

UPF and WFWP Melbourne, Australia: Meeting Global Challenges Together, Beyond Religious and Ideological Divides

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Melbourne, Australia - UPF and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in Australia hosted their second online peacebuilding seminar of 2022, on the theme, "Meeting Global Challenges Together, Beyond Religious and Ideological Divides," on May 14. This year's Peace Building Seminar series explores the concept of "head-wing" put forward by UPF co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and highlights that national and international solutions cannot be achieved through political compromise alone but must involve a commitment to personal change and shared values.

Over 35 participants took part in the event, which also commemorated the UN International Day of Families. The program began with a brief overview of the Day by the emcee and moderator, Mr. Will Abdo, assistant vice president of UPF-Australia.

The first speaker was Dr. John Bellavance, vice-president of UPF-Australia and Oceania coordinator of the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAPP), who spoke about peacebuilding principles for an equitable and sustainable world.

Dr. Bellavance called for raising awareness of our universal solidarity as one human family to secure lasting peace. He underscored the importance of ethical values in our life, family and work and noted that the loss of values is serious because it causes materialism, which leads to the destruction of intra-family relationships. The family is the basis for a good society, which expands to the nation and ultimately the world. Giving and living for the sake of others is the key to meeting and solving our global challenges together.

The second speaker, Dr. Robert S. Kittel, co-chair of UPF - Asia Pacific, presented on the topic, "The Need for Universal Values: Their Determination and Identification."

Dr. Kittel highlighted that everything operates on principles, from the governance of our universe to medicine, engineering and even basic daily tasks. The absence of these principles leads to failure and destruction, and therefore, peace needs to be built on principles. What are the principles of peace?

He explored the notion of universal principles, which he paralleled to the idea of the rule of law, and underlined the need for universal values and the purpose of universal principles. These principles need to transcend cultures and religions and be widely applicable at every level, place and time. He went on to emphasize that the priority of goodness is giving, living for the sake of others and highlighted the pair system principle (marriage) as the essence of true love. He further said that by strengthening the family, a stronger base of social capital that will enhance the overall quality of life for everyone can be built. He explained that UPF has been actively working in countries like the Philippines and Thailand on government-school programs promoting the importance of family and the risks involved in pre-marital relationships.

The final presenter was Mr. Stefan Romaniw OAM, first vice president of the Ukrainian World Congress and co-chair of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organizations.

Mr. Romaniw gave an overview of the Ukraine-Russia war and stated that the invasion of Ukraine was unjustifiable on the basis that it has the sovereignty and constitutional right to choose its European and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) aspirations and posed no threat to Russia's national security. The invasion violated the will of the people as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. With millions of people displaced internally within and externally outside of Ukraine, families are experiencing immense terror and hardship, and the need for humanitarian assistance is urgent. Mr. Romaniw spoke about Australia's overwhelming positive response to the war and humanitarian efforts, including welcoming refugees coming to Australia.

During the Q and A session, Mr. Romaniw said that UPF can assist the crisis in Ukraine by utilizing its wide sphere of influence to sell the message for and roadmap to peace. Ukraine does not want war, it wants peace. He also stated that constant economic pressure on Russia and its oligarchs needs to be maintained by the West to stop Russia's violations.