

Ki Hoon Kim holds seminar for Caribbean FFUWP and UPF leaders

November 3, 2013



Caribbean Leaders pose with Dr. Ki Hoon Kim and Dr. Michael Balcomb after the meeting

FFWPU (Family Federation for World Peace and Unification) and UPF (Universal Peace Federation) leaders from the major Caribbean nations gathered in Miami November 1-3, 2013 to attend a three day program that included a UPF International Leadership Seminar, a Vision 2020 strategy meeting, and the celebration of True Children's Day with Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, UPF Regional Chair.

The delegates prepared for the strategy meeting by submitting short briefing statements one week in advance. Each nation was asked first to briefly review the history of the FFWPU mission and the development of UPF, and then to make an assessment about one major opportunity, and one major obstacle. The emphasis throughout was on programs that could transfer from one nation to another.



A report from Rev. Dawn Bachhus-Horan of St. Kitts and Nevis, who emphasized the importance of proclaiming True Parents

True Parents have made a number of visits to the Caribbean over the years, especially during the UPF World Tours of 2005 to 2007, and were able to meet with several national Presidents over those years. Some of the longest-standing Ambassadors for Peace have come from the Caribbean, but overall progress in recent years, as elsewhere, has been difficult. The Vision 2020 meeting was aimed at making a new beginning and a new commitment.

Though geographically close, such a meeting between the national representatives is very rare. Rev. Dennis Salmon, representing Jamaica, thought it might have been the first one in over a decade. The Caribbean only became part of the North American region earlier this year as part of the Vision 2020 alignment, previously having been grouped with South America.

“We are very happy to welcome our Caribbean brothers and sisters to the United States,” said FFWPU

USA President Dr. Michael Balcomb. “We have many common ties of language and culture, and several large expatriate communities throughout the United States. I think we can do a lot to help each other.”

The first to report was Leonidas Belliard, the Cheon Il Guk representative of the Dominican Republic, home of the largest FFWPU community in the Caribbean and one of the 2020 strategic nations. Recent successful UPF programs included a conference in the National Congress, celebrations of major UN Holidays like the International Day of Families and Day of Peace. Divine Principle workshops are being taught every week, and the Dominican Republic has hosted Religious Youth Service programs as well.



At a fellowship dinner at a Cuban restaurant, American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) Ministers and Local Members offer a donation to Rev. Paul Theodule of Haiti

Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Dominican Republic, was represented by Rev. Paul Theodule, who shared about recovery and revival efforts since the devastating 2010 earthquake caused so much death and damage. The church was rebuilt with the help of foreign donations, and serves as an important community resource. Also present was Ms. Evelyn Drake, a Haitian national who has been developing WFWP (Women’s Federation for World Peace) outreach seminars in Haiti for several years.

The Cuban Mission was introduced by Rev. Sangbo Kim. With hundreds of thousands of Cubans now living in exile in Miami, the city is a natural hub for the Cuban church, and services are held in Spanish every Sunday, along with many other programs. There is also a small unofficial church in Havana, but restrictions mean that they have to meet in private homes and be extremely cautious. However, travel restrictions on Cubans are easing, and there is hope of greater collaboration with the rest of the district.

The Bahamas was represented by Mrs. Kimiko Suzuki, one of the many hundreds of Japanese missionaries who over the years have dedicated so much to the Caribbean and the world mission. The group heard of the tremendous sacrifice made by these loyal women, who leave their families for long periods of time in order to spread the Divine Principle word in foreign nations. The Bahamas Mission, like many others, has suffered from inconsistent and changing leadership, as well as having to swim upstream in a secular culture where family breakdown is rife. All present felt strongly that the time has come to develop capable local leadership to lessen the burden on our wonderful volunteers from Japan.

Rev. Dawn Bacchus-Horan, who with her sister Kaye represents the small islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, shared about her spiritual encounters with True Parents, and her decision to make the teaching of the Principle and the declaration of True Parents her distinctive focus, with the use of radio, TV and other media. Still, the mission remains small after many years.

St. Lucia, represented by Remy Taupier, is another nation where church growth has been almost non-existent, despite success over the years with Character Education training in the schools, youth service programs, and goodwill from government officials. A new focus on evangelism has seen the reopening of the St. Lucia Family church.

Another nation with many Ambassadors for Peace but no church congregation is Grenada, represented at this meeting by Rev. Zagery Oliver, senior pastor of the Washington, D.C. Family Church. Rev. Oliver, who visited Grenada with Dr. Ki Hoon Kim earlier this year, said that the small nation represented a great outreach opportunity, with some foundation including a Peace Embassy.

Jamaica, represented by Rev. Dennis Salmon, is another nation with a long established mission, but a very small church – less than 20 families – with a much larger number of Ambassadors for Peace. Violence, especially among young people, is a significant problem in this country, one of the larger

nations in Caribbean. “We’d really like to have Christian Ministers and other religious leaders from the United States visit Jamaica to help us improve our interfaith outreach,” Rev. Salmon said.

The Womens’ Federation for World Peace (WFWP) is one of the most active programs in Barbados, which was represented by Rev. Peter Phillip. “Encouraging young people to keep their purity and to honor their culture is one of the main challenges facing all churches in the country,” he said. “It would be very helpful if we could build momentum by partnering with other nations to expand our youth activities.”



Tomiko Duggan speaks about the successful outreach to National Embassies, including the Caribbean, in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Tomiko Duggan, Acting Secretary General of UPF North America, reported about the outreach that she is doing with all the national embassies in Washington, D.C. This has included regular monthly seminars, and last summer a number of Ambassador’s children joined a Religious Youth Service program in the United States’ capital.

Mr. Ricardo de Sena, director of FFWPU Spanish Ministries in the United States, who also works with UPF at the United Nations, reported about the diplomatic opportunities available there. “I meet with many of your Ambassadors,” he said, “and one of the first things they want to hear about is what is UPF doing in my nation? Often, they check the UPF website beforehand to see what is going on. If they are inspired, you can be sure they will report back to their country’s leadership. So we can help each other enormously by sharing information and progress reports about our activity.”

Dr. Ki Hoon Kim warmly welcomed all the leaders and emphasized the importance of face to face, skin-touch communication. “We can learn some things by reading reports,” he observed, “but the real contact comes when we see each other’s faces, hear each other’s voices, pray together, share a meal together, and come up with a common goal.”

The meeting concluded with a fellowship dinner at a nearby Cuban restaurant. The Caribbean group was joined by a number of Miami Family Church members involved in outreach, including 2nd Generation Miami Family Church pastors Rev. Mari and Richard Curry, several Christian ministers and a Muslim Imam from the American Clergy Leadership Conference, and others involved in UPF programs. An impromptu collection was taken up and several hundred dollars donated to Haiti, the poorest nation in the Caribbean. The following day, many re-gathered for one final event, a joyful celebration of True Children’s Day.