace and love."

"I would like to congratulate all of you who received the blessing of God today. I hope that all of you can share deep and eternal love with spouses as you grow older. I pray that your children can grow as beautiful victors of love and goodness."

Ties with the Asian Summit

The day before the Blessing Ceremony, on January 31st, the "2015 Asian Summit" was held at the Manila Hotel under the banner, "'Toward Peace, Security and Human Development in the Asia Pacific Region.'" The conference was attended by about 500 leaders from 30 different nations in Asia.

The summit was divided into six sessions: "Toward a New Paradigm for Sustainable Peace and Development in the Asia Pacific Region," "Building a Roadmap or Sustainable Peace in the Asia Pacific Region," "The Impact of Interfaith Cooperation and Harmony Towards Peace in Asia and the World," "Peace and Development: The Role of Media and Education," "The Founder's Legacy-World Peace Through True Love" and "Strengthening Families, Rebuilding Nations, Creating a World of Lasting Peace" and several others.

"Peace will only come about when humans overcome their selfishness and set aside their self-centered lifestyles," said Director Yong in the opening ceremony. "Let all the island nations become one and create the long-desired homeland of God."

Former Prime Minister of Nepal Madhav Kumar, who received the Leadership and Good Governance Award, gave the keynote address. "This 2015 Asian Summit, which strives to create peace, security and human development in Asia, has a deep meaning for Asia, which has become devastated from the proxy wars of other nations."

In his welcoming address, Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada spoke about the recent disputes between religions. "This conference, under the banner of 'peace, security and human development,' is an urgent signal to the world heads of state, government officials and politicians of the world," he said, welcoming the participants of the conference to Manila...