

Report on True Parents' Visit to Nigeria July 15-18

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Abuja, July 19, 2011 – Critics claim pianist Arturo Rubinstein made Chopin sound easy because one cannot hear the rigorous disciplined practice behind his seemingly effortless performances.

Similarly, Rev. Sun Myung Moon's three-day visit to Abuja, Nigeria July 15-18 in which he met with the nation's newly re-elected president, Jonathan Goodluck, addressed an overflow crowd of more than 3,400 people and simultaneously sponsored a three-day UPF International Leadership Conference, seemed comparably smooth and effortless.

On Sunday, July 17, Rev. Moon addressed an overflow audience of statesmen, diplomats, religious and civil leaders, international VIPs from some 70 nations and Nigerian citizens at the International Conference Center in Abuja, Nigeria. For more than five hours Father Moon interacted with the responsive crowd asking questions, gesturing, smiling and laughing with them, despite speaking through a translator. He frequently came out from behind the podium to share intimate moments with his listeners.

During the speech, Rev. Moon told his listeners he felt "very welcome" in Nigeria and added, "African people have the warmest hearts of anyone in the world."

"This country has a great potential, not just for itself but for the whole of Africa and the world," he said, but even though about 20% of Africans are Nigerian, this substantial human potential is less important than establishing "the tradition of peace that God wants to see in Africa" established in the family.

Encouraging them to make good use of this potential, he asked, "What use is even a Nobel prize, if it is not used for the sake of peace?"

Speaking of the direction that Nigeria and Africa should take. "To attend God, and to enjoy life with God, you have to understand the path I have taken, and walk the same way with me," he said. "If all the countries of Africa can unite, then this continent will rise."

Rev. Moon's son and daughter, Hyung Jin and In Jin moon, both introduced their father, and former Senate Deputy Vice-President the Hon. Ibrahim Nasiru Mantu offered welcoming remarks.

Rev. Moon and his family travelled to the speech in a presidential motorcade of three expert motorcycle riders with sirens blaring and lights flashing and two presidential cars offered by the Nigerian State House.

On the day of their arrival in the country, Friday, July 15, the party had ridden in the same presidential motorcade when Rev. Moon went to meet President Goodluck. At the half-hour meeting in the president's office, the president listened attentively as Rev. Moon told him that Nigeria is an "important providential nation" and would receive God's blessing if it establishes "a tradition that God can relate to" in his government and in Nigerian society. He told the president that the nation would need to establish strong marriages and families in order to resist strong secular and humanistic influences and to create a pure lineage in line with that of God. He also spoke of the importance of "resemblance," that Nigerians needed to develop a character that "resembles that of God," so that religion can become a unifying, rather than a divisive, force in the Nation and so that Nigeria can become a model nation for Africa and the world.

Simultaneous with these events, there was a three-day UPF International Leadership Conference in which over 700 participants from Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa explored such topics as Good Governance, Development Projects in Africa, and Interfaith Issues.

During all of Rev. Moon's 2011 World Tour, the Nigerian president was the only head of state with whom Rev. Moon met. Also, the audience of over 3,400 people was the largest audience he had addressed during the tour, possibly outside of Korea. What may not have been apparent to the casual observer is that every aspect of Rev. Moon's three day visit in Nigerian had been carefully and meticulously choreographed beforehand.

For weeks before the visit Nigerian UPF members, led by Mrs. Kathy Rigney, had fund-raised and planned every detail of the stay from Rev. Moon's lodging, food and support staff to security and the preparation of the speech venue, from hospitality and public relations to the mobilization of thousands of local VIPs and the general public. Myriad hours of meetings, list making and contingency planning helped to assure that the team was prepared for all eventualities and was ready to quickly address any glitch.

Mrs. Rigney told the team, most of whom slept little or not at all during the visit and the week leading up to it, that the key to success in this program was for each team member to be absolutely serious, united, vigilant and focused, even prepared to offer one's life. "You can collapse after the event," she told her weary team at one point.

At Hoon Dok Hae Friday on his arrival on Friday, Rev. Moon also said that Mrs. Rigney "can be remembered in the missionary history of True Parents as the number one missionary in the Unification Church."

Long time former African missionary Annerose Adams said of the visit, "This three-pronged event (The meeting with the president, the speech and the ILC) was a potential logistical nightmare that Mrs. Rigney and the Nigerian and African members pulled off miraculously well. Through their struggles, they have pioneered a new standard of professionalism in putting on such a multi-faceted national event."

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