

Some reflections of those who attended The World Interfaith Harmony Week event in London (House of Lords) - by YouthUPF, Wednesday 5th February 2014

This day was an incredibly challenging day; it had been announced that there would be a national train strike (underground transport) resulting in a majority of trains coming to a standstill. The beauty of the Youth Universal Peace Federation spirit is one to be admired, although I utter this with great humility. Rather than opt to cancel the event, it gracefully went ahead without even discussing the possibility of cancellation as an option. Everyone simply carried on with the tasks in hand to make this evening a success. Some of the youth walked for miles in the blustering wind and rain, with one vision in sight; and that was to simply prove that the voices of the youth are of paramount importance as we are the leaders of tomorrow, the world's future

The evening was a perfect ensemble of interfaith dialogue, expression, vision and entertainment. A balance of youth and adult shares about how interfaith harmony can be encouraged, created and aspired towards was quite touching. There was one sentiment that was portrayed amongst all those that were present; amongst the array of varying faiths, color and creed that were present, and that was to follow our different paths of religion, our individual beliefs, our unique journeys in life, to encompass the intention and desire to unite as one; resulting in the culmination of respect, kindness, care, humility, Godliness and above all love for humanity. Everyone shared their own profound story, yet everyone was connected with the same goal, mindset, hope, desire and aspiration - to ultimately unite as one under the umbrella of humanity, and above all, under the grace of God – Anita, UPF Team Member, (Hindu)

Despite of the London Tube strike and the cold rainy day which made the journey to the Houses of Lords uneasy for many of the attendees, the day has remained a truly exceptional. The attendance of Baroness Verma added a greater value to the event. The messages delivered by the majority of young participants were powerful and diverse. It was my first time to take part in an interfaith dialogue event, so it was particularly special experience for me. Being originally from Libya, the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week made me realize one of the greatest needs of the Arab world. Our greatest needs are to learn to cooperate with those who are different- beyond boundaries of ethnicity, religion and nationality. I hope one day the Arab youth in both the Middle East and North Africa become more aware of the significance of interfaith dialogue in achieving peaceful co-existence and celebrating this special UN week. – Amira, YouthUPF Team Member.

It was an honor to contribute to this event. I was very inspired by all of you and the great work you are doing. It was great to be in an environment as conservative as the house of lords (I try and keep away from politics as much as I can) and listen to people sharing views the same as I have, Of peace love and unity for all beings regardless of religion ethnicity and status. The views shared by everyone are the same that I sing about. I feel that all humans truly feel the same way. - Antarma (Hindu)

The YouthUPF World Interfaith Harmony Week event was very enriching. It showed everyone's deep thoughts, experiences and opinions. It also showed everyone's deep commitment to youth activism, interfaith dialogue, harmony and peace. One could feel that everyone was speaking from his/her heart and that is why every speech has reached the audiences' hearts as well. The audience was amazed by the strong commitments and positive thinking of youths and everyone felt motivated to work even harder to achieve peace and harmony. Also Baroness Verma's short speech at the end was very inspiring and encouraging. We ended the event with different musical flavors that communicated feelings of love, harmony and peace. The music translated what we have all felt after the different speeches and it was a great sentimental closing. Asmaa Soliman – YouthUPF Team member (Muslim)

I really enjoyed the evening. The poetry, the rap, the arts and the variety of performers all delivering messages of peace and harmony in different ways using music as a platform. – Keldon YouthUPF Team member (Christian)

Yesterday's events really made me think and challenge my own perceptions of how I view the world. I believe that social media is a great way to promote change and well-being, but I guess I have been a little naïve in thinking that everyone sees it that way. Everyone that spoke added something new to think about however and I went away reflecting on a lot, as everyone said something meaningful from their heart and how they see the world. I believe that the most important things that are said are said from the heart and I think everyone's intentions to make a positive change were evident through their speeches and which is what resonated through the room. I arrived jogging from London Bridge (and I don't jog!) but the event was so beautiful and I felt so proud to have been part of it that by the end of the evening it wasn't even a thought in my mind. A massive thank you to Christa for asking me to be part of something so amazing” – Lauren Turner – Blogger, Journalist with Road Work Media and YouthUPF Team Member (Christian)

The event was an overwhelming success. The Room was full and bursting with enthusiasm from the moment I stepped through the door. I particularly enjoyed hearing the thoughts about how youth can make a difference from my colleagues. I think everyone could take away several points from each person that really struck their heart. The Crowds discussion afterwards was also very positive and inspiring. Some points made by a gentleman that works with tortured victims really resonated with me 'We all have the capacity for doing amazing good but also tremendous evil, and it's this internal nature that we struggle with from day to day.' The musical performances were superb. I really had to close my eyes to fully enjoy them that only happen when it's really good! – Michael Schroeder – YouthUPF Team member (Unificationist)

The Prophet Mohammad (pbth) said to us take advantage of what matters. Your youth before you become old. Your health before you fall sick, your wealth before you become poor, your free time before you become busy and your life before you death...so think about his advice which qualities you have? Most of them you have...you are young; you have good health, you have free time and you are still alive. So my requests to all youth take this chance because it doesn't come always....That why you need to work hard with confidence. Because we have chance and Youth UPF has made this opportunity for you. We are youth so we have this golden chance to change this world with peace and harmony and love. ZAMAN - London Ambassador-London Olympic-2012

The evening that I took part in was really special. The whole atmosphere in room was filled with peaceful communication. I think it is extremely important to recognize all these different faiths and backgrounds and see that we can all learn from each other. Even though everyone in the room had different beliefs but we all shared one thing in common, our goal to create peace and unite –

This event was spiritually realigning and inspiring to see true action towards making the world a better place. I myself travelled from Birmingham and despite traffic, tube delays and cancellations and treacherous weather I was so pleased to have attended and have walked away feeling empowered and excited to also continue efforts towards global peace and harmony. – Jessica, CEO and Founder of Superheroes for Change, Youth Achievement Awardee by UPF

The UN World Interfaith Harmony event last night at the House of Lords, was inspiring and it was moving to see so many people from different faiths placed together with the sole purpose of bringing about a change for peace and harmony. I loved how young people shared with passion the impact of visiting Jerusalem and felt the profound impact it had on their lives. If we can empower many more young people to make a difference the world will be a much better place. I look forward to attending your future events and will do all in my power to support the young people causes. Thanks for a lovely evening and may our youth be blessed with everlasting peace. Timothy John the Baptist - Time4worldpeace.org

I attended the YUPF event at the House of Lords as part of the UN's world interfaith harmony week and was inspired by the positivity and diversity that was there. People from every religion and cultural background seemed to have attended. The speech from YUPF shows us that a lot can and has been achieved by interfaith youth movements. Look around the room demonstrated to me that tremendous advancements have been made, but now the responsibility of respect and harmony fall to the younger generations. Never has there been a time more pressing for our global community to act in unification for the greater good of the planet and its people. We may well be unique, with a multitude of faiths and beliefs but our souls all face in the same direction and our basic needs are all the same. A core belief of YUPF is to focus on leadership training for global citizenship and is a working, practical model of how great achievements can be accomplished while keeping at its core a peaceful and open heart. It is an honor and a pleasure to be part of this inspirational organization and I look forward to being part of many more life changing adventures with YUPF in the future." Julien, Road Work Media – YouthUPF team Member (Buddhist)