

## UPF-Asia-Pacific: Thai Interfaith Assembly Extols the Role of Religion in Peace

Ursula McLackland  
January 27, 2024



Bangkok, Thailand - Since the inauguration of an Interreligious Council for Peace in 2011, UPF-Thailand has celebrated the U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week every year, with the support of the five major religions in Thailand. This year's event on the theme, "The Role of Religion in Creating a Peaceful Society," was held at the Peace Embassy in Bangkok on January 27, 2024, and attended by 250 participants, 110 onsite and 140 via Zoom.



Emcee Mr. Kamol Thananopavarn, secretary general of UPF-Thailand, thanked all participants, religious leaders, government officers, community and youth leaders as well as the ambassadors for peace for



joining this important program.

In his welcome and opening remarks, Gen. Terdsak Marrome, president of UPF- Thailand, explained the history of the U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week and its purpose of promoting cooperation among different religions for the sake of world peace. Then distinguished representatives from four major religions offered messages and prayers for peace.



Representing Buddhism, Ven. Dr. Phra Khru Sataratana Bundit, director of Dhammaduta College at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist University, said: "I am grateful to UPF for giving Buddhists in Thailand the opportunity to build a peaceful society through the Buddha's teaching. No matter what religion we believe in or practice, they have the same goal, to create peace and well-being for all. May peace and happiness be with everyone, our nation and the world."



The representative of Sheikhul Islam of Thailand, Imam Pirat Phanitsawaranun, read a message from Imam Arun Boonchom, with the highlight: "Long-lasting and sustainable peace need the sincere cooperation of all those who determine to sacrifice for the sake of peacebuilding. Sheikhul Islam of Thailand wishes to see peace everywhere in Thailand. We should invest our efforts, both physically and with wisdom, to develop this world on the foundation of righteousness, justice, generosity and sacrifice for the public good that transcends religion, skin color, language and ethnicity, because all human beings were created to be righteous and equal."

Representing Christianity, Bishop Rev. Dr. Suraphol Boonpratham, chairman of the Thai Evangelical Alliance Foundation, said: "I am very glad that we come together in the promotion of peace and unity, not only in Thailand but in the whole world. I appreciate our founders, Father and Mother Moon, who made us realize the importance of living together in peace, beginning with the family, which is the school of

love and peace."

Representing Sikhism, Guru Gurdeep Singh from the Sri Guru Singh Sabha voiced his concern for the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and in the Middle East. "We are all the same, not different. God is one. Even though we might have some differences, no one should be our enemy, a stranger to us. God manifests Himself in other human beings so that we can experience God through others."



Ms. Pornsuda Gruesae, a leader of Youth and Students for Peace from Chiangmai, then sang, "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." This was followed by a presentation from Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, chairman of UPF-Asia Pacific. He showcased the close cooperation UPF receives for its work from government, heads of state, members of parliament, political and religious leaders in the Asia Pacific region. He explained that UPF founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, recognizing the important role of religious leaders in fostering world peace, proposed the creation of an Interreligious Council at the United Nations, and established the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development as one of UPF's main projects.

In his keynote address, Dr. Charles S. Yang, chairman of UPF-International, emphasized that despite the differences in their teachings, the core aspiration of every religion is to create an ideal world of lasting peace. Therefore, we should respect and honor other religions, as we do our own. He pointed out that all people are brothers and sisters in one big family under God, the Supreme Being. He then explained two important peace projects initiated by UPF's founders: the Middle East Peace Initiative and the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula Initiative. He invited all participants and ambassadors for peace to give their support.

Dr. Lek Thaveetermsakul, vice president of UPF-Asia Pacific and UPF-Thailand, explained the significance and mission of ambassadors for peace, and Dr. Yang then presented the Ambassador for Peace Certificate to seven new awardees.

Mr. Masaichi Hori, president of FFWPU Asia Pacific, congratulated the new peace ambassadors and concluded the program with words of gratitude to the religious leaders and all participants.