

## UPF and WFWP hold International Day of Peace 2017 in Melbourne, Australia

Anne Bellavance  
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**Melbourne, Australia**—Peacebuilding within the diverse, multicultural city of Melbourne was the focus of the 2017 celebration of International Day of Peace.

The Victoria state chapters of UPF and Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, held a one-day conference on September 16, 2017, at the Ibis Hotel in Glen Waverley (City of Monash). The event attracted 68 participants, many of whom were Ambassadors for Peace and members of WFWP. The organizing committee comprised members of the Victorian Peace Council: UPF, WFWP, I Declare Peace, and the World Peace Prayer Society.

After registration, participants joined in a flag ceremony. They were handed hand-painted world flags to place in holders on their way to the conference room. During the program’s opening, Jenny Funston from the World Peace Prayer Society explained the significance of the world flags displayed around the venue and guided everyone through the prayer “May Peace Prevail on Earth.”

On the public officials’ panel, Councilor Rebecca Paterson, the mayor of the City of Monash, joined with UPF-Australia Vice President John Bellavance to relate their experiences of peacebuilding within local communities.

### **Bridge of Peace**

Anne Bellavance, WFWP International vice president for Oceania, and Charlotte Mukamuberwa, the vice-president of WFWP in Victoria state, conducted the signature Bridge of Peace Ceremony together. The Bridge of Peace seeks to build real and lasting friendships between people from different cultural, religious and national backgrounds. The motto of the ceremony, coined by the co-founder of WFWP International, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, is: "If the women of the world can be sisters, the men of the world won't go to war." The purpose of the Bridge of Peace is to enable healing and reconciliation between people who may have been enemy nations in the past.

The leaders of the ceremony were Jenny Funston, the Australia/Oceania coordinator for *Byakko Shinko Kai* (White Light Association) and the official peace representative of the World Peace Prayer Society, and Hana Assafiri, who owns the Moroccan Soup Bar and Moroccan Delicacy in Brunswick, a suburb of Melbourne. Both women gave powerful talks about the role of women in peacebuilding.

During break periods, participants could view the exhibition titled “Peace-Loving Global Citizen.” Each two-meter-high banner revealed a different aspect of the life and works of UPF co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

After lunch, participants enjoyed a performance of Chinese music played by the New Eastern Arts College orchestra. Wearing period costumes and using traditional instruments, teachers and students showcased China's beautiful traditional music.

The keynote address, "Measuring Peace and Its Economic Benefits," was presented by Jose Luengo-Cabrera, a research fellow from the Institute for Economics and Peace, a global think tank located in Sydney. He spoke about the research undertaken to quantify peace, its drivers and its economic benefits. The 2017 IEP report indicates that in 2016 Syria was ranked the least peaceful nation and Iceland the most peaceful. Ethiopia and Burundi registered the largest deteriorations in peace. The Central African Republic and Sri Lanka showed the greatest improvement. Since 2008, the world has become less peaceful. One reason for this is the increase of non-state actors in conflict. The global economic impact of violence in 2016 is \$14 trillion.



Three workshops were held:

Rick McNerheney, the former national director of UPF and Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), another affiliated organization, gave a very brief overview of the remarkable founder of UPF and WFWP, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. After showing the video *A Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, Mr. McNerheney touched on Reverend Moon's life, his teachings and vision for the world. He mentioned that when Reverend Moon died just five years ago he and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, were leading the fastest-growing religious movement in the world during the lifetime of the founder. His international and interfaith peace activities are also regarded as the biggest in history. Mr. McNerheney also emphasized Reverend Moon's belief in the divine significance of marriage, which underpins the most famous events of the Unification movement, the World Peace Blessing and wedding ceremonies, under the banner of "One World under God," which have drawn hundreds of thousands of participants all over the world.

Anne Bellavance of WFWP began the "Conversation about Parity" workshop by defining equity, equality and parity, before giving her insights from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) held in New York this year. At the current rate it will take 170 years for women to gain parity with men in work. Mrs. Bellavance explained that WFWP has advocated the partnership between men and women as the model for peacebuilding since its founding 25 years ago. It is only in the last few years that governments and organizations are seeing the value of engaging with women in security and peace negotiations. For more information, visit the Why Women? report at [www.inclusivesecurity.org](http://www.inclusivesecurity.org)

Mrs. Bellavance concluded her presentation by stressing the need for a cultural change, in which women and men advocate for each other as partners, so that parity between men and women is achieved—the result being stable and ongoing peace. Afterward, the conversation moved into the audience, where participants spoke of their concerns, ideas and experiences.

John Bellavance, the vice-president of UPF-Australia, presented "Unification Thought and Mindfulness." He spoke about the key principles for peacebuilding based on Dr. Moon's teaching. These are:

- Break down barriers and build bridges that separate people, such as race, religion and culture.

- Faiths must work together to promote peace. We are one family under God.
- A partnership between men and women is needed to build peace.
- In our global village and the multicultural society which is Australia, for peace to be achieved we need shared universal values.
- Left and right in politics must work together for the sake of the common good. Neither on its own can solve our shared problems.
- Living for the sake of others.
- Peacebuilding requires unity between mind and body.
- The family is the cornerstone of peace.

### **Reflections from Participants**

“The conference encouraged me to think about peace and bridge between friends and colleagues.”

“To pass the message of peace across the world; peace starts within a family and friends.”

“Living for the Sake of Others; to build peace is about loving your enemy and engagement.”

“Bridge of Peace and Living for the Sake of Others is my goal and aim in my life.”

“This event is sending its message heart to heart. There is no push/pretense on the subject. Your peaceful approach made the day easy.”

“A wonderful opportunity to engage in global sharing—sharing of ideas, sharing of smiles, and sharing of energy. I loved every minute of the day. Thanks for the opportunity to participate in an interesting and inspiring day.”

### **“I Declare Peace” Event in Central Melbourne**

On Saturday, September 23, an event called Hands for Peace was held in the Melbourne central business district. To form the letter P for peace, a human chain joined hands to encircle Princes Bridge (just south of Flinders Street Station), the footpaths along both sides of Yarra River and the South Bank Pedestrian Bridge.

This final event was organized by Negin Mansoury and her friends. Ms. Mansoury is a peace activist and Ambassador for Peace.

Around 100 people gathered to fill 20 stations to make a P for peace around the bridges. Different nationalities and organizations filled these stations with music and cultural events. At 4 p.m., doves were released from a boat in the Yarra River and trumpets for peace sounded out.

### **Partners and Supporters**

World Peace Prayer Society, New Eastern Arts College, I Declare Peace, Simon Babb Photography, Art-Mill Productions