



Our Spiritual Traditions and Sustainable Peace - Oslo European Leadership Conferences

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Session 3: Our Spiritual Traditions and Sustainable Peace - in the Norwegian Parliament

The essence of religion is good values; however, in reality we can see tension between them. How can religions contribute to sustainable peace? Ms. Marcia de Abreu from Spain moderated the session.

Mr. Stein Villumstad, Secretary General of the European Conference of Religious Leaders, asked why it is important to involve religions in the peace process? He gave five answers: 1) The importance of God cannot be ignored; 2) there's a growing movement towards interfaith engagement; 3) religions need to be engaged to solve the problems of society; 4) the power of religious assets, e.g., The Golden Rule; and 5) religions have important social groups such as women's organizations and youth groups.

Imam Abduljalil Sajid, Chairman of Dialogues and Cultures in Europe, said we all have to work together for our common good. He said that action speak louder than words. If no action, words are meaningless. We must speak to other people peacefully. We cannot use force or compulsion on each other. Respect each other. Without the family there is not going to be any peace. Without role models, we will go nowhere. Religions need to be engaged. Secular society needs to make space for religions.

Venerable Bhante Sobhana, from Stockholm Sri Lanka Theravada Buddhist Temple: Morality is the first step in our training. The importance of right speech – abstaining from worthless talk. The importance of right action – abstaining from robbing, stealing, etc. The importance of right livelihood. The world is like a mirror; if you look at the world with a smiling face, you will see your own smiling face. Even if things are others' fault, you must see it as your own fault. If you treat others kindly, they will treat you kindly.

Mr. Tim Miller, chair of UPF Europe, spoke on the relationship between the public and the private dimensions. Public values and affairs need to have priority over private ones, always.

Short Biographies

Mr. Stein Villumstad

General Secretary for European Council of Religious Leaders - Religions for Peace (ECRL). He is the

Deputy Secretary General of World Conference of Religions for Peace since January 2006.

He had a twenty year career with Norwegian Church Aid.

Dr. Imam Abduljalil Sajid

Chairman of the Taskforce for European Inter-cultural Dialogue; Deputy President and International Secretary World Congress of Faiths (WCF); President Religions for Peace in the United Kingdom and Deputy President of European Religions for Peace; Vice Chair of the Moslem Council of Britain's Inter-faith Relations Committee and Adviser to the Europe and International Affairs Committee

Venerable Bhante Sobhana,

Is from Myanmar/Burma. He belongs to Stockholm Buddhist Theravada temple in Stockholm. Which is a Sri Lanka temple. He has been in Stockholm for 2 and a half year.

Mr. Timothy Miller,

Vice-Chair UPF Europe. Vice-Chair of the Universal Peace Federation in Europe. He has been instrumental in developing UPF's European Leadership Conferences since 2004- now more than 50 such conferences have taken place in Europe.