

UPF Connecticut and ACLC host Ambassadors for Peace Forum and Conference

Roger Wetherall
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On Saturday, November 9th Universal Peace Federation – Connecticut (UPF-CT) and American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) formed a spiritual, joint venture in creating a unique conference, and Ambassadors for Peace Forum that brought together about 70 religious, civil and academic leaders to discuss the impact of good families on creating a peaceful, prosperous and healthy world at the Margaret E. Morton Government Center in Bridgeport from 2 to 6 pm.

Mr. Steven Boyd who served as the facilitator led everyone through the program which started with a sincerely moving invocation by Archbishop Russel J. Davenport, founder of the Arrow of Yahweh Ministries in Queens, NY. Mr. Antonio Battilocchi, Executive Director of ACLC welcomed the guests in attendance from all walks of life and religions, and Mr. Roger Wetherall, Executive Director of UPF in Connecticut presented a brief introduction of some of the philosophy, history and activities of UPF.

Mr. Boyd then set the tone for the forum by reading a Poem about Peace provided by Mike Theebs, the poet Laureate of the City of Milford, which reads in part:

Does it sprout from the barrel of a gun?
Is there enough of it for everyone?
Perhaps it's one, or none, or all of the above.
Perhaps it's an olive branch in the beak of a dove.
Whatever it may be, one lesson is clear:
There will never be peace wherever there is fear.



These words led us into the Peace Forum where three outstanding presenters took to the podium to share their inspiring messages:

Rev. Hopeton A. Scott, Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Bridgeport who spoke on peace in the family under the title "Violence No More!"



Mr. Bruce A. Barrett, Executive Director, IWagePeace Inc., CT who spoke on Faith and Peace and provided a deep insight into the personal challenges that he had to face in overcoming his reluctance to work together with other faiths. Mr. Barrett has been instrumental in working with veterans and survivors of the conflict in Israel and Palestine to bring about reconciliation and healing and he organizes annual Day of Peace Activities in Connecticut.

Apostle Glenda Phillips-Lee, International Gospel Helpers, NYC and ACLC Co-chair, CT, delivered her powerful message on Peace in the World and emphasized the incredible work that Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon is doing in bringing her message of peace and love to people throughout the world.



The presenters offered their unique understanding on the importance of peace in the family, in the nation and in the world and provided good material for the questions and discussion that followed. The table discussion proved to be essential for networking, as it provided a safe place for attendees to express their thoughts and listen to what others shared.

Though the Hon. Joseph Ganim, Mayor of Bridgeport who previously attended the Parents' Day celebration could not personally attend this event, he sent his Community Liaison, Ms. Carolyn Vermont to deliver congratulatory remarks to the 10 Ambassadors for Peace that we recognized in this event. This

portion of the program began with a short presentation on the meaning of the Ambassador for Peace Award. It is paramount to understand that this award is a not just a recognition for what an individual has accomplished but for what they commit to accomplish in the future. For this reason, we introduced an 'AfP Spotlight' segment to give an opportunity for one of our long-standing AfPs to talk about what they have been doing. Dr. Elaine Golden, who was appointed an AFP in Connecticut 15 years ago, gave a moving presentation on what she has been working on and has accomplished over the last 15 years in India, Africa and Connecticut. She testified to how empowering it has been to her to know that she is an Ambassador for Peace and she is very proud of this recognition.



During the Ambassador for Peace ceremony, 10 Individuals received their awards and after the ceremony, Mr. Wetherall called on everyone present to become a UPF member and attend the "Peace Starts with Me" Rally on December 28th, to hear the address that will be delivered by Mother Moon, the Mother of Peace. Many of the participants signed up immediately to get tickets and to bring their friends.

Overall the participants were really engaged in the program and several new people indicated their intention to continue working with us in the future to organize more programs like this. Rev. Pettway of the Friendship Baptist Church in Stratford said, "I learned a lot and appreciated the invitation and the appointment I have received." Archbishop Davenport said, "I really had a great time and could see many of my church members asking great questions!"

We also offer our gratitude to all those in our community who contributed to the set-up and clean-up, who helped with the sound system, who prepared the food and above all, who invited and brought guests. We could never have put on such a great program without the help of so many caring and talented people.