

What Religions Can Teach Us in Divisive Times

Leslie Rigney
May 24, 2017



Las Vegas, NV – The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) – Las Vegas held an Interfaith Peace Forum on May 24th, in the evening at the International Peace Education Center (IPEC) with the theme “*What Religions Can Teach us that Can Be Helpful in Divisive Times*”.

Leslie Rigney, executive director of UPF Nevada, welcomed the sixteen participants who were present. After each person introduced themselves, and Pledge of Allegiance and opening prayer, a video was shown, introducing UPF.

Jim Rigney gave a heartfelt explanation of several slides speaking on the Principles of Peace, which was very well received.

A panel discussion was facilitated by Mrs. Sera Hirano, Vice Chair of Women’s Federation for World Peace – Las Vegas. The panelists were chosen to represent their faith as youth who are involved in the practical expression of their faith. Kinesha McDaniel, a Unificationist deeply shared her heart, leading the other panelists to do the same. Ender Austin III represented Christianity. He is the youth minister of the Church of God in Christ in Las Vegas. Ender is very involved in representing the disenfranchised to the state representatives and to the Police Department and striving to intervene on their behalf. He is very passionate about the healing of our city and the concerns of those who have no voice. The Muslim faith was represented by Deyaa Dabbagh, who just took his finals for the first year of medical school. He came to the US from Syria at the age of 7. He is very ardent about his faith as his core guide in life and is well integrated into the lives of others, always working to build ‘bridges’ of connections with others, and to be merciful as God is merciful. Through a series of questions, each panelist expressed how their faith helped them in dealing with hatred, discord, and frustration, in life as well as their important mentors (Ender said his 5-year-old son has taught him!).



Following the discussion, the panelists were all appointed Ambassadors for Peace. Pictures were taken, and then there was much sharing and discussion among the participants.

We all were grateful we could gather in this way and look forward to continuing our work for peace.