

## FFWPU, WFWP and UPF Australia Launch Way2Happiness Seminar Series: Part 1

John Bellavance  
April 15, 2023



*Seminar participants*

On April 15, 2023, WFWP Australia partnered with the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the Family Federation for World Peace (FFWPU) to launch the first of a three-part "Way2Happiness and Peacebuilding" seminar series. This series focuses on the three pillars of finding meaning and connection: 1) managing oneself well, and mind and body unity, 2) managing our relationships well and 3) managing our relationship with our natural environment well. It is a holistic life education approach to foster good people, good education, good global citizens and promoting common benefit and sustainable development.



*Miss Shakilah Wesonga for her work with the Rotary SAFE Families and Inclusive Communities Initiative.*

This first seminar in the series focused on "Finding Meaning and Purpose - An Interfaith Perspective," which is vital to live a happy life. Twenty-six participants attended face to face, while four joined online from Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. Four Interfaith groups participated: Monash, Dandenong, Geelong and Yarra Ranges. Each fifteen-minute presentation was followed by twenty minutes of group discussion and Q and A with the speaker. The interactive program enabled participants to share insights on each topic. Rev. Daniel Meadows, chair of Family Federation for World Peace Victoria, was master of ceremony.

### **Presentations:**

Ahmed Tohow is an Ambassador for Peace, the deputy chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Somali Diaspora and is currently a Director of the East Africa Security and Policy Forum. Mr. Tohow presented on the topic, "Purpose gives us a clear system of values for measuring and defining our values and our lives - A Muslim Perspective."



*Shashi Kochhar is Founder of the charity organisation, Friends of Children Foundation.*



*Two new Ambassadors for Peace joined UPF, Shashi Kochhar (OAM) Order of Australia Medal recipient (left centre with Rev. Daniel Meadows).*

and "Mental prisons - Free your Mind" in the afternoon.

Mr. Tohow shared the core practices of Islam and how these practices sustain his life and his relationships with others. He explained that he is grateful for the blessing God has bestowed on us; these blessings remind us of our duties to society. Therefore, happiness is attained by living the life of a Muslim. Participants expressed that through the presentation they learned much more about the Muslim way of life.

Dr. John Bellavance is a Global Vice President of Sun Moon University (SMU), Oceania Coordinator for the International Association of Academicians for Peace, Vice-President of UPF Australia and Chair of UPF Victoria. Dr. Bellavance gave two presentations: "Living Consciously - Know Thyself" in the morning



*Venerable Bodhicitta a Theravada Buddhist Nun practicing in Melbourne and Sri Lanka.*

During the morning session, Dr. Bellavance explained that living consciously is a means through which we can become rid of hangups and fulfill our potential. He used the analogy of Plato's Cave to explain that humans are living in a state of denial of their true human condition. Those who leave the cave into the light of day see the world as it really is and see themselves as they truly are.

During the afternoon presentation, Dr. Bellavance shared that to discover our strengths and weaknesses we must become aware of the mental prison we have created for ourselves. For example, becoming aware of our need for the approval of others and letting go of this need is a realization that allows us to be free, comfortable and happy with ourselves and others.

Shashi Kochhar is Founder of the charity organisation, Friends of Children Foundation. During the seminar he was awarded the Ambassador for Peace award for his exemplary service to the community. Mr. Kochhar presented on the topic, "Purpose gives us a clear system of values for measuring and defining our values and our lives - A Hindu Perspective."

Mr. Kochhar explained that people who live for the sake of others are happy. He shared about his own experiences serving the community to look after the environment and supporting children's hospitals and schools. He explained that by removing the ego you can be happy and free.

Anne Bellavance is the National President of WFWP Australia and a Vice President of WFWP International, representing the region of Asia Pacific 2 (Oceania and S.E. Asia). Mrs. Bellavance presented on the topic, "How do we Become Self-Aware?"



*Ahmed Tohow is an Ambassador for Peace, the deputy chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Somali Diaspora, and is currently a Director of the East Africa Security and Policy Forum.*

Mrs. Bellavance explained that rigid beliefs about life stem from persistent, irrational demands about ourselves, others and the world due to the stories we create in our mind about past events. We observe our mind racing with dysfunctional thoughts about the past and project these into the future. The secret is that we can change these thoughts into positive and loving ones by removing the past from the reality of our present, and our future.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Bodhicitta is a Theravada Buddhist Nun practicing in Melbourne and Sri Lanka. She has a Bio-Medical Science degree from Monash University and is the Spiritual Director of the International Centre for Inner Peace and Happiness. We were blessed to conclude the seminar with guided mindful meditation led by Venerable Bodhicitta.

#### **Ambassador for Peace Awards:**

Two new Ambassadors for Peace joined UPF, Shashi Kochhar (OAM) Order of Australia

Medal recipient, mentioned above, and Ms. Shakilah Wesonga, for her work with the Rotary SAFE Families and Inclusive Communities Initiative. This initiative provides printed translated Guides and films to the African Australian communities. Additionally, Ms. Wesonga worked with the KenAus (Kenya/Australia) fellowship to bring unity between Kenyan tribes and help others in their Christian faith and wellbeing.



*Anne Bellavance is National President of WFWP Australia, and Vice-President of WFWP International representing the region of Asia Pacific 2 (Oceania and S.E. Asia).*

Those in attendance had positive experiences. One participant gave the following reflection: "Very well done. The seminar gave food for the soul and was a profound experience."

WFWP looks forward to continuing this seminar series in partnership with UPF and FFWPU.