

UPF Finland's World Interfaith Harmony Week event focuses on mutual prosperity

Keijo Mikkanen
February 3, 2024



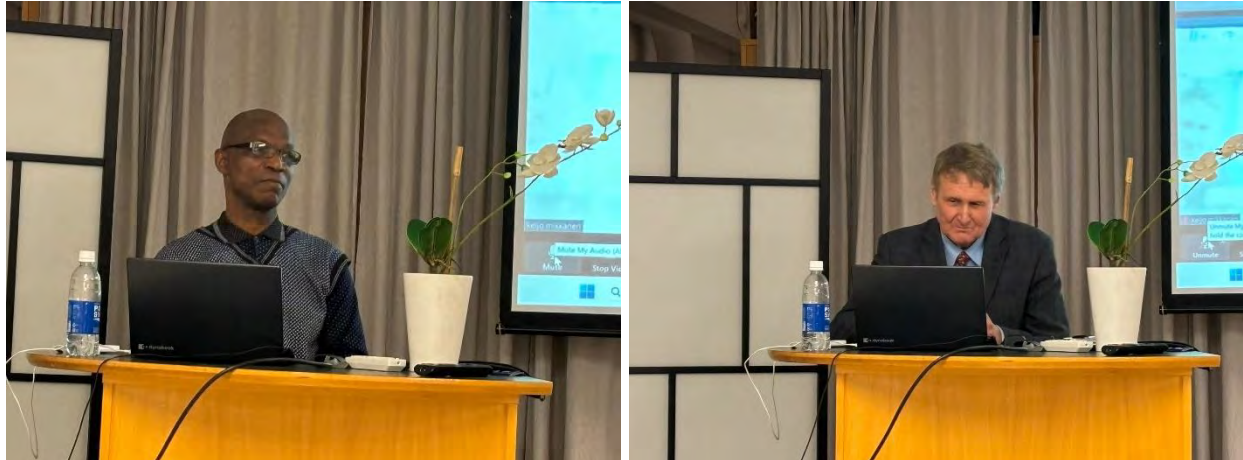
To coincide with the United Nations' World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW), Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Finland organised a WIHW event in Helsinki on 3rd February, 2024. The Theme was "From Mutual Pain to Mutual Prosperity". Mr. Keijo Mikkanen, Secretary General of UPF Finland as well as moderator of the event started by welcoming all participants and guests in attendance. In his opening words he remarked that one could look at the Theme from many different angles. "Our world is divided into two camps", he said, "One that believes in God and an atheistic one which believes that God does not exist. Without reconciling these two opposing beliefs there is no hope of ever building a society of peaceful coexistence and mutual prosperity. One that shares the same universal values. Everyone aspires to joy and happiness but these can never really be attained without peace". Uplifting and inspiring, the event brought together 14 who were present in person and another 10 who attended virtually on Zoom. Those participating included three African pastors representing various Christian views and one eye specialist representing a physiological view.



Pentecostal Baptist, Pastor Samuel of RCCG Hosanna Chapel, gave a lively opening about the nature of suffering and prosperity and how to move from pain to prosperity. His talk included 10 points wherein he explained the importance of financial systems, environmental issues and various social authorities. He drew everyone's attention to the ongoing wars and armed conflicts in our world which are still causing

tremendous strife and deep pain to every family living in these areas.

Next to speak was Mr Avi Balwani, originally from India. He is an eye specialist and studying at Helsinki University. Mr Balwani brought a physiological aspect to the discussion. He started by first holding a questions and answer session with the audience. Then he went on to explain how, when one studies something critically, then reality ensues. He pointed out that many observations in the end revealed to be imaginations rather than an existing reality. Hence, the simple conclusion is that Substantially, nothing exists.



The next contribution came from Pastor Linus Anyamele of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in Helsinki. He first thanked and acknowledged those who spoke before him. The theme of his talk was

"Through one man, sin entered the world and through one man, Jesus Christ, salvation, liberation and restoration is given." He explained how the United Nations (UN), the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA) are determined to end hunger and poverty. Together with religious bodies they are working to show how to tackle these challenges, as well as any other related ones. We are called to find a solution with God, as He created us in His image. This means that men and women are in a partnership with God and that a solution cannot be found by human endeavour alone. With love, compassion and cooperation, righteous solutions will be found in order to build an ideal world. We should be able to love God and our neighbours by sharing prosperity. To conclude his talk Pastor Anyamele read part of Dr Sun Myung Moon's Autobiography: "Humanity deserves mutual prosperity.... Whenever we say "I" we should be automatically including "others" too."

The last speaker was Pastor Anthony Blessing Kapindula from Bethel Worship Centre in Malawi, Africa. He was not able to make it in person due to the long distance so he joined the event virtually via Zoom. He had, however, visited Finland in the summer of 2023 and stayed for over thirty days. Pastor Kapindula recalled the deep experiences he had in his native country when he started sharing his convicted beliefs in UPF's vision of the Principles of Peace. How well received the explanation of these Principles was, especially among the youth in universities and high schools. He was very happy to announce that he has obtained the official governmental permission to visit and meet the students. He was asked to conclude the event with his prayer.

At the end there was a palpable excitement amongst the audience, those present as well as the ones on Zoom. People showered the speakers with constructive and educational questions and passed many pleasant comments. The atmosphere (which never lies) was embracing and familiar and continued thus even after, with joyful and appreciative remarks.

