

New Zealand Ambassadors for Peace Plan to Expand Network

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Parnell, New Zealand - Based on a successful year in 2013 and a request coming from Ambassadors for Peace to meet on a monthly basis in order to develop and expand the Ambassador for Peace network, the first UPF meeting in 2014 was convened at the Parnell Peace Embassy on Jan. 26, 2014. The master of ceremonies was Mr. Gerald Trass.

Approximately 30 Ambassadors for Peace gathered to discuss the theme “The path to world peace through intercultural, interreligious, and interracial marriages,” to appoint seven new Ambassadors for Peace, and to hear an announcement regarding a Pilgrimage Award to be awarded to an Ambassador for Peace later in 2014.

The presentations were preceded by a ‘pot-luck’ dinner with a wide range of dishes representing the many different cultural backgrounds of the Ambassadors for Peace present at the meeting. Ambassador for Peace Rev. Rob McKay offered a prayer for the meal, and Miss Samantha Ryu provided beautiful background music and also presented a solo song.

UPF Director Mr. Julius Gicole opened the night’s proceedings by welcoming participants to a new year and encouraged everyone to work together to make the Ambassador for Peace network a successful movement in 2014.

This was followed by a panel discussion on the night’s theme. Panel speakers included Rev. Suamalie Iosefa, representing the Tuvaluan and Christian perspective, and Mr. Peter Holdem, representing the Family Federation for World Peace viewpoint. A speaker who was to share from the Muslim perspective, Mr. Gul Zaman, was unable to attend due a death in the family.

Both presentations were lively and informative and well received by the audience. A spirited discussion followed the talks as participants shared their views on how marriage could contribute to the cause of world peace.

Seven new Ambassadors for Peace were appointed. These included Dr. Maysoon Bayati, Ms. Diane Winder, Mr Allen Pukepuke, Dr. Caroline Ongleo-Calub, Mr. Kieran John Trass, Mr. Krishna Naidu and Ms. Julia Wei. Each participant received a plaque from Mr. Gicole and his wife, Jasmin, outlining the responsibilities of being an Ambassador for Peace.

The brief reflections shared by all were evidence of the suitability of each candidate to be appointed an Ambassador for Peace, and UPF welcomes them into the network.

A new initiative from UPF was announced: the Pilgrimage Award. It is an award to be given to an Ambassador for Peace which will allow them to travel to Korea and visit sites connected with the founder of UPF and peace visionary, Dr Sun Myung Moon. The award is a trip for two people, including airfare, accommodations and a grant for expenses.

The award will go to an Ambassador for Peace who brings at least ten new Ambassadors for Peace between August 2013 and August 2014 and who regularly attends Ambassadors for Peace meetings and other UPF events such as the UN International Day of Peace, etc.

The meeting was concluded by UPF-New Zealand Secretary General, Mr. Geoffrey Fyers, thanking everyone for coming and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting peace and harmony in their respective areas of responsibility and community.

Overall, the meeting was a great start to the new year. Several participants commented on how much they enjoyed the sharing and general warm atmosphere that the Ambassadors for Peace meetings generate. One participant said that it was the best meeting she attended and the first time she felt true happiness in the 15 years she had been in New Zealand.

Much more is planned for the coming year as the Ambassador for Peace network expands and matures as a movement dedicated to the ideals of building world peace beginning within ourselves.