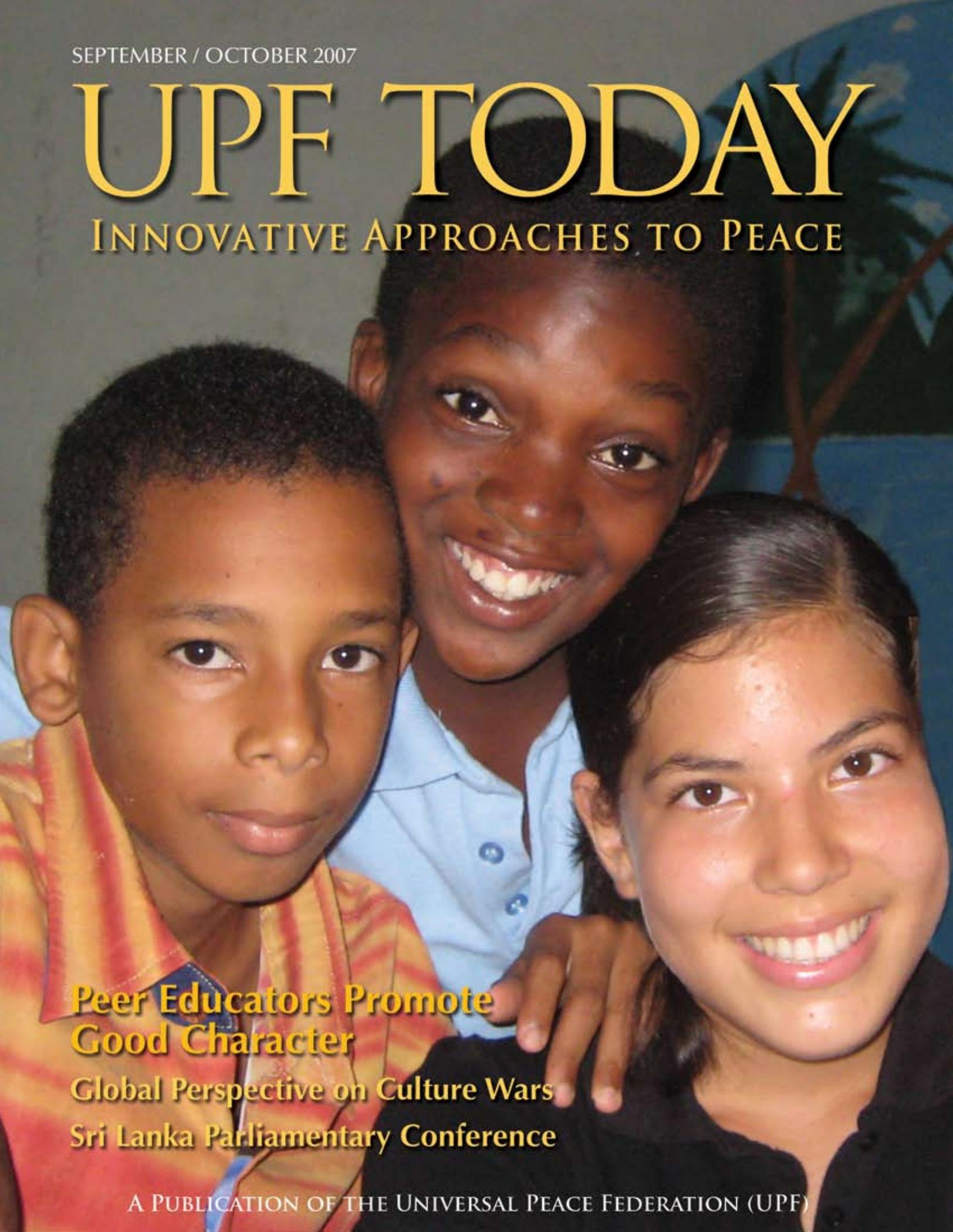


SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2007

UPF TODAY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PEACE

A close-up photograph of three young people of diverse backgrounds. In the center is a young girl with dark skin and hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, smiling broadly. To her left is a young boy with dark skin, wearing a red and yellow striped shirt, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. To her right is a young woman with light skin and dark hair, wearing a black top, smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with a palm tree.

**Peer Educators Promote
Good Character**

**Global Perspective on Culture Wars
Sri Lanka Parliamentary Conference**

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION (UPF)

Working towards the MDGs

Welcome to our new magazine, *UPF Today: Innovative Approaches to Peace*, the publication for Ambassadors for Peace and UPF friends and colleagues who share our vision of building a world of peace. Our previous publication, *World and I*, will continue as a periodical focused on major issues.

Helping the United Nations reach its Millennium Development Goals is a central focus of UPF. In September, I was invited to speak at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris to offer recommendations about ways civil society can supplement UN development efforts. The following points were emphasized:

The concept of virtues expands the idea of development to include moral development. While we may want to insist that moral development can only become a focus once economic development is secured, in reality the two are inextricably related. *Action Step: Offer character education.*

The quality of human relationships is essential to development, not only in the sense of "it's not what you know, it's who you know," but also in the sense of having social skills to work collaboratively, cooperatively and constructively with others. *Action Step: Offer training in relationship skills.*

Marriage and family are universal values held sacred by virtually all human civilizations in history. The qualities of family life, parenting and husband-wife relationships are central to human development. *Action Step: Offer programs to strengthen marriage and teach parenting skills.*

Religion and faith-based organizations can be strong allies in the effort to achieve MDGs, from HIV/AIDS prevention, to empowerment of women, to primary school education. *Action Step: Encourage partnerships with religious leaders and faith-based organizations.*

The quality of leadership and governance in nations, religions, NGOs and the private sector is essential to achieving MDGs. Raising awareness about these goals needs to be combined with training in leadership and good governance. *Action Step: Offer leadership and good governance programs.*

To foster change, there must be a vision, rooted in universal moral and spiritual values, that inspires service. *Action Step: Develop a global ethics based on universal moral and spiritual values.*

Conflict between people of different tribes, nations, religions and ethnicities undermines the best efforts for human development. Human development needs to be seen in relationship to peacebuilding and a broadened vision of human security. *Action Step: Link MDG achievement with peacebuilding efforts.*



Dr. Thomas G. Walsh,
Secretary General,
Universal Peace
Federation

UPF TODAY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PEACE

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UPF Today is the membership magazine of the Universal Peace Federation, founded by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon. Envisioning peace as a state of harmonious interdependence among individuals, families, nations and peoples, UPF advocates constructive and original practices that contribute to achieving a unified world of peace, the hope of all ages. The magazine offers a forum for Ambassadors for Peace fostering human development, good governance, public service, and collaborative peace efforts involving religions, nations and nongovernmental organizations.

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Cover photo:
Participants in UPF character
education initiative summer programs
in St. Lucia

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PROMOTING GOOD CHARACTER

What It Takes to Be a Character Educator

Character education emphasizes a life-long approach to character development, centering on the family as the principal school of love.

This was the message conveyed by Mrs. Poppy Richie and Mrs. Sally Sayre during the June 26-29 training in UPF's Character Education Initiative. In a rural US setting, they led the participants through exercises in the *Discovering the Real Me* textbooks.

Mrs. Sayre teaches English at Northwestern Lehigh High School in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Richie (who wrote the textbooks for young children) teaches at the Principled Academy in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. They described strategies for implementing character education throughout a school and a community.

Many of the participants in the training were young peer educators preparing for summer assignments in the Caribbean islands. Dennis Salmon, an educator who came from Jamaica for the training, explained the history, politics and culture of the Caribbean islands and the importance of character education in helping young people find their true value.

"I think the most valuable lesson I received was that in order to be a character educator, I must be a person of good character," one summer peer educator commented.

Other participants included Veronica Evangeline, a journalist and lawyer from Uzbekistan who is interested in promoting character education in Central Asia.

A Wake-up Call in Belize

By Diana Santelli, Peer Educator

I was amazed and shocked and saddened by the kinds of things the young people in Belize had already gone through in their lives. Yet they were touched by the exercises in the *Discovering the Real Me* Curriculum.

We used a video clip entitled "Free Hugs," which is about a man who goes out on the streets and offers free hugs to anyone who needs one. After viewing the clip, we went around the room and did an exer-

cise to hug one another—and even the students who refused to participate or thought it was weird had huge smiles on their faces. They were literally glowing from happiness—just from a simple hug.

We started to get to know the students that we were working with. Many came from broken families or from a family where they have brothers or sisters from two or three different fathers. Some of them experienced the death of a sister or a brother. Some were abandoned at a young age, or were sexually molested and abused. There was a point that I really wondered how I could teach them anything. They had experienced so much, and who was I to come and teach anything to them?

With practice, we became more comfortable with giving the presentations. Despite my uncertainties and fears of how students would receive these kinds of messages, I found that many of the students were so happy to talk about these things! They wanted to hear about how to forgive others; they wanted to hear that they have choices in their lives, and they wanted to hear that their dreams can come true and they can have happy families.

Especially when we presented the topic on the emotional and spiritual side effects of uncommitted sexual relationships, I doubted that anyone was going to want to hear me tell them to wait to

"I feel great wonder at the transforming effect a five-day experience can bring about."

MRS. SALLY SAYRE,
SUPERVISOR, PEER
EDUCATORS

Belize class with peer educators



“Going to Belize was like a wake up call reminding me that most of the world doesn’t have the opportunities I have. Many of those students couldn’t read at their grade level. After this experience, I do feel responsible for those young people in Belize.”

DIANA SANTELLI, PEER EDUCATOR IN BELIZE

have sex until they were married. I assumed that their response would be similar to the way that American students from my high school would respond, treating sexual purity and self-control as a “religious and outdated” point of view. To my great surprise, many of the kids supported me and

were nodding along in agreement. One girl came up to me at the end of class and said, “Thank you. I really learned a lot from this.”

We worked in four different schools in the Belize City District under the guidance of Rev. Lynda Moguel, the director of UPF Character Education in Belize. We gave a total of 22 presentations at Youth Enhancement Services, Career Enhancement Training, the YWCA, and at the Salvation Army School, and we covered topics from Human Value and Self-Esteem to Love vs. Infatuation to Goals/My Future.

Growing up in America surrounded by the everyday comforts and conveniences, we tend to forget how the rest of the world is living. Going to Belize was like a wake up call for me—it was a reminder that most of the world doesn’t have the opportunities I have. Many of those students we worked with couldn’t even read and write at their grade level, which is something I never even really thought about. We have so much here in America and have been blessed with so many things, but as the saying goes: “with great blessing comes great responsibility.”

After this experience, I do feel responsible for

those young people in Belize and I really hope that they too can live a life of happiness without regret. It has opened my eyes to appreciate what I have, but even more—it has opened my heart.

Spontaneous Service in St. Lucia and St. Vincent

By Sally Sayre, Supervisor, Peer Educators

Natoria, a slender, somewhat quiet, pretty 13-year-old girl, was nearly always waiting at the school almost an hour before it was time for the first session of our day camp to begin. She sat at a picnic table under the colorful mural at Vide Bouteille School. We had come by bus to set up the sound system and a projector, and to prepare our last day of camp. The rest of the camp staff would arrive by car.

Without anyone asking her, Natoria set about doing a thorough cleaning of the desk at the front of the room. Then she began wiping down every chair in the room. Natoria’s desire to serve the camp in this way confirmed for us that our week of character education summer day camp had made an impression on at least one student.

On Thursday we had not just talked about taking responsibility but had given everyone the experience of finding their true value in serving others. One team of students cleaned and painted the chalkboards while another team cleaned and swept classrooms and still another two teams were armed with garbage bags in order to pick up litter around the school and around the neighborhood. The teams working outside the school experienced ridicule from some folks on the street but happily kept singing and working until their bags were full.

The Vide Bouteille School is in Castries, the capital city of the beautiful island of St. Lucia near the southeastern end of the Caribbean islands. Remy and Chyoko Taupier, UPF leaders in St. Lucia, organized a five-day summer day camp that ran from July 23-27. The camp was jointly sponsored by CARICOM, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and Universal Peace Federation. Besides Gina Standard, Kuna Hamad, Kenny Wolfenberger, the Taupiers and myself, the team of teachers and counselors included Lisa Degoede from Seattle, Yoshiko Go and Chika Sanzen from Japan, and Dwight Augustin from St. Lucia. The name of our camp was “Fighting HIV/AIDS Through Character Building,” and the message was geared for students from 12 to 18 years of age. There were 40 students in this first camp of the summer. The program began at 9:00 a.m. and finished at 3:30 pm, usually with a pick-up game of volleyball or soccer.

Students in St. Vincent participate in an exercise from the *Discovering the Real Me* curriculum.



CHARACTER EDUCATION INITIATIVE UPDATE

SUMMER 2007 ACTIVITIES

Teacher Training

Teachers from the United States Mrs. Poppy Richie and Mrs. Sally Sayre joined Mr. Alan Saunders in training teachers and supervising peer educators.

- **ST. LUCIA:** The Department of Education runs 56 primary schools and 14 secondary schools, with a total 36,834 students. Teacher training workshops have been conducted in many of the elementary and high schools.
- **POHNPEI, FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA:** The Department of Education runs 32 elementary schools and two high schools for 5,000 students. Three trainings have been held to date, for 200 teachers.
- **PHILIPPINES:** In the National Capital Region, more than 200 administrators and values education teachers have been trained in the curriculum. The materials are being piloted in classrooms in Central Luzon region #3, with a group of teachers making the translations.

Summer Programs

Local teachers and community leaders organized community-based character education programs during the summer based on the *Discovering the Real Me* Curriculum:

- **ST. LUCIA:** Ambassador for Peace Ms. Fortuna Anthony Husbands, former Chief Education Officer for St. Lucia, arranged for five-day programs in three schools, with funding from the Ministry of Education and CARICOM.
- **ST. VINCENT:** Ms. Fortuna Anthony Husbands arranged for a five-day camp in St. Vincent, with funding from the World Bank and St. Vincent Ministry of Education; 60 students, 20 teachers and counselors. Ms. Abner Richards from the HIV/AIDS Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Education, worked with Ms. Husbands.

- **BELIZE:** Ambassador for Peace Rev. Lynda Moguel organized programs in four Anglican schools; 130 students.
- **POHNPEI, FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA:** Ambassador for Peace Hon. Iso Iriarte, the senior traditional leader, helped make arrangements. Eighty-five educators from Pohnpei Islands Central School and elementary schools in Nett, Ohmine and Kolonia attended a three-day teacher-training workshop; 140 students attended a two-week summer camp.

Reports on programs in the Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago, and Gambia will be included in a forthcoming issue.

Get Involved

- Buy and study the *Discovering the Real Me* books.
- Share what you learn at home and in your community.
- Attend a teacher-training seminar.
- Promote character education on a national, district or community level.

Contact Alan Saunders, Director, UPF Character Education Initiative, 481 8th Avenue, 30th floor, New York, NY 10001 USA. Phone: 1 (212) 239-6500. Fax: 1 (212) 239-2021. Email: asaunders@upf.org.



Training in character education for teachers in the National Capital Region of the Philippines.

The lessons and discussions occurred all day, whether we were formally teaching from the UPF curriculum, *Discovering the Real Me*, making greeting cards in a craft class, or enjoying a lunch of salt-fish with rice and lentils. In all our sharing we tried very hard to convey to each child that he or she is a person of true value who deserves to be treated with respect and true love. Our clear message was that abstinence before marriage and fidelity within marriage are the way to stop the spread of HIV. The sad reality is that the Caribbean islands have an extraordinarily high rate of HIV infection (highest in the world outside

of sub-Saharan Africa) as well as an extremely high number of single-parent homes, mostly headed by women, many of whom first gave birth as unwed teens.

The Taupiers and most of the rest of their crew conducted camps in two other schools. As coordinator of the UPF summer program for college student peer educators, I flew with Gina to St. Vincent, a nearby island south of St. Lucia, where we were met by Abner Richards, director for a five-day camp held in Barrouallie from July 30–August 3 at the Barrouallie Multi-Purpose Academy, a secondary school for



Students clean a school in St. Lucia

students who want to learn trades.

This was the first camp of its kind for St. Vincent. We were joined by Dwight Augustin, Dannel Chassang, and Arlette Cenac, all from St. Lucia. Mrs. Cenac is a retired school principal and Ambassador for Peace who is committed to bringing character education to the youth of the Caribbean. Dwight and Dannel are trained Christian counselors who work in public schools throughout the year teaching the abstinence message in “Family Life Education” classes. The five of us became the support staff for the teachers and counselors from St. Vincent trained by Mr. Alan Saunders.

The schedule, activities and lessons were along the same model as the camps in St. Lucia. Students ranged in age from twelve to eighteen. Mrs. Kyoto Kuramoto, Chairwoman for Women’s Federation for World Peace in the Caribbean, taught crafts; Mrs. Cenac and I taught drama; and Mr. Piere, from the school, ran the sports activities.

It was a busy week that included a national holiday. August 1 is Emancipation Day, commemorating the emancipation of the slaves in 1834. It is a day for family picnics, and all workplaces and stores are closed. We had almost full attendance that day, and we organized into teams for cleaning the school. Mr. Crease, the principal,

Discussion group during summer camp in Pohnpei, Micronesia



was especially happy to see his school thoroughly cleaned.

The House of Hope, a local HIV/AIDS charity, sponsored a visit to St. Vincent by the WAIT Team (Washington AIDS International Teens). They are recruiting and training a St. Vincent team and brought their music, dance and drama to our camp. In response, one of our campers, “Biggie” (Glenroy John), sang the song that won him an award in the island’s 2006 HIV/AIDS songwriting contest.

I feel great wonder at the transforming effect a five-day experience can bring about. The fact that we achieved such a feeling of oneness and joy over the course of such a short time gives great hope for what can be accomplished through ongoing programs.

Changing Attitudes in Pohnpei, Micronesia

by Michael Treacy, Director, UPF-Micronesia

“What I’ve experienced from this summer camp is that first, change yourself before you change others. I applied this [during the camp] and I changed the way I acted with my friends. I gave them respect, friendliness, leadership, and [an example of] responsibility.” This was how Myron, a ninth-grade student, described the two-week summer camp in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

The camp program began with a plenary session followed by class group meetings using selections from the *Discovering the Real Me* textbooks. Teachers led the lessons, with the assistance of peer counselors. Lunch, snacks and lots of water were provided every day.

“My best experience was the morning activities, because I learned so many things from the presenta-

“What I’ve experienced from this summer camp is that first, change yourself before you change others.”

NINTH-GRADE STUDENT, POHNPEI, MICRONESIA

tions. And I can go back home and teach my younger brothers and sisters so that we can live in a happy and responsible family,” reported Kevin, a tenth grade student.

After lunch, the students enjoyed sports, games, arts and crafts, or doing a service project until finishing time in the afternoon. Each day, we noticed the student numbers creeping up from 122 to 140 and more, as they told their friends about the activities, friendships and enjoyable time.

The students grew to love and appreciate the camp, some arriving early each morning, just as we were setting up the hall. Each day their enthusiasm would grow, their interest in the program would deepen and new friendships would be made.

The students’ attitudes changed a lot over the two weeks—from the usual self-interested attitude to a rising degree of self awareness and diligent investment in all the activities. The character education initiative gave the students a unifying focus for their lives and a more hopeful future for their personal situation.

Myron, an eighth grade student, reported: “I learned how to be a respectful student. I learned how to respect others as friends. I have to respect everyone in the world. I would like to treat others the way I want to be treated. I learned how to be honest with people, and how to keep away from bad things [influences].”

One afternoon was devoted to service projects. The students cleaned and beautified the school sign, repaired toilets, cleaned and painted men’s and ladies’ bathrooms, repainted the principal’s office and collected trash from one end of the town of Kolonia to the other. This brought a new sense of pride in the school and also a feeling of responsibility for the environment. The students felt happy to actualize what they had learnt about becoming a good citizen. They felt a sense of value in making a personal contribution to good causes.

Mr. Alan Saunders and Mrs. Poppy Richie from the US led the training and summer camp, with the support of peer educators Morrow Willis from California and Eika Davis from the High School of the Pacific in Hawaii. The Treacy children and two other HSP students from Pohnpei, Ericka and Frannie Baker, were peer counselors.

We are grateful to our Ambassador for Peace, Iso Salvador Iriarte, and Mr. Reynold Albert of the Department of Education. The DOE, many of the teachers and most of the students indicated their desire to see the character education program established in their school system and to have a much longer summer camp next year.

Evaluating the Curriculum in the Philippines

UPF-Philippines

One hundred and eleven superintendents, principals and values education teachers in the National Capital Region of the Philippines attended a two-day character education workshop on “Institutionalizing the Culture of Heart in the Family, School and Society.” It was held at the International Youth Center in Tanay, Rizal, Philippines June 23-24 in cooperation with the Philippine Teachers’ Association for the Research of Principles and the National Capital Region Department of Education.

Mr. Alan Saunders explained how the character education initiative can help people fulfill the three life goals: to develop a mature character, build good marriage and family relationships, and make a positive contribution to society. Joseph Navalta, an engineer and Secretary General of IIFWP-Philippines, presented a vision of education that promotes the development of individuals’ full potential, strengthens the family and society, and promotes harmony among cultures and nations.

Workshop participants divided into ten groups to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas in the book. They made suggestions on how to make the chapters more relevant to the Filipino readers by adding indigenous stories and examples.

The closing ceremony included congratulations by Dr. Samuel Salvador, Vice President for Academic Affairs of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Ms. Consolacion Diaz from the Department of Education stressed that institutionalizing a culture of heart in academia will help promote the department’s motto: *Makabayan* (love of country), *Makatao* (love of people) and *Makakalikasan* (love of nature).

“Institutionalizing a culture of heart in academia will help promote the department’s motto: love of country, love of people and love of nature.”

MS. CONSOLACION DIAZ, NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PHILIPPINES

Teachers in the Philippines discuss ways to apply exercises in the *Discovering the Real Me* curriculum in their schools.



SRI LANKA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

By Dr. Robert Kittel, Director, UPF-India

“MPs need to understand that they do not have supremacy, but have responsibility.”

HON. W.J.M. LOKUBANDARA, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT, SRI LANKA

The Sri Lanka Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in collaboration with UPF held a “ground-breaking conference that set a new level of cooperation between government and non-governmental organizations,” said Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, Secretary General of UPF. The Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Mr. Ajit Nivard Cabraal, agreed, noting that usually people sat and listened to Members of Parliament, but in this conference, the tables were turned—MPs sat and listened while people spoke.

The theme of this International Leadership Conference on August 5-6, 2007 was “Good Governance for Parliamentarians.” The venue was the Sri Lankan Parliament building in the capital, Colombo. All 225 Members of Parliament were invited, and they attended sessions as their schedules permitted.

Opening remarks were given by the Sri Lankan Speaker of Parliament, Hon. W.J.M. Lokubandara, who stressed that the life of an MP should be the same in public and private. “MPs need to understand,” he told the audience of legislators, “that they

do not have supremacy, but have responsibility.”

Hon. M.H. Mohammed, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, had invited UPF to partner with his ministry to hold this conference. The idea for this conference grew out of a meeting between Mr. Mohammed and the Chairman of UPF International, Rev. Dr. Chung Hwan Kwak, during a conference on good governance held in Korea earlier in the year. He stated that such a conference could benefit his country because it “focused on international and interreligious harmony and cooperation.”

Ms. Sujata Koirala, the special envoy (and daughter) of Nepal’s Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, reminded the mostly male audience of the need for gender balance, even in parliament. She described Nepal as a model of transition from crisis to representative democracy and called upon those present to support the forthcoming historic Constitutional Assembly elections in November.

“In many ways,” said Dr. Kwak, “good leadership begins in the family, the root of all human life and experience.” He stated that “families form the foundation of the society and the nation, and family breakdown for whatever reason undermines the stability of the society and nation.”

Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake noted the numerous definitions of ‘good governance,’ including that of the World Bank. He emphasized that leaders have the capacity to understand the essence of good governance, despite its often changing definitions. More importantly, he said, public officials should not just act by external criteria or mandates but govern for the greater good of the nation based on their own conscience.

“The Sri Lankan speakers provided state-of-the-art content from a political perspective,” reported Dr. Walsh. “They shared their expertise in areas such as the Sri Lankan peace process, good governance and fiscal responsibility.” These speakers included:

Panel presenters at the International Leadership Conference in Sri Lanka



- Mr. P.A. Pemathilaka, Auditor General
- Mr. Sumith Abeysinghe, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
- Prof. Rajive Wijesinghe, Secretary General for the Secretariat for the Co-ordination of the Peace Process
- Mr. Ajit Nivard Cabraal, Governor, Central Bank of Sri Lanka
- Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Member of Parliament

Amb. K.V. Rajan, Executive Vice-Chairman, UPF-India, shared insights about the need for bringing faith-based organizations into the governing process of the United Nations.

Presentations about universal values that form the basis for good governance were given by Dr. Christopher Kim, Regional Chair, and Mrs. Ursula McLackland, Regional Secretary General of UPF-Asia. Other speakers included Mr. Ek Nath Dhakal, Secretary General of UPF-Nepal, speaking about peace initiatives in his country, and Mr. R. Thillairajan, Secretary General of UPF-Sri Lanka.

In summary, the conference provided a unique forum for cooperation between government and civil society. Discussions focused on responsibilities



Members of Parliament in the audience

each party must undertake in relation to the future development of the country. Minister M.H. Mohammed expressed his pleasure with the outcome of this maiden venture and hope that such collaboration would continue.

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES IN 2007

Yong Pyong, Korea, March 29-April 1

Seoul, Korea, April 15-19

Washington, DC, May 14-19

New York, New York, June 2-3

Seoul, Korea, June 12-16

Honolulu, Hawaii, June 17-21

Seoul, Korea, July 17-21

Colombo, Sri Lanka, August 6-7

Seoul, Korea, August 17-21

Kodiak, Alaska, August 28-September 3

New York, New York, September 10-13

New York, New York, September 21-24

“Public officials should not just act by external criteria or mandates but govern for the greater good of the nation based on their own conscience.”

H.E. RATNASIRI
WICKREMANAYAKE,
PRIME MINISTER, SRI LANKA

GET INVOLVED

To sponsor a leadership seminar in your country, contact Mr. Jack Corley, Assistant Secretary General, UPF.

jcorley@upf.org.

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE “CULTURE WARS”

UPF’s International Leadership Conferences promote the contribution of intercultural dialogue and cooperation to peace and human development. Keynote speakers at International Leadership Conferences in Washington, DC, and New York City spoke about their experiences working to improve relationships between Islam and the West. Excerpts of their presentations follow.



Dinesh D’Souza

Western Secularism and Islamic Revival

*Dinesh D’Souza
Fellow, Hoover Institution,
Stanford University, USA*

I was reading an article recently written by the former Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew. It was called “Modernization without Westernization.” Lee Kuan Yew was saying: “I came to America and I fell in love with America in the 1950s.” And then he said: “I fell out of love with America in the 1970s.”

In other words, he fell in love with one America and he fell out of love with another America. What’s the difference? “In the 1950s,” he said, “I saw America as representing freedom. I saw America as representing opportunity. I saw America as representing the kind of life that one couldn’t have anywhere else.”

I’m a native of Bombay, India. Actually my family is from a small part of India called Goa, which used to be a Portuguese colony. I came to the United States at the age of 16 as an exchange student. I went to high school here for a year and lived with American families. I went to Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. While I was in college I became interested in the role that America plays in the world. As a result, the books that I’ve written explore what distinguishes Western civilization from other civilizations that have existed through history.

Secularism in Europe and the US

Quite simply, the rest of the world has become a lot more religious, and the West has become a lot more secular. These two developments have been occurring simultaneously. Secularism is far more advanced in Europe than it is in the United States. In European countries it is not unusual to have rates of church

attendance that are in the range of 10 percent; 90 percent of Europeans don’t have any sort of regular or formal religious attendance or participation.

In the United States, rates of church attendance are considerably higher, close to 40 percent. But that still means that the United States is a largely secular society, and it’s secular in a deeper sense too. For a complicated series of reasons within Western civilization, the idea has developed that the way to respond to the religious wars that divided Europe in the past is to remove religion from the orbit of government, particularly the national government. In America we call it “separation of church and state,” so that even religious people don’t have a very visible presence in the American public sphere. Therefore, America appears to be even less religious, if you were to look at it from the outside, than it is.

American popular culture and the America exported abroad is the most secular side of America. In other words, popular culture is not a reflection of America as a whole. It tends to be a reflection of “bohemian” America. It is the America of Hollywood, which is very different than, say, the America of Kansas City or Peoria, Illinois. In other words, the rest of the world is seeing an image of America that is not necessarily the real America.

Now this secularism is, within the West, regarded as a kind of an accomplishment, because it is a way of getting away from theological differences which are seen as unresolvable. Let’s take an example:

If you say that there are three persons in one God, and I say that there’s one person in one God, how do we settle that dispute? It is an unresolvable issue. Historically it has brought people to blows. So, in the West, the idea has been to remove that kind of dispute from political consideration to avoid conflict.

Religion is also a universal source of morality. There are secular ways of talking about morality.

There have been important philosophers, from Kant to John Rawls, who talk about secular morality, but I have yet to meet a person who follows secular morality. Have you ever met a Kantian in everyday life? Most people follow morality through religion. Religion is the main incubator of morality, and the secular importance of religion in the world is that it provides ultimate accountability for a person's actions.

What I mean by that is we all live in a world where life is unfair. We know that there are good people who come to grief. We know that there are bad people who succeed. So the question becomes: "Where's justice?" If you are making decisions for yourself, you might as well say, why shouldn't I be a bad guy if I can get away with it?

Religion introduces the idea of ultimate accountability. In Hinduism, if you act badly in this life, you will get your come-uppance in the next life. This is a small example of what I mean by this idea of ultimate accountability, this sense that even when nobody is looking, there is a divine being that is aware of what we do and the consequences that result from our actions.

Revival of piety among Muslims

Within our lifetimes, we have been seeing a real revival of piety within the world of Islam. Starting around World War II, there was a powerful movement in Egypt toward Arab nationalism. Gamal Abdel Nasser was the sort of leading figure of this, as his nation was coming from under the yoke of British colonial control. In the last 30 years you have seen a revival of Islam, not just in the Middle East but really all over the world. You see it in Malaysia and Indonesia, in India, in Turkey. You even see it in America. Today if you go on a college campus like Berkeley or Yale, you will see Muslim girls wearing a head scarf, and these are the daughters of bankers and venture capitalists. You would not have seen it 20 years ago.

There is an Islamic desire to apply religious values to the problems of today. The big question that's being debated within the Islamic world is: "How can Islam help the Muslims to get out of the big mess that Islam has fallen into in the modern era?"

There was a time in history when Islam was competing with China for the title of the most advanced civilization in the world. Muslims are very conscious of that. They have a feeling that Islam has really sunk down, and in particular, that if you were to somehow remove the revenues of oil, the Muslim world would be in pretty bad shape. And the Muslims know it.

The question is the process of revival within Islam. The Islamic radicals are in the forefront of saying that the way to do this ultimately is to repel the forces of the bad guys who are coming to our society, installing secular dictators in our world, undermining our religion, undermining the Muslim family and corrupting the innocence of Muslim children. The radical Muslims have become very successful in multiplying their ranks because they are touching on something that is of genuine importance: we want not only to live in a prosperous society and in a powerful and strong country, but we also want to live the good life, the decent life, according to certain moral codes.

Concerns about the US

In other societies, our destiny is shaped to some degree by who we are, what religion we belong to, what tribe we belong to, what caste we belong to, whether we are the oldest son in the family, and so on. In America, those barriers are cut loose, so there's a great appeal to America, I think. This shows why young people all over the world are fascinated by what America represents.

But Lee Kuan Yew's point was that there is another America that is making the whole world a little nervous, and that is an America in which the idea of being able to do what you want has come to be interpreted as permissiveness, license or immorality—doing whatever you damn well please. In other words, freedom without accountability. This America endangers the traditional values that most of the world lives by.

The issue isn't religion; it is the way in which religion has provided a kind of a social cement in forming societies. Culture is a product of religion. Western civilization threatens to unloose forces that overturn traditional values.

*"I came to America
and I fell in love with
America in the 1950s.
I fell out of love with
America in the 1970s."*

H.E. LEE KUAN YEW,
PRIME MINISTER,
SINGAPORE (1959-90)

**Dinesh D'Souza helps
bridge understanding
between the East and
the West.**





Dr. Nouracham Niam taking part in the question and answer session following Dinesh D'Souza's presentation

“Religion is the main incubator of morality, and the secular importance of religion in the world is that it provides ultimate accountability for a person’s actions.”

DINESH D’SOUZA

Contrasting ideas of freedom

Now here’s the interesting point: when we talk about America and the West, two ideas of freedom are competing. There is a moral order in the universe, the American founders believed, a moral order that makes claims on us, and it’s our job to live up to the dictates of this external moral code. This is the traditional view that freedom is very important, because with freedom you’re able to

take advantage of opportunity and make the kind of life that you want for yourself.

There’s a new idea of freedom that developed in America. If you came as an immigrant to America in 1910 and you went to the neighborhood called Greenwich Village in New York City, you would encounter something called “bohemia.” People there were living against the mainstream of society. They said, “We reject this traditional way of living; we want to live in a more experimental way.” It was confined to intellectuals, artists, poets, painters; it was not a mainstream phenomenon.

One of the unnoticed legacies of the 1960s was to take these counter-cultural values and make them mainstream. Hollywood, for example, was really very permissive, even in the 1930s, but Hollywood today is a lot closer to America than it was then. In other words, many counter-cultural values have gone mainstream.

So we have a new morality that says: I should not live by consulting any external code; all those codes are outdated. They don’t apply to me. I should live by consulting my inner self. So, if I have a decision to make, such as whether to go to business school or become an artist, I decide not by any external calculation but by looking to this inner self.

It’s not a rejection of morality completely. It’s a transposition of morality from the idea of an external standard to this notion of inner morality. This means that there is no shared morality. Morality is subjective; it is personal.

The traditional Muslims are the majority of people in the Muslim world. They’re not that different from traditional Jews or traditional Christians. In fact, there is a kind of cousin relationship between

Judaism, Christianity and Islam—each later faith claiming to incorporate elements of the one that came before. That creates a certain internal zone of respect. But what is new is that the radical Muslims are going to the traditional Muslims and saying: “Look, this West that we’re dealing with is really not a Christian society, not worthy of the traditional respect that the Qur’an extends toward Judaism and Christianity. This West is now a pagan society. It has gone through Christianity and come out on the other end. It is now a secular, atheist society. More than that, it is now the enemy of religion and moral values, and it is coming to your part of the world to threaten your values.”

This gives the ordinary Muslim a much stronger motive for a kind of jihad than any foreign policy issue.

Working for a better America

Those of us who are in the US need to work for a better America here at home, not just for reasons of foreign policy but because ultimately there’s a big fight in this country about what kind of America we want.

When you have a nine-year-old daughter, you find yourself constantly shielding her eyes from ugly or immoral things that are out there. You can’t really turn them off, because they are so pervasive in the culture. So you can understand why these things taken abroad are going to have this kind of impact.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a remarkable accomplishment because people of very different religious traditions, which make very different claims about the universe, can agree on a certain set of moral norms. The idea of rights can be understood as nothing more than a translation of the idea of morality into the political sphere. Our challenge is to recover some of that moral basis to advance peace in the world.

Examples of Faith-Based Diplomacy

*Dr. Douglas M. Johnston
Founder, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, US*

One madrasa leader in Pakistan told me the following story after we spent two weeks together discussing the relationship between Islam and contemporary thought:

“In our village a young woman was caught talking on her cell phone at 2:00 in the morning to a young man in another village in whom she had an interest. The tribal elders felt that this violated

their code of honor, so she was to die, her mother and sister were to die, the boy's mother was to die, and the boy was to lose his nose and his ears. Ordinarily I wouldn't say anything about this, because code of honor is applied all the time. But as a result of the discussions we've had on human rights, I felt compelled to go back and confront this on the basis of our religion."

He said that he feared for his own safety, but still he went back, met with the tribal elders, and showed them there was no statement in the Qur'an where women were prevented from talking to men. He appealed to those passages that urge the peaceful resolution of differences, and the situation was resolved with no one being harmed. This was a situation where the higher values of religion trumped tribalism, in a context where it's very difficult even for Muslims to know where one ends and the other begins.

I had been involved with the national prayer breakfast fellowship in Washington and had seen how spiritually motivated lay persons operating on the basis of their personal religious faith were able to reconcile differences between peoples—sometimes bringing wars to a halt with no one the wiser for how it took place. I thought to myself: if this kind of activity could be captured in a compelling book that could be made available to policymakers and diplomats, then perhaps government could learn how to build upon it.

When I was becoming the number two person at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, I wanted to focus on the positive role that religious or spiritual factors could play in actually preventing or resolving conflict while at the same time advancing social change based on justice and reconciliation.

Once you start talking about the intersection of religion and politics, it gets very complicated very quickly. This was far beyond my ability to do alone, so I enlisted a lot of people from nine different disciplines—a lot of world-class folks.

The Berlin Wall came down in 1989, and ethnic conflict started to blossom. All of a sudden, people could see that the juxtaposition of religious reconciliation with official or unofficial diplomacy had more potential than traditional diplomacy to deal with these identity-based conflicts.

Muslim and Christian leaders dialogue in the Sudan

We were invited into the Sudan to see if there was something we could do to address the long-standing civil war between the Islamic north and the Christian, African traditional south. There were a lot of NGOs

working in Sudan, but they were all in the south and were dealing with the symptoms of the problem.

We decided to go to the north and try to get at the cause rather than the symptoms. We went with the idea of establishing relationships of trust with the Islamic regime in the north, and from that vantage point inspiring them to take steps toward peace that they wouldn't otherwise take. About a year and a half into this process, we had a watershed moment in November 2000, when we brought together 30 religious leaders and scholars. Scholars are important, because Islam is decentralized and the imam of any particular mosque has a very limited reach. It's the scholars who make a difference by planting new ideas and having a broad reach.

Ten prominent Sudanese Christian religious leaders, ten prominent Sudanese Muslim religious leaders, and ten internationals from both faith communities came together for four days to address the religious aspects of the conflict. Now the greatest difficulty was getting the Christians to participate. They had been beaten over the head for so long that they were disillusioned and didn't think anything good could come of this. I said: "You really don't have a choice. You're a Christian, you're called to be a peacemaker."

At the end of the first day these Christian religious leaders came up to me with smiles on their faces. They said, "You know, this is the first time we have ever been heard." By the third day, prominent Sudanese Muslims were articulating the need to address some of these problems that they were hearing, many of them for the first time. At the end there was a genuine breakthrough in communications. Seventeen consensus recommendations emerged. An elder statesman, a Muslim diplomat, said that he had never before seen northerners and southerners

"I had seen how spiritually motivated lay persons operating on the basis of their personal religious faith were able to reconcile differences between peoples—sometimes bringing wars to a halt with no one the wiser for how it took place."

DOUGLAS M. JOHNSTON

Dr. Douglas M. Johnston with ILC Chairman, Dr. Hyun Jin Preston Moon





Presentations at the International Leadership Conferences sparked lively discussion.

“Christian religious leaders came up to me with smiles on their faces. They said, ‘You know, this is the first time we have ever been heard.’”

DOUGLAS M. JOHNSTON

come together to talk to one another from the heart.

We weren’t there to overthrow the regime. We weren’t there to abolish *shari’a*, traditional Islamic law. We were there to answer a very simple question: “What steps can an Islamic government take to alleviate the second-class status of non-Muslims in a *shari’a* context?”

Why was this meeting so successful? I think because it was really an exercise in faith-based diplomacy. We began every morning with readings from the Qur’an and the Bible. Each day we had a prayer breakfast at the hotel for the internationals and local religious leaders. We brought a prayer team from California to pray and fast during those four days for the success of the deliberations, and they were matched by an equal number of Sudanese Pentecostals.

While the religious leaders bared their grievances just as brutally frankly as one could hope, it was all done in a cordial tone. When that meeting began, there was frosty silence. When it was over, there was a lot of joking and laughter between the two communities.

One recommendation was to form an interreligious council. It took two more years to do that and to get all the relationships right, but within the first few months, that council had a list of solid practical achievements that boggled the mind and far outweighed anything the churches had been able to do in the previous 15 years of operating alone. The council meets monthly, with top religious leaders from both communities coming together to surface and resolve their problems.

This independent body was formed in the context of an Islamic dictatorship. The government also agreed to leadership on the Muslim side that it was opposed to because the leader had been a constant thorn in their side; however, that leader was someone who commanded high moral stature with both faith communities.

And Darfur notwithstanding, which is a Muslim-on-Muslim situation, the government has kept its word, building new churches and providing restitution for the past seizure of church properties.

Another ingredient in faith-based diplomacy is looking for the convenient opportunity to make a helpful reference to the Qur’an, how the Prophet

Muhammad may have dealt with the situation, or what Jesus might have to say about it. I have not met a Muslim who doesn’t open up when you start engaging on that basis, because many of them are uncomfortable or almost resentful at having to deal with only secular constructs.

Muslims dialogue with US policy makers

We’ve been working with the American Muslim community and the US government to try to see if we couldn’t get both working together for the common good.

First, we sponsored a couple of conferences where we brought 30 American Muslim leaders together with 30 US government security officials and foreign policy practitioners to capitalize on the extensive paths of influence that the American Muslim community has with other communities overseas, many of them in very strategic locations.

Second, we are starting to inform American foreign policy with a Muslim perspective. The American Muslim community probably has greater freedom of thought than just about any of their counterparts around the world, and on a daily basis they are bridging modernity with the contemporary practice of Islam. As a result of these meetings, where Muslims are free to express their concerns, knowing that they will be heard, the doors are starting to open in the Departments of State, Defense, Homeland Security and Justice.

Islamic principles applied to tribal traditions in Pakistan

I was briefing the executive director of an institute for policy studies in Islamabad, Pakistan, on our work in Kashmir. He said, “How would you like to partner with us in reforming the madrassas?” Because his institute had been involved with these Islamic schools for more than 20 years, doing research of one sort or another, it could convene madrasa leaders and administrators from all five of the religious sects that sponsor these schools. So we brought them together for 15 days of discussion on the subject of Islam and contemporary thought.

Even though there was suspicion, there was some appreciation for the fact that reform was needed. They had totally rejected any government attempts at reform, because they felt that was going to lead to the secularization of their curriculums. But out of this first seminar came the natural demand for more. They’ve had real ownership in the process.

Dinesh D’Souza is author of *The Enemy at Home: The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11*. Douglas M. Johnston is author of *Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

One might wonder what is expected of someone with a lofty title such as “Ambassador for Peace.” Here are two vignettes gathered during interviews with Ambassadors for Peace at a recent UPF conference.

Call up a Friend

In Amman, Jordan, Dr. Ghazi Tayyeb got a phone call one day last year from a friend who said, “Are you an Ambassador for Peace?”

The soft-spoken former Commander-in-Chief of UN Forces in Croatia said yes.

The caller replied, “Prove to me that you are really an Ambassador for Peace.”

This challenge aroused his curiosity. “Let me hear your story to evaluate whether I can help or not. What do you want exactly?”

The caller said, “I have friends—a family consisting of three women and two men. They are in danger in Lebanon. They are in an area that is being shelled.”

Dr. Tayyeb knew that the situation at that time was very bad. There was a lot of shelling between the Hezbollah and the Israelis.

The caller had requested a basic humanitarian appeal to help those whose lives were in danger. As vice president of Jordan Aviation, Dr. Tayyeb had access to resources, but to mobilize assistance across national boundaries during conflict is not a simple matter.

He told the caller, “I can’t promise, but I will try.”

Dr. Tayyeb made a telephone call to one of his friends in the royal court in Jordan. The friend said, “Yes, contact this person [a staff member at the Embassy of Jordan in Beirut]. I will send him a letter asking him to help those people.”

Immediately Dr. Tayyeb contacted the anxious caller and told him, “Call your friends in Lebanon and tell them to go to the embassy or call this person.”

They communicated with the staff member, who said, “Be in Beirut at a certain time and I will be waiting for you.” The meeting took place. The family was taken to the airport and put them on an aircraft belonging to the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

When the airplane was due to arrive from Beirut, Dr. Tayyeb was waiting for them at the airport. “I came to them and introduced myself,” he recalled. “I remember the girl, who was about 18. She was nervous, looking all around—looking here and there. She was still afraid that she was in danger. She had

been through a very bad time. I tried to quiet her. I told her, ‘You are safe now. You are in Amman. Don’t worry.’” But she was still afraid.

Dr. Tayyeb realized that his task as an Ambassador for Peace was not yet finished. He took the family to La Royale Hotel in Amman and arranged for them to stay there for three days. The girl did not calm down until she saw tourists from England, America, and Japan and other places in the hotel. The family stayed in Amman for three days and then left for Europe. They returned to Beirut when things settled down.

Dr. Tayyeb paused and then commented, “The girl’s mother told me in tears, ‘You saved her life.’”

“The girl’s mother told me in tears, ‘You saved her life.’”

DR. GHAZI TAYYEB

Build on a Foundation of Dialogue

In December 2005, tensions arose in the Cronulla suburb of Sydney between local Australian residents and young people of Middle Eastern background. There was a dispute about how women were dressed at the beach. Muslim youth started sending messages by phone to all Middle Eastern and Lebanese youth to invite them to get together on the beach and fight the Australians. There was violence between both sides for several days.

The five years Father Melhem Haikal had invested in interfaith dialogue among immigrant communities paid off when he was called to help defuse a potential riot in his adopted homeland of Australia.

“I am a Lebanese priest promoting peace with every person I meet,” says the Melkite Christian priest now living in Sydney.

“The Australian government has welcomed immigrants from around the world because it respects human rights,” he explained, “but clashes in traditions sometimes arise.”

“According to UPF, there is no difference between people,” Father Haikal explains. “Likewise, the mentality of the Australian government is to treat all people as one.” The government encourages interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians and supports interfaith groups with grants of funds.

“We already had a good foundation of knowing each other and building friendships. We had a meeting with the Muslim leaders to invite them to call a halt to the young people’s plans, and they played a big role to stop all the things.”

FR. MELHEM HAIKAL

“The government sent policemen to resolve the problems at the beach and called on everyone, especially us as leaders, asking us to help,” recalls Father Haikal. “We already had a good foundation of knowing each other and building friendships. We had a meeting with the Muslim leaders to invite them to call a halt to the young people’s plans, and they played a big role to stop all the things. They invited everyone at the mosque to stop such problems, appealing to the desire for security of everyone in the community. The religious leaders played a big role. They are a key to solving many problems.”

In the multi-cultural urban environment of Australia, Father Haikal tells people “We are all brothers and sisters under one God, who is God of love and the Father of every human being on earth.” His dark eyes sparkled as he spoke about his dream that all nations can get together and respect each other by focusing on values that are respected in every culture.

The Muslim-Christian Society in Sydney has been active in Sydney for more than five years. It started with five leaders, and now between 500 and

1,000 people attend meetings. There are monthly meetings and two or three big conferences every year. Both Muslims and Christians of Lebanese origin are part of this group. They assemble for social activities and welcome immigrants from different countries. Dialogue is an important part of the meetings, focusing on values and how to collaborate to plan events.

GET INVOLVED

Do you have a story about how you engaged in peacebuilding? Send it to info@upf.org for possible inclusion in a future edition of *UPF Today*. Please include your name, address and telephone number in case we need to contact you for more details.



Seiko Lee and David D'Or sing "Halelu" with the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra and the choir of the Academic Cultural Artistic Society. David Eaton conducted this premiere performance.

PEACE CANTATA PREMIERES IN BELGRADE

By David Eaton
Music Director, New York City Symphony Orchestra

The world premiere performance of the peace cantata “Halelu” took place on May 19, 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia. The 40-minute composition for solo voices, chorus and orchestra is the collaborative effort of Israeli vocalist/composer David D’Or and myself.

The concert was produced and organized by the Embassy of Israel in Serbia with support of the Israeli-Serbian Business Fund to commemorate the 59th Independence Day of Israel.

Mr. D’Or, one of Israel’s most prominent artists, was joined by soprano Seiko Lee as vocal soloist. I conducted the combined forces of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra and the 120-voice choir of the Academic Cultural Artistic Society. The audience of 2,500 included the Ambassador of Israel to Serbia, H.E. Yaffa Ben-Ari, and Princess Jelisaveta of the Yugoslav Royal Family.

The concert was held at the Sava Arts Center in Belgrade and televised to six other Eastern European countries. Future performances are planned for Jerusalem, the United States, Japan, Cyprus, South America and Ukraine.

David D’Or and I first met in Israel in September 2004 at a concert promoting interfaith harmony at the International Convention Center in Jerusalem. It was held in conjunction with the Middle East Peace Initiative. David D’Or commented that this was one of the most uplifting concerts he had done in his distinguished career. “Based on the inspiration of that concert I felt compelled to contribute to the cause,” he explained, “and the best way for me to do that was to write music.”

After a subsequent meeting in New York early in 2005, we began a serious creative collaboration based on several musical themes that David D’Or had composed and sent me.

I was very taken by the richness of his melodic invention. It was a fantastic juxtaposing of several traditions. He was a musical Ambassador for Peace, bringing several traditions into harmony.

I remember feeling that some of it was very much like the music of Bach, perhaps the greatest of the church composers. It was deeply spiritual music and

evoked the spirit of the most exalted musical expressions of that particular culture. Other themes were evocative of the modality of the Hebrew and Arabic traditions.

From March through August I arranged and orchestrated the music, and with the assistance of Seiko Lee, produced demos of the various movements, which were then sent to David D’Or for approval.

The music was recorded in Tel Aviv in 2006 with the Ra’anana Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia Chorus of Israel.

The music of “Halelu” is a fusion of diverse musical styles including Western tonality and Middle-Eastern modality and rhythms. It is sung in English, Hebrew, Arabic and Latin. The greetings of peace of Christianity, Judaism and Islam (peace, *shalom, salaam aleikum*) figure prominently in the lyrics of several movements. Psalm 113, “Praise the Lord” (sung in Hebrew by Mr. D’Or), is the basis of the fourth movement.

The ten-movement cantata expresses the composers’ desire to cultivate a culture of peace. On other occasions, the vocalists have used their music to bridge cultures. Mr. D’Or appeared with the Orchestra of the Beijing Opera in China as a cultural envoy between China and Israel, and Miss Lee has given three concerts in North Korea, a rarity for an artist from Japan, Korea’s historical enemy.

“My deepest desire is to build bridges through song,” Seiko Lee said. “I feel this is my mission. I hope the success of this concert will bring greater peace in this part of the world.”

At the heart of this musical endeavor is our fervent desire to promote understanding and reconciliation and encourage other artists to use their creative abilities to bridge cultures.

“Based on the inspiration of that concert I felt compelled to contribute to the cause, and the best way for me to do that was to write music.”

DAVID D’OR

GET INVOLVED

- Watch video excerpts from “Halelu” at www.uptv.org/ch8.php.
- Host a performance or publicize an upcoming performance.
- Purchase a CD from David Eaton, 481 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10001, USA. Email: NYCSYM@aol.com. (Price: US\$15.00, which includes shipping within the US; inquire about rates for international shipping.)

NEW PEACE COUNCILS LAUNCHED

Ambassadors for Peace are encouraged to form peace councils. The Universal Peace Federation envisions peace councils as keys to promoting economic, political, intercultural and interreligious cooperation. Councils have recently been established in the following nations:

Albania: Hope for the Future

The Chairman of the National Peace Council of Albania and former prefect of Shkodra, Mr. Ali Lacej, described the Ambassadors for Peace initiative as the “hope of the future” in the strife-torn Balkan region.

The National Peace Council of Albania was inaugurated with 120 members on June 15, 2007 in the capital, Tirana. Regional Peace Councils had previously been established in the counties of Korça, Vlora and Shkodra.

Another member of the National Peace Council is the mayor of Tirana 1, Mrs. Lindita Nikolla, who reported that UPF principles helped her during the year and a half that she has been an Ambassador for Peace. Other council members include municipal officials, members of parliament, scholars, religious leaders, and military officers.

Working to rebuild their country after centuries of conflict, Albanian Ambassadors for Peace take a message of hope to people in other regions of conflict. Amb. Pellumb Xhufi, member of Parliament of Albania and former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, was touched by the people he met in Israel and the Palestinian Territories during a UPF-sponsored

Middle East Peace Initiative trip.

“We won the war; now we have to win the peace,” he said, and he promised to continue promoting peace efforts in the Middle East.

Benin: Need for Stability

Benin’s National Peace Council was launched in the capital city of Cotonou on July 7, 2007, with more than 120 participants. Vice-Minister Juste Guedou, representing the Minister in Charge of Relationships with Institutions, Porte-parole of Benin’s government, Hon. Juste Guedou remarked that the primary function of the culture of peace is to promote social, economic, political, cultural and religious stability in all nations, and the National Peace Council will be a great help in accomplishing this purpose. The installation ceremony was broadcast nationally and internationally by Benin National Television, four radio stations and many newspapers.

At a Continental Seminar for African Leaders in Benin sponsored by UPF in 2006, a representative of H.E. President Boni Yayi called on the continent’s leaders to eradicate the root causes of human suffering and give priority to the principles of dialogue and reconciliation. “Africa’s countries need peace,” he said. “Therefore, they need to receive through their heads-of-state education about a culture of love, peace and non-violence.”

This culture of peace is being promoted on a grass-roots level through peace councils in each of Benin’s twelve departments.

Albania Peace Council



Germany: Focus on Key National Issues

Approximately 50 Ambassadors for Peace met in Berlin, Germany, April 28-29, 2007 to lay the groundwork for a National Peace Council. President of UPF-Germany Karl Meier challenged participants to adopt the motto of “living for the sake of

others” as a guideline for not only interpersonal but also international relations.

Participants selected topics for the council’s permanent working committees. Six committees were formed and chairpersons selected:

- Human Rights and UN Renewal (Karl Meier)
- Youth and Inner Peace (Elfriede Bradley and Ashin Sopaka)
- Jewish-Islamic Dialogue (Elke Preusser-Franke and Joerg Wolf)
- The Family Ideal in a Diverse Society (Gerhard Toelke)
- Sustainable Agriculture and Renewable Energies (Ahmadudin Wais)
- Interreligious Dialogue (Mohammed Herzog and Dong-Shin Shin)

The working groups met to set goals, and lively discussion continued into the night.



German Peace Council

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE

- We are one human family created by God. The way to rise above the pursuit of self-interest is to recognize our common humanity, given to us by our Creator. Just as a parent can intercede in the disputes of children, the parental heart originating from the Creator can help us resolve the differences that exist between nations, cultures and religions.
- The highest qualities of the human being are spiritual and moral in nature. Human beings long for truth, beauty and goodness. Life’s deepest meaning and purpose can be found through their pursuit. Each person has an eternal spirit that transcends physical life. Spiritual principles are to be practiced in this life so that we are prepared for the eternal world.
- The family is the “school of love and peace.” In the family, the most basic personal and public virtues are learned. Understanding the family as the school of love helps us to recognize that family is the most essential institution. The foundation for a healthy family is a faithful, committed marriage.
- Living for the sake of others is the way to reconcile the divided human family. By practicing living for the sake of others, we become other-centered rather than self-centered. The essence of good character is true love expressed through unselfish actions.
- Peace comes through cooperation beyond the boundaries of ethnicity, religion and nationality. Lasting peace cannot be achieved through political compromise alone, but requires

addressing the root causes of conflict. Transcending racial, religious and ethnic barriers is an imperative of our time. Faith can give people the power to forgive, and the love to overcome even generations of hatred, resentment and violence.

Membership in UPF

Senior membership is open to official national chapters of the Universal Peace Federation. These must be truly national in scope and range of activities. A country may have only one national organization as a member.

Affiliate membership is available to non-profit organizations which are international in scope and range of their activities and are committed to working towards the purposes and goals of UPF.

General membership is open to individuals who are appointed as Ambassadors for Peace by the International Secretariat, Senior or Affiliate Members.

Associate membership is open to non-profit organizations and individuals committed to working toward purposes and goals of the Universal Peace Federation and participate occasionally in its activities.

With a view toward increasing collaboration between government and civil society, representatives of governments are invited from time to time to advise UPF in relation to its programs and activities.

For more information contact info@upf.org.

Ambassadors for Peace in the News

Japanese Peace Ambassadors Visit Liberian President

The Analyst, *Monrovia, Liberia*
August 17, 2007

A delegation of Japanese Peace Ambassadors yesterday paid a courtesy call on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Monrovia.

The six-man delegation headed by Mrs. Ayumi Hasegawa is in the country to identify with President Johnson-Sirleaf and Liberians in general on the reconstruction of the country.

The meeting that took place at the Foreign Ministry also included Mr. Mitsuhiro Hasegawa, Mrs. Hisayo Ogata, Mrs. Kimiko Haga, Ms. Yuri Ogata, and Little Shoma Hasegawa.

The delegation, which earlier met with Vice President Joseph Boakai on Wednesday, is part of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF).

The Japanese International Peace Volunteers were accompanied by the President of the Family Federation for World Peace, Rev. Augustine S. Arkoi.

Amb. Hasegawa literally consoled the president in tears in recognition of the post-war reconstruction burden inherited by her administration. She assured the president of their commitment to support the rebuilding of Liberia at all cost.

It can be recalled that Amb. Ayumi and a delegation of ten Japanese women Peace Volunteers visited Liberia in 1993 during the administration of Cllr. David Kpomarkpo.

The volunteers have been supporting various community projects ranging from skills training

programs for street girls to counseling and educational development.

Kimiko Haga, the first Japanese volunteer to Liberia in 1979, said her return to here exactly after 20 years, accompanying her children and grandchildren should signal to the world that "Liberia is now at peace and needs support for reconstruction from all peoples of good will."

Little Shoma Hasegawa and Ms. Yuri Ogata presented a flower to President Sileaf after which Ogata played piano while Hasegawa sang a song.

The President was moved not only because of the song "Amazing Grace" played by the two children but because Little Hasegawa is the same boy who had presented a flower to President Sirleaf during her last visit to Japan early this year.

In response, Pres. Johnson-Sirleaf thanked the peace volunteers and noted that Liberians recognize and appreciate their concerns and love for Liberia as demonstrated by their sacrificial services.

She encouraged little Hasegawa to visit Liberia again. Mr. Mitsuhiro Hasegawa, Mrs. Hisayo Ogata, Ms. Yuri Ogata and little Shoma Hasegawa depart the country today for Japan.

Meanwhile, Rev. Arkoi has disclosed that 21 peace ambassadors from the US, Japan and South Korea will alternatively visit and work in Liberia between now and September 2007.

Rev. Arkoi said their duties will involve peace building and conflict resolution among cluster families and community-based organizations.

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*"Liberia is now
at peace and
needs support for
reconstruction from all
peoples of good will."*

KIMIKO HAGA

UPF TODAY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PEACE

Universal Peace Federation
155 White Plains Road, Suite 222
Tarrytown, NY 10591, USA

*"True love gives,
forgets that it has given,
and continues to give
without ceasing."*

— REV. DR. SUN MYUNG MOON
FOUNDER, UPF