

WFWP Denver's Second Meeting of the Interreligious Sharing Series

Gale Alves
June 28, 2018



WFWP Denver together with Family Federation for World Peace held their 2nd meeting of the Interreligious Sharing Series on June 28th, 2018. Despite the 105 degree weather, representatives of three different religious groups came together at the Lady Fatima Center to discuss the topic of "How and Why Mankind Separated from God and What Were the Repercussions?". The gracious hosts of the mosque started off the evening by inviting everyone to partake in a delicious halal meal in the Muslim tradition, creating an atmosphere of openness and understanding.

Gale Alves, WFWP Co-Chairwoman of the Denver chapter, was the emcee for the presentations that followed. Gale expressed during her opening remarks that she and her husband Antonio were inspired to put this Interreligious Sharing Series together by Rev. Sun Myung Moon's insight that unity of the world's religions is a crucial component for creating true peace in the world. "God is our common Parent," she shared. "He wants to see his children living in harmony and learning good things from one another. And this is what we are doing tonight: Learning from one another so that barriers of ignorance and pre-conceived concepts of other religions and people will come down, and understanding and openness will go up and hopefully out into the world."

The panelists were:

Chaitanya Chandra Das - Senior priest of the Hare Krishna Temple

Dr. Michael Hentrich - From the Colorado Family Church /Family Federation for World Peace

Hossein Hashiminasari - Spiritual leader of the Lady Fatima Mosque, MA in Religious Studies



Each of the speakers shared intriguing and well thought-out content according to their particular faith tradition. Chaitanya Chandra Das, the first presenter, shared in a very fatherly way. He encouraged everyone to follow and live the teachings of our own faith, be it from the Bible, the Koran, or the Hindu sacred texts. If we do, we will naturally find ourselves drawing close to God; God dwells in all of our hearts so we should keep our hearts clean and pure. He certainly moved the room with his lovingly expressed understanding of the purpose of life.



People were riveted as our 2nd presenter, Dr. Michael Hentrich, from Family Federation for World Peace, clearly laid out his faith's understanding of God's original plan of creation, the 3 Great Blessings, "Be fruitful, multiply and have dominion" (Gen. 1:28), and the Fall of Man. Adam and Eve were first supposed to have each grown to physical and spiritual maturity, Dr. Hentrich said, becoming one in heart with God, living a life of absolute goodness. They were to have fully matured their godly love before they went to the next step in their lives. The failure to do this was what caused mankind's separation from God -- premature sexual love before God gave His permission when Adam and Eve had not completely developed unselfish love within themselves.

The final speaker, Hossein Hashiminasari, admitted to wrestling with this topic because Islam does not have a Fall of Man aspect to their theology. The idea that we are punished for the sins of our ancestors did not resonate with this young Muslim leader. He shared that Adam is a prophet and therefore could not make a mistake. Rather, Adam "slipped" in the Garden of Eden and that slip serves to remind us that we need Allah in our lives.

There was a beautiful spirit in the mosque as everyone sincerely contemplated the deep question of why we are separated from God. There was a heartfelt openness to listen to new points of view.

Two of the religious communities connected deeply in the QandA session through their mutual understanding that Jesus is not God. Dr. Hentrich explained that the Family Federation does not believe that Jesus is God, but that he is the son of God and the Messiah, explaining that this does not diminish the value they see in Jesus because they recognize that he was the first person to attain perfection or complete oneness in heart with God. Prayer Imam Massoud of the Lady Fatima Center was greatly intrigued by this as the Muslim faith shares a similar understanding of Jesus. In their faith, Jesus is not God, but rather a great prophet. He said, "Based on this evening's content, I believe we can share even more deeply together."

Some quotes from the participants:

Chaitanya Chandra Das, Denver Hare Krishna Temple: "I enjoyed being a part of this interreligious dialogue. Please let me know when the next one is."

Hossein Hashiminasari, Lady Fatima Center: "Thank you so much, Antonio and Gale, for putting this together. I really enjoyed the other panel members, too. So much to learn. God bless you both for the good you bring to the world."

Dr. Michael Hentrich, Family Federation for World Peace of Denver: "Such a warm, embracing spirit in this mosque. All of the participants were wonderful."

We hope to continue and expand this Interreligious Sharing Series. Friendships are blossoming. The beauty of this Interreligious Sharing Series is that all the spiritual leaders can freely share their beliefs without the need to convince anyone or to minimize what they believe. Everyone has the opportunity to just plainly state their religious understanding to an audience that listens with a desire to learn. Here in Denver, we are working toward promoting such respect and understanding across all religions in the world.