

## International Day of Families Observed in Norway

Steinar Murud  
May 27, 2015



Oslo, Norway—The 2015 UN International Day of Families was observed by UPF-Norway with a program entitled “Are There Universal Family Values among Religions?”

The program was held in the Diakonhjemmet University College in Oslo on May 27, 2015.

Four speakers commented on the topic.

Magdalena Kwak Nyberg, an academic born in Korea who has settled in Norway, spoke on the Confucian concept of filial piety, which goes far beyond the Fourth Commandment—to honor one’s father and mother—mentioned in the Old Testament. Even though the concept is alien for many people in today’s society, there are elements here that deserve closer consideration, she said.



Nazish Khan, a Muslim author born in Norway, spoke about topics from her newly published book about the values behind arranged marriages. She made a very clear distinction between arranged marriages and forced marriages, which she declared to be a criminal act. Arranged marriages, in which the process takes place in full trust and freedom, can be a blessing for the couple.

Stein Hardeng, a teacher from University College, gave a summary of how family patterns have developed in Norwegian society over the centuries. He also shared contemporary statistics on modern Norwegian families. Even though Norwegian history has shown progress in many ways, he suggested that with an open mind people can learn

from traditions in other cultures.

Steinar Murud, secretary general of UPF Norway, addressed the metaphysical perspective in his talk “God and the Family.” He raised the question of whether there exists a common standard for all families. Who determines the standard? And how is it defined? He elaborated on the words “*imago dei*” (“in the image of God”), suggesting that such an ideal does exist for all human beings.

Mr. Murud said we need a spiritual ideal in our lives, even though it takes efforts to live accordingly. The consequences of not following an ideal can be much worse, he concluded.

All the speakers contributed well to the variety of ideas about the family. It is hoped that all the participants were stimulated to further thoughts on the topic and that a common concern for the safety and development of our families can be a foundation for building a harmonious society.

*Photos by Jane Toresen*