

From friendship to interfaith brotherhood: A Heavenly Tribal Messiah's Victory

November 14th, 2023

It was a Wednesday autumn afternoon, and the room was packed with seventy people. Then, **Father Antonio García Rubio**, a catholic priest; sharing stage with a muslim and another priest and long-time practitioner of zen, openly expresses his gratitude to the Unification Church for warmly receiving him. A very unusual remark, for every catholic priest risks his position just by relating to our community. How was it possible for this to happen?

The story of Father Antonio shows how we never know in which mysterious ways Providence works. Father Antonio became almost casually friend of **Sebastián Badosa and Chigako Moriyama**, blessed couple, Heavenly Tribal Messiahs, who reside in a small village in the North of Madrid. Fr. Antonio was already a very respected priest in the village, in the way that only good and profound priests are respected among people. Sebastián also knew him through his books, but it was through the major of the town –a common friend–, that he finally met him. Sebastian and Chigako attended his Monday masses, and after they had good talks over coffees. They became natural friends. They never hid him from the fact that they were Unificationists. He also knew about our constant interfaith work through UPF in Espacio Ronda, Madrid; about our values and vision on family. They naturally respected each other. But not just that: they developed a deep affection and connection of the heart over time. Something was evolving which did not just have to do with ideas. And the proof of that was that Father Antonio invited Sebastián to present his book, “The White Heron”, in the Town Hall of Guadalix de la Sierra.

Later, Sebastián proposed him to co-organize an inter-religious presentation of his book, in our church HQ in Madrid; which he accepted. Thanks to the help of **Armando Lozano**, UPF director of Spain, and its wide interfaith network, finally on November 14th, 2023, Madrid, we hosted the event. Along with Father Antonio were



José Cruz Igartua, a catholic priest and long-time zen practitioner, who has worked with our community for over many years and had also risked his position by holding Christian meditations monthly in our HQ; and **Yusuf Fernández**, responsible for activities at the Alalbeyt Foundation, a center dedicated to promoting Islam and interfaith dialogue.

The event was challenging in its own way, particularly for the muslim representative: the language of the book was deeply Christian in expression and language form, and not easy to understand for someone not acquainted with it. And yet, we witnessed with our own eyes how, when spiritual people are open in their heart,



it is possible to find God in a path different from ours. The essence of the book was the honest testimony of a spiritual journey.

And so all of us were enraptured by this sincerity. We thank God and our True Parents for allowing us to have learnt the heart of a parent that can embrace our differences in a single room, and who guides us in our way, leading us to good people, and blessing us with their friendship and brotherhood.