



World Interfaith Harmony Week “Similarities across Differences”

Oslo, Norway, January 24, 2018

By Steinar Murud

Our annual “World Interfaith Harmony Week” event was organized on the 24th January in partnership with the largest mosque in Oslo, Central Jamaat E Ahle Sunnat. The mosque served as a great venue for our program under the title “Similarities across differences”.

After a welcome from the imam in the mosque and the Norwegian UPF leader, there was a short “Candle for peace” ceremony, accompanied by the reading of a couple of quotations on peace.

There were some challenges to set up the program this time as three out of five panelists cancelled their participation shortly before our meeting. However the positive aspect was that they all had good reasons for doing it, due to fever

and sickness.

Considering the circumstances, the result was good.

Our lady speaker, a postgraduate doctor on Systematic Theology, represented the Christian Theological College, that traditionally educates ministers for the Church of Norway. This College used to be very negative towards our movement in the past. But the times are changing and now we have people from this particular college speaking at our events with great enthusiasm.

She spoke very well on «How religions can be a tool for peace», particularly based on her practical experiences with the peace process in South Sudan.

Another scheduled speaker, who unfortunately had to cancel, was the former editor of the main Christian Newspaper in Norway.

Also, this newspaper used to be an obstacle for us in the past.

However, the fact that the former editor, who is still a very active commentator, wanted to come, was a victory.

The Norwegian UPF leader spoke on “How religion can be a provider of universal values in our society”, emphasizing the need for spiritual clarity and answers on existential questions. As long as religion provides this, it is most relevant, particularly in our secular age and in the encounter with new technology, ideologies and politics.

The three central participants in our program received True Father’s Autobiography.

We closed the evening program with informal discussion and delicious refreshments.

