

FFWPU and UPF Switzerland's Family Peace Festival Unites Faiths in Biel/Bienne

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The Family Peace Festival, held on November 16, 2024, in Biel/Bienne, Switzerland, brought together diverse religious communities for an afternoon of celebration and interfaith dialogue. The event, organized by the FFWPU and UPF, marked the culmination of three months of outreach and preparation with UPA and Swiss missionaries.

The festival, hosted in a grand concert hall, opened with performances by second-generation families, Ambassadors for Peace, and community members. The highlight was an inter-religious panel discussion on the theme "Peace starts with me and my family," moderated by Chantal Chételat Komagata, Secretary General of UPF Switzerland. She summarized the "Principles for sustainable peace and happiness," emphasizing the importance of filial and fraternal relationships in building lasting peace.



The panel featured six diverse religious representatives: Koffi Owoussi representing African traditional religions demonstrated unity through an engaging nail puzzle; Martin Kamber shared Buddhist wisdom on inner peace; Jacques Viloz of the Latter Day Saints discussed family peace through personal experience; medical student Ghoufrane Beltifa read Korean passages about love and unity; Martin Wolf offered Krishna perspectives; and Rosa Hänseler presented Biblical insights on women's development and SDGs. The panelists concluded by performing a symbolic water ceremony, representing each faith's contribution to peace.

The event culminated in a Peace Blessing ceremony officiated by Nathalie Komagata and Thomas Pritty, which included traditional elements such as the holy wine ceremony and a ritual to overcome gender-based resentment. The celebration concluded with the cutting of a handmade cake by Hwayeon Lee and a Middle Eastern feast.

According to one participant's testimony, the festival successfully demonstrated how different religious communities could unite around common values, particularly regarding family. The event highlighted the vibrant and youthful nature of Biel's religious communities while showcasing how interfaith cooperation can contribute to societal peace and harmony.