

WFWP and UPF Spain: Steps to Peace - Changing Ourselves Changes Society

Marcia de Abreu
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The program was divided into three sessions, each with its own sub-theme: 1. Rights and Obligations in a Global Society; 2. The Relevance of Women for Social Transformation: Security, Harmony, Peace; 3. The Role of Spirituality in the Building of a Peaceful Society.

A number of good friends, who are individuals committed to serving society from a variety of fields of action such as politics, entrepreneurship, spirituality, education, NGOs and International Organizations, made powerful and brilliant presentations which moved the public to raise questions or make short comments.



The program started with welcoming words by Marcia de Abreu, President of WFWP Spain, who insisted in the idea that we are the ones to change and improve ourselves if we want society to go the same way.

"We need to incarnate the values that we defend and promote", she said.



Ms. de Abreu was also the moderator in the first session, under the theme "Rights and Duties in a Global Society" and whose speakers were:

- Mr. Josep Carles Laínez, President of the ICTS, who made an excellent presentation on the rights and responsibilities of human beings expressed in the text of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its new approach written up at an international congress in Valencia in 1999, highlighting the weight of the individual conscience.
- Ms. Arenales Serrano, former Senator and MP in the central government for years, highlighted that "the globalization, accentuated by the new technologies, has brought positive changes such as that of millions of Chinese people being able to leave poverty, and negative aspects, such as the revival of communism on certain areas of the planet."
- Mr. Sánchez Motos, clearly declared that "we all need to understand individually and relationally what true love is in order to create a harmonious society."



After a brief pause, the speakers of the second session were ready to take their places. María Jesús Cañellas, a journalist and good friend of WFWP, moderated this session with sharpness and sensitivity.

This session was dedicated to women and their relevance in the establishment of a society where peace prevails.

- Ms. Carmen Quintanilla, former Senator and MP in the central government, Founder and President of AFAMMER (Families and Women in the Rural World Association) went through women's development in history and emphasized that "we still need to work to guarantee equality between men and women, which is the base for a prosperous world, always avoiding a discourse that is based on polarization, confrontation and hatred."

- Rosa María Rodríguez Magda, a PHD in Philosophy and writer who insisted that "all levels in society must cooperate towards equality between men and women if peace is to be achieved" and that "we still need to vindicate the dignity of feminism."

- Ivette Barreto, President of the IberoAmerican Business Women Association, emphasized that "moving according to convictions and not emotions and being firm with our Judeo-Christian values is a must if we want to build a righteous and peaceful world."



The theme for the third session was "The role of spirituality in the building of a peaceful world." Armando Lozano, Director of UPF Spain, was the very fine moderator in charge.

- Rafael Monzó, President of Valencia/Mediterranean Association for UNESCO, expressed that "all religions must be seen as part of the solution for peace, as all of them have in their teachings indications to help establish peace. In this sense, nowadays we must promote the interreligious dialogue."

-Belén Blanco, overseer of the educational program for a network of Catholic Schools, explained that "an overall education refers to all dimensions of the human being, including spirituality; it refers to the dimensions of interiority, then of spirituality and finally of faith."

-Juan Carlos Ramchandani, President of the Hindu Association in Spain, clarified certain precepts: "the Divinity is One, no matter how we name it, we all belong to the human family beyond our different faiths and beliefs."

All in all, the speakers made great contributions to the debate with concise and precise ideas on how we can be active in the creation of peace from a variety of angles. The public responded with interest, raising good questions and making clarifying comments.

WFWP and UPF organized a lunch open to all in order to promote a more personal exchange among all.

Reported by Marcia de Abreu
WFWP Spain Chapter Leader