

Intercultural New Year Reception in Frankfurt

On 25 January, to celebrate the start of the New Year according to the lunar calendar, UPF Frankfurt held a reception under the motto: „God at the centre of the world family“. Invited were pastors and representatives of various religions and cultures.

Refreshments and a warm welcome greeted the guests and UPF members - amongst whom were Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, a Sikh and several members of the Family Federation - when they arrived in the late morning at the premises in Sachsenhausen.

The celebration began with an explanation by Je-Hun Yoo, elected representative of the Association of Koreans in Europe (650.000 Koreans living in 28 countries), about the family traditions in his homeland at the start of the year. He also pointed out that with this year of the „white mouse“ (or ‚metal rat‘) according to the Chinese horoscope, a completely new cycle begins, bringing with it strong, winning energy for a new beginning.



Under the motto, „when connections are emphasised, separation loses its meaning“, all were happy to join in unison singing of some well known religious songs and the young singer Gabriele expressed emotions to move the heart with *Musical-Evergreens* .



Claus Dubisz, Frankfurt UPF representative, in his celebratory address, invited us to dedicate the first day of the year to our creator. „He created our ancestors as man and woman; and because He himself has masculine and feminine qualities, God is our Heavenly Parents. What causes Him, as parents, the greatest pain are wars and disunity amongst his children. “

Mr. Dubisz then read an excerpt from the autobiography *A Peace Loving Global Citizen** by the founder of the Unification Movement, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, whose 100 birthday will be celebrated this year: „in many and varied peace initiatives the emphasis is always on dialogue and understanding between religions and cultures.“

As a moving example of this attitude to love all mankind regardless of mindset or intent, he cited the surprise visit by the South Korean Rev Moon to his

North Korean home, in the course of which he embraced his former enemy Kim Il Sung as a brother, with no trace of hatred or revenge.

A short video showed excerpts from rallies featuring Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon, who since the death of her husband, continues the work they started together. Known by many affectionately as „Mother of Peace“ , she called upon the heads of state in attendance, as well as believers the world over, to understand the essence of our creator and to solve the pressing problems of the world centered on Him. In this spirit, the New Year celebration turned to the World Peace Blessing tradition, established by Rev. and Mrs. Moon and starting with their own marriage sixty years ago.

With parents from New Zealand, Austria and Korea - the young couple Mickey from the USA and Nicole from Germany, who together moderated the programme - introduced themselves as an example of an international marriage blessing.



Mickey told us how his parents' promise to be faithful saved their marriage in a time of crisis. He stated: „in that we not only promise each other, but also God, to build our marriage with true love, to raise responsible children, and to live for the sake of others beyond our own family, we are working with Him to fulfil God's dream. In this way, we can finally realise an ideal world in which we can all live happily together. “



Albert Mobo from Cameroon and his German wife Gudrun guided us through a small World Peace Blessing with Holy Wine/juice in which each one with his/her partner could participate. Those who currently did not have a partner were invited to think in the spirit of a future (or deceased) partner, since as Albert said, „nobody is alone in this world“.

The official programme was brought to a close with „Blessing“, sung by Margaret Staudinger, and the cutting of a three-tier cake. The classic „Every Praise“ and a video of „Tongil“ (kor. „Unity“), (performed by young people at the recent event in New York attended by over 30,000 pastors), had everybody on their feet, singing, clapping and dancing karaoke-style!



Thus a successful afternoon drew to a close; there was a feeling of joy about the unity experienced between people of different cultures and a desire to carry this awareness into society and thus to positively shape the „still unknown year“, as one says in Korea.

We lingered for a long time together, sharing a bountiful and very tasty Korean meal, getting to know each other better and forging plans for the new year.

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**The complete version of Rev. Moon's Autobiography „A Peace Loving Global Citizen“ is available under: <http://www.familyfed.de/autobiografie/index.html>*