

International Day of Families observed in Austria

On the occasion of the International Day of Families UPF-Austria held a 2-day conference on the topic:

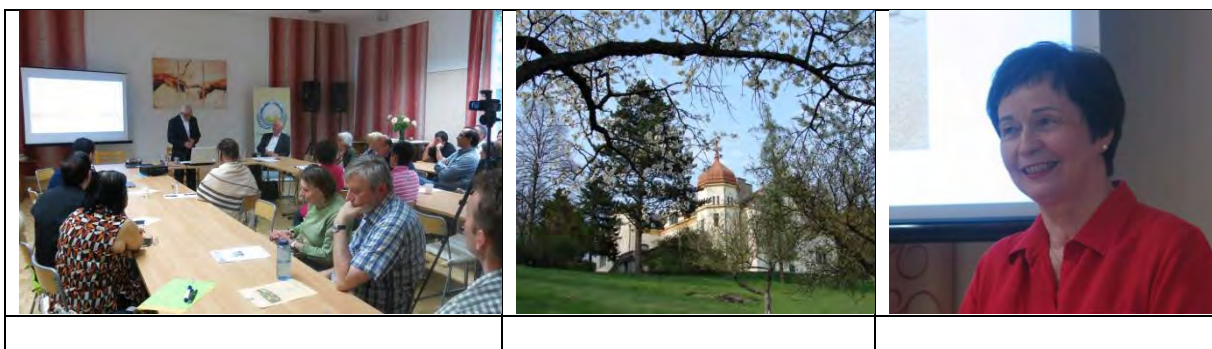
Spirituality and Family as Basis for a Sustainable Future.

May 28th – 29th, 2016, Seebenstein

In organizing the symposium, UPF was supported by the Womens' Federation and the Family Federation for World Peace-Austria.

The program of the conference consisted of Divine Principle lectures given by lecturers of the Family Federation, and presentations by Peace Ambassadors and other guests on the topic of Spirituality and Family. We learned about "Vedic Views on Spirituality and Family as Catalyst for a sustainable Future", Muslim thoughts on the topic and a presentation by the President of "Hermetic International".

A highlight was the presentation of the Unification Movement's Matching and Blessing tradition by a young blessed Unificationist, after the conference participants had watched a movie coverage of the Blessing 2016 broadcasted by the German TV channel "Pro 7" in the program "Galileo".



Read here a more detailed report:

The first speakers were Elisabeth Cook and Johannes Stampf from the Family Federation. They approached the topic from the viewpoint of Unification Theology: From the existence of man and woman we can conclude that the origin of all life, God, has male and female elements and can be considered as the parent of humanity.

By man and woman achieving spiritual maturity and then becoming parents themselves, they can attain the highest level of spirituality, specially by having children and passing **on God's love to them.**

Johannes Stampf emphasized that we can master life best, if we are aware of our eternal existence. The relationships of love, which we create during our life on earth will be our eternal treasure. The most precious and sustainable contribution to a better future is to have children and raise them to become loving parents themselves.

Dr. I smail Yasin, a former professor at Damascus University in Syria summarized the most important principles of life as follows: "We need a good relationship to our creator, God, because this is the key to inner peace and success in life. Our spiritual desire is to be united with God and we suffer when we cannot attain this unity. Second, we need good relationships within our family – to our spouse, children and relatives, because this is the key to peace and social success. Family means that nobody is left behind. Without stability in the family people have little hope. The disintegration of the family endangers our culture today." Of further relevance are for **Prof. Yasin good relationships at one's workplace, because this also strengthens the social peace. Our economic activities should be in unity with God's spirit.**

Already in 2002 Prof. Yasin participated in an International World Peace Blessing in Korea and since this time he is inspired by the vision of Father Moon, the founder of UPF.



The symposium continued in the afternoon with a presentation by Dr. Elias Rubenstein, president of [Hermetic International](#). Referring to the topic "Spirituality and Family" he explained three levels of relationships: the physical family which is to fulfill God's blessing of "Be fruitful and multiply". He sees a second level of family relationships in the brotherhood of all people, as Jesus said: "Where two or three are gathered in my name I am amongst them" and "The one who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and father and mother". Dr. Rubenstein sees the third and highest level of relationship in the relationship of human beings to their creator, God. Only if we

experience God's love can we have successful relationships on all other levels of love. He concluded his presentation with the statement "We should live our lives in abundance (of love), which we only can do if we give and receive love continuously". After his lecture Dr. Rubenstein was given the "Ambassadors for Peace" award by UPF president Peter Haider.

Then Dr. Triloki N. Ahuja, who comes from the Hindu tradition, spoke about "Vedic Views on Spirituality and Family as Catalyst for Sustainable Future". He explained that 60% of the 400 000 verses of Vedic texts deal with family and spirituality. For the Hindus the divine is manifested in all living beings. From this viewpoint they consider the whole cosmos as one big family. This concept is a central aspect of the Hindu philosophy and it is expressed in the greeting "Namaste" which means "The Divine within myself bows before the Divine within you". Further topics, which Dr. Ahuja covered, were the meaning of spiritual growth in modern life, responsible parenthood, how to find your own roots and how to foster a spiritual lifestyle in the family. Finally, Dr. Ahuja guided the audience through a meditation of love and benevolence for all human beings and for universal well being.

Herbert Wolf from the Family Federation for World Peace continued the program with his lecture about "Family Traditions in the Far East". He had lived in South Korea for 17 years with his Korean wife and could talk about his own experiences as well as the Confucianist traditions: In a society with Confucianist traditions the family occupies a central role within a well organized state. There is a saying that "Everything goes well if the family is well". Filial piety towards the parents is one of the highest values in such a society. It is even considered as the root of all virtues and as the foundation of humaneness.

Moreover, the ancestors play an important role. The children have to study the life and the achievements of their ancestors, and the eldest son has to take care of the annual services of respect for the ancestors.

"What people know without having studied it, this is the real knowledge" – this proverb expresses that, whatever the children learn from their parents and ancestors - their tradition and their way of life - has the highest value. The relationship between parents and children is seen as one between the roots and the treetop.

By showing and explaining the meaning of several Chinese and Korean characters Mr. Wolf underlined the Confucianist philosophy on peace, family and spirituality.



The last topic and at the same time the highlight of the day was the annual International Blessing Ceremony of the Family Federation for World Peace in Korea. As a beginning, the conference participants were shown a movie coverage of the Blessing 2016, which **had been broadcasted by the German TV channel "Pro 7" in the program "Galileo"**.

After the movie Mrs. Orlande Schenk, who had participated in a Blessing ceremony herself ten years ago, **shared her experiences and insights into Parents' matching**, Blessing and family life as a second generation Unificationist. She explained that the fact that her parents supported her in choosing her partner was very helpful for her. Actually one of her friends, **who is a Catholic, commented: "You are very wise. You didn't have to go through several painful and disappointing relationships in order to find the best partner!"** What appears very unusual for our western culture proves to be very sustainable in real life, because only a small percentage of the Unificationist partnerships fail.

At the end of the day Mrs. Shirley Dimaano, a singer from the Philippines, sang songs from different cultures and musical epoches, which inspired the conference participants to sing along with her and even present songs themselves.

On Sunday, the second day of the Symposium, Dr. Wolfgang Czerny und Heinz Krcek from the Family Federation gave lectures on the root causes of evil in our world, the Principles of Restoration and Time Parallels of History. We were happy to see young conference participants who followed the lectures with great interest.

Mag. Maria Neuberger-Schmidt, **founder of the "Parents Workshop"** talked about her work **experiences in 20 years of parents' education:** The succession of generations guarantees the sustainability. The dysfunctional family is a big problem today, and we absolutely should not accept the breakdown of the family as the norm. We need an ideal, which gives us hope and direction. The wellbeing of the children has the highest priority, and they need a father and a mother. Mrs. Neuberger-Schmidt addressed also the problem that many young well educated people take great care in planning their career, but forget to plan their family. Often they start too late and cannot have children anymore. Young people urgently need a family oriented value system.

The conference was well attended by over 50 participants, who created an atmosphere of mutual inspiration with the lecturers and the staff.