

WFWP Arkansas celebrates the United Nations International Peace Day 2018

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Bruce Biggins, representative from WFWP Arkansas, invited me to come and speak to local members and guests for International Peace Day on Friday, September 21st. The weather was bad that week, with threatening storms and flooding in the area. On top of which, Vice President Pence decided to come to downtown Little Rock and hold a rally for a local Republican congressman, so several roads were closed during his visit. Thus, only 12 people were able to show up on Friday night for my talk at the First United Methodist Church chapel in downtown Little Rock. However, that did not dampen our spirits. As I pointed out to Mr. Biggins, those who did come were top quality people, active in their community and well respected. I was able to get to know each of them because it wasn't a big group, and made personal connections in a way that would have otherwise been impossible. I really felt that it was a case of "quality over quantity."

The title of my presentation was "The Role of Women in Creating a More Peaceful World." As I spoke, the audience was right there with me throughout. I could see their faces and reactions. After that, my presentation focused on WFWP's efforts to uplift marriage and family. There were four couples in attendance who were greatly interested in the marriage rededication ceremony. I did not have the necessary supplies to perform it there but invited everyone to follow up with Bruce about our campaign to Rededicate One Million American Marriages by 2020. I also told them about Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's November 12th "Peace Starts with Me" Rally on Long Island.

After my presentation, we all went to the nearby "Interfaith Library" room, in the lovely, old church building. The building has been very well maintained, like most Methodist churches, with gorgeous stained glass windows. Mr. Biggins has been working with the Interfaith group which maintains that library room containing books from all the major world religions. We were all able to relax and chat. Most of the guests knew one another, but not all of them. I met one lady who is a member of Pax Christi of Little Rock, she went to high school in a Dallas suburb, the same school as some of my cousins. She and I had quite a bit in common.



On Saturday, a group Mr. Biggins has been active with, held a Youth Summit for Peace at the Little Rock Central High School gymnasium. Various groups were represented such as Pax Christi, and Mr. Biggins co-chaired one of the activities. I met some truly amazing people at this event!! I cannot overstate how moved I was to encounter these people. One was the daughter of a civil rights worker killed in Alabama. This lady is now a dedicated follower of Martin Luther King Jr. -- a "Certified Kingian Nonviolence Trainer." Many of the people I met in Little Rock felt like kindred spirits and I'm sure WFWP will be working with them in the future. Bruce's contact from the organization is a young woman named Natalie Larrison. She is the co-director of a program for Syrian women and children called The Wisdom House

Project. www.wisdomhouseproject.com



Mr. Biggins co-ordinated a project for Sept. 22 centered around this Syrian outreach program. The project started in Little Rock with one young man, Mouas Moustafa, who was a refugee along with his family. He has become a US citizen and he spoke eloquently to the assembled youth about how much he loves and reveres the United States and our constitution, how totally different it is in Syria where he learned never to even joke about the dictator. Moustafa is now working on Capitol Hill. I met him afterward and we discussed WFWP and our work.

I was so inspired to see the beautiful seeds planted by our WFWP Arkansas chapter, especially by Mr. Biggins. All his heart-driven work to reach out to the people of Arkansas is paying off. He has many friends there who love and respect him for his years of work. WFWP will certainly continue to cultivate the many seeds that have been planted until they grow more and more into a beautiful tree.

