

Mothers Leading the Way in Raising Filial Children and Patriots of the Nation?

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FFWPU-related organizations in the Philippines



Yeon Ah Choi Moon Nim testified to Mother

The role of women has been evolving in many homes in many nations around the world. Balancing her role in the family and her role in society remains a challenge for many mothers today. In some places, governments deny women treatment and protection equal to what men receive, and some women continue to suffer in bleak home environments where men consider women inferior. We must not rest until the growing respect earned by women in some homes and throughout some nations is enjoyed by women everywhere. Women are vital to all societies as contributors to the national economy and as the moral guides to the nation's future generations. This is well reflected in the theme for two recent Global Women's Peace Network events held in the Philippines on June 27 and 28 -- "Mothers Leading the Way in Raising Filial Children and Patriots of the Nation."

The first event, Mothers' Hearts Network International Conference, was held at Traders Hotel in Pasay City, Manila, on June 27. Around forty foreign delegates and two hundred Filipino woman leaders joined the conference. In its opening session Dr. Lan Young Moon, president emerita of the Women's Federation for World Peace International, gave the keynote

address. Dr. Chung Sik Yong, regional chair of the Universal Peace Federation in Asia, gave the opening message. He lauded WFWP in the Philippines for spearheading the cause of educating mothers to raise children that are devoted to their parents and that dedicate their hearts to their country.

Among the speakers in the opening session were Mrs. Merly Barrette Barlaan, president of WFWP-Philippines and Rep. Maria Georgina P. De Venecia, congresswoman of a district of Pangasinan Province, who among her many public service deeds was instrumental in the establishment of the Haven for Women, shelters nationwide for battered women.

Three breakout sessions that afternoon were held on how to uplift the status of the family, on mothers' participatory role and leadership in nation building, and on the education and advancement of women, their values, rights and responsibilities. The conference concluded with a dinner banquet filled with songs and music. Prof. Moon Yeon-ah, Hyo Jin nim's widow and the new president of WFWP, gave the main message at the banquet.



The WFWP-UPF conference on Family Values and Their Link to Economic Well-being and Social Outcomes

Excerpts from Yeon Ah Nim's speech

"In my family, I have five children. The oldest is fifteen years old and the youngest is seven years old. Honestly speaking, they still have a long way to go before they become filial children and patriots. It will probably take more than twenty years to see if they do or not. So what came to my mind when I heard the theme of this conference, Mothers Leading the Way in Raising Filial Children and Patriots of the Nation?"

I thought, "This is a very appropriate, essential theme in this problematic society. But I don't have the experience of raising such a child yet. What can I say about this topic?"

Because I am a novice mother in the process of raising filial children and patriots, I thought I could introduce my role model instead. I would like to speak to you about the teachings of True Parents, who are the beginning point of my life as well as the guiding star of my goal and direction. As you all know, True Parents always emphasized the importance of family, especially the importance of becoming true parents.

True Father, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, spoke many times on children's education: "What will you tell your own sons and daughters? You should live an exemplary public life and educate them to inherit that tradition.... People are to be educated by their own parents. Education is not done only in school, especially regarding inheriting tradition. Children find all of their values in their parents. Who will the children resemble in their family as they grow up? They will resemble their parents. And who will the children follow? They will follow their parents." (1969.7.20) "Parents should practice what they teach their children." (1970.6.4.) "You should be able to tell your children to resemble their mother and father when educating them. Children learn the Shim Jung of their parents." (1970. 3.17)

Everybody knows this wisdom already but it is not easy to practice. I would like to tell you an experience I had as an example related to it. As a mother of five children, it is not easy to do my job in a UN NGO organization and be a mother at the same time. So I always receive a lot of support from my mother in raising them.

One day, my mother and I were having an argument because we disagreed on a technical point on how to educate them on proper manners. Unfortunately, one of my children heard us. He said to me, "Mom, why don't you speak more nicely to grandma?" I couldn't say anything to him because I always taught my children to be respectful and polite in front of elders. I took it to heart once again that I need to teach them not through just knowledge or words, but by showing them through my own actions. I also realized why True Parents risked their lives and lived each day as if it were "the last day of their lives."

Ridding the Nation of Corruption

The second event was held the following day, when around thirteen thousand Filipino mothers, female leaders and supporters met to launch the national campaign for a nation without corruption and to raise awareness of the important role mothers play in the process of improving our nation.

Among the women that the Global Women's Peace Network presented an award to as an outstanding leader was Senator Grace Poe. She is one of twenty-four senators, each of whom represents the entire nation. Philippine senators do not represent a limited constituency. Among those running in the 2013 senatorial election, Grace Poe garnered the most votes. What follows is an unofficial translation of what she said in Tagalog to the large crowd that day:

"My biggest role as a woman is not as Senator Grace Poe but as the mother of my three children. This is the reality of career women in our country, whether they be in the public or the private sector: Our obligation doesn't just stop with our work but more importantly extends to the home. I have inculcated in my children's minds that the people of the country entrusted in me a position to serve; therefore, they should never use my position to get special privileges. Just as I have an obligation toward the Philippine society, I have a responsibility to bring my children up as responsible citizens that can be productive and that our country can be proud of. Other people may make the laws that I will pass in the senate, but I am the only one who can mold my children's personalities so they can be dignified citizens, which is why I also have to tune in to this role. The home is the basic unit of our government, which is why transformation and change should also start at home."

Remembering Those We Lost

One of the highlights of the convention was the launching of WFWP chapters in all the eighty-one provinces in the Philippines. WFWP Philippines envisions expanding its foundation all over the nation to reach out to and to teach 20 million mothers and other women by 2020.

To conclude the convention, a tribute ceremony was held to pray, honor and remember all the victims of Typhoon Haiyan, as well as those who died during recent calamities that devastated the Philippines. Many participants cried during the ceremony. At the conclusion of the convention, Mrs. Barlaan, the new president of WFWP-Philippines, challenged the audience to unite together as mothers and as women in order to save future generations.

The Mothers' Hearts Network Conference and Convention gained remarkable support from national government sectors and local governments. The Commission on Higher Education and the Department of Education, as well as several city governments endorsed the events. Some mayors and local government leaders even supported their delegates by paying for their registration and providing transportation.

Women's Federation for World Peace in the Philippines has been going through much reorganization this year under the guidance of the Asia region's special emissary and its regional president. According to Julius Malicdem, the national leader of FFWPU-Philippines, the concept of using "mothers' hearts" to multiply the vision of WFWP and expand membership came about like an inspiration from heaven, which has so far proved to leave a lasting, positive effect on many. We launched the Mothers' Hearts Network last September.

Ever since its launching, it has conducted many conferences and seminars for women in different parts of the Philippines. We have held a Women Ambassadors for Peace Forum every week at the WFWP Philippines headquarters. Thanks to these efforts, WFWP came to connect to many prepared female leaders. Inspired by True Parents' vision, these women have in turn greatly contributed to the success of our activities.

Some prominent women that have recently become involved in our work volunteered to muster the support of other women and to organize seminars. Some even provided cars to the WFWP staff members to use during activities. These efforts led to the success of both the conference and convention at the end of June. We hope these efforts continue and allow us to reach many women throughout our nation.