

Houses of Religions

Vision / Format / Experiences

This was the title of a special workshop which was held from 23 - 24 October 2019 in the Munich *Alter Rathaussaal* (Old Town Hall), and the *Evangelische Stadtakademie* (Protestant City Academy).

Six founders or representatives of already established houses of religion responded to the invitation for this conference from Prof. Dr. Martin Rötting, Professor for Religious Studies at the University of Salzburg and committee member of the interreligious society OCCURSO and the „House of Cultures and Religions” in Munich. The purpose of the event was on one hand to glean inspiration for the founding of such a house in Munich, and on the other to encourage exchange with a broad public about the vision, concepts and content of such houses.



Hubert Arnoldi in discussion



various info stands



representative of the city



Prof. Martin Rötting

Information stands demonstrating the work of the different houses had been set up, and at the opening event in the dignified *Alter Rathaussaal*, each house of religion gave a presentation about their work in front of an audience of about 100. An official representative welcomed all the participants on behalf of the city of Munich.



H. Arnoldi und all representatives of the Houses of Religions present their work.

On the following Thursday morning, the conference continued in the Protestant Academy.

Dr. Rötting gave a talk about the past history of the idea of interreligious houses and about their general concept. Following this, each house presented their plans, experiences and activities in more precise detail. In terms of actual buildings, only two of the houses own such - in Bern and Taipei (two levels in a high-rise complex). Ground has already been broken and construction will start on the „House of One“ in Berlin in April 2020. It is hoped to be completed in 2023.

The houses in London, New York and Stuttgart are active associations which have as members various religious communities, many interreligious activities and a ‚virtual house‘. It was not clear as to whether or not concrete buildings were also planned.

Of special note was the report by the representative from Bern about their success and the full integration of the house in the city. There it has even had a positive effect on tourism and the economy.



A special feature was that Hubert Arnoldi was able to speak in great detail about the house of religion in Stuttgart. He introduced the book „World Scripture“ and spoke about programs and activities and how diverse religious communities feel at home there, have lively exchanges and cooperate well.

The morning program ended with a plenary session where questions could be posed to and addressed by all the speakers.



The program continued after lunch with workshops and an exchange of ideas in smaller groups.

At the end, the *Bayrische Rundfunk* (Bavarian radio station) interviewed the speakers. This was an excellent event that will hopefully bear good fruit. We are surely moving forwards to „One Family under God!“

Robert Bentele (English: Catriona Valenta)

More information under:

www.hdkrm.org

www.haus-der-religionen-stuttgart.de

www.haus-der-religionen.ch

www.coexisthouse.org.uk

www.interfaithcenter.org

www.mwr.org.tw

www.house-of-one.org

www.br.de/radio/bayern2/programmkalender/ausstrahlung-1917058.html

www.br.de/nachrichten/kultur/haus-der-kulturen-und-religionen-muenchen-dialog,RfupIBa