

## A New Vision of Peace for the Americas



by Michael Balcomb, UPF Communications Director

Saturday, May 03, 2008

The Americas Summit in Washington, DC, April 28 to May 2, 2008, brought together 160 delegates from 32 nations in North and South America from Canada to Argentina and Chile to consider the challenges and opportunities for better relationships throughout the hemisphere. The conference participants included six former heads of state and government, four current speakers of the house, 27 congressmen and senators from different legislatures, members of the diplomatic corps, clergy from key faith traditions, and community, youth and women leaders.



Ambassador Charles Shapiro, US State Department, with H.E. Felipe González and H.E. Jorge Quiroga



Delegates from the Caribbean often spoke out about the need for greater recognition and participation

With the hopeful news of the election of new governments in many nations on the one hand, and concern about the rise of potentially destabilizing populist movements on the other, the participants were set the difficult task of examining new paradigms for leadership and development.



Networking between sessions brings people together across political, religious, economic and cultural divides



H.E. Julio María Sanguinetti, twice President of Uruguay, chairing a session on the future of democratic reform

Certainly political changes are an important part of the solution. Ambassador Charles Shapiro of the US State Department called for “evolution” rather than “revolution” and emphasized the need for strong and free trade ties as a foundation for prosperity and more friendly ties. “There has been an

important transformation going on in Latin America and the Caribbean,” he said, “and the developed world needs to pay more attention.”

H.E. Felipe González, Prime Minister of Spain for 15 years, pointed out that successful democracy means more than successful free elections and called for deeper examination and a commitment to the entire process of good governance. “Democracy does not guarantee good government,” he said, “Politics is the art of governing shared space and getting all to feel ownership of the results.”



Delegation from the Southern Cone



Amb. Cris Arcos discusses prospects for US policy for Latin America under a new administration.

The event was part of UPF's series of International Leadership Conferences, designed to examine in some depth the importance of shared spiritual and cultural values as the most important ingredient for change. The ILC introduced the key concepts of the UPF Peace Education curriculum, which emphasizes strong families, interfaith unity, and an unwavering commitment to personal integrity and self discipline as the foundations for lasting change.

UPF Co Chair Hyun Jin Moon, who had returned a few days earlier from a six-nation tour in Latin America, said that creating a hemispheric alliance based on universal spiritual values is the key to peace. “America became a great nation because of the Founding Fathers’ commitment to values that come not from man, but from God,” he said, “however the vision of one nation under God is not enough in our ever-shrinking global village. I want to tell you that the dream and vision of one human family under God is alive and well.”



UPF Co Chair Hyun Jin Moon reports about recent UPF developments in South and Central America



The entire conference was held in English and Spanish, thanks to the team of translators.

One of the highlights of the three-day conference was a field trip by chartered flight to the George Bush Presidential Library at Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas. Newly renovated, the

library offers an intimate glimpse into the long life of public service of the former president, and was of great interest to many of the delegates from South and Central America who remember the Bush presidency's welcome focus on the region.



The field trip to College Station, Texas



In the Bush Presidential Library and Museum

H.E. Jorge Fernando Quiroga, President of Bolivia from 2001 to 2002, and himself a 1981 Texas A & M graduate, spoke of the growing impact of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and effect of Latin Americans living in Europe and the United States. "We need economic development with symmetry, where all will benefit, and an economic agenda that will dissuade corruption," he said. "We should also have religious, political and cultural integration."



George Bush, 41st President of the United States welcomes the group and encourages their work



Bishop Luis del Castillo Estrada from the Catholic Diocese of Melo, Uruguay, takes notes

In his keynote address, the 41st President agreed. "This is not the time for America to be turning inward," he said. "The United States needs to stand up and work for peace in the world, especially in the neighborhood of nations near to home. It is a matter of conscience, not just a concept. The challenges are more complex and more compelling than they were in the past, but they are so important we cannot afford to get them wrong. We need better solutions for issues like poverty and immigration and make sure that the successes of the past in the fight against drugs are not lost."

"However, too many citizens these days are becoming disengaged at a time when we need more involvement, more debate, and more foreign exchanges," he said. "That's why the work of the Universal Peace Federation and The Washington Times is so important, and I thank Rev. Moon and salute all of you for coming here to address these urgent issues."



Rev. Moon speaks of the coming of a new age of peace and religious unity, centering on the Pacific Rim



Rev. and Mrs. Moon visit some of the exhibits at the impressively restored Bush Presidential Library

“We are entering into a new and hopeful time,” said Rev. Moon in his remarks, “And all of us are being called – whether we know it or not – to bring our best efforts to bear on creating a new culture of peace, centered on the ideal of one family under God.” He went on to describe a vision of a future world where some of the weaknesses of democracy, and in particular the wasted efforts of extreme partisanship, can be relieved by the involvement of elder statesmen as senior advisors.

“We believe that groups of political, religious and community leaders such as these working together in new partnerships hold the key to lasting peace,” said Dr. Thomas Walsh, the UPF Secretary General. Leaders should act not like the quarreling brothers that they sometimes were while in active office, but with wisdom and impartiality act more like the parents of their nations.

“Of course, some may indeed doubt that peace is possible,” said Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in her closing address, “but where there is a will, there is always a way—especially if it is the will of God!”



A visit to the Washington Times News Room

[Regional Contact](#) | [Admin](#) | [webmaster@upf.org](mailto:webmaster@upf.org) | [Conference Staff](#)

Copyright ©2006-2008 UPF/IIFWP. All rights reserved

IIFWP is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations