

UPF Berlin, Germany holds Seminar on the Principles of Peace in the Alex-Treff

Gudrun Hassinen
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A half-day seminar, held in the Alex-Treff near Berlin's famous Alexander Platz, on Saturday April 13, 2024, attracted an audience of around thirty. The purpose of the seminar was to give some insight into the motivation for the establishment of UPF, how it envisions the way to a peaceful world community, and the approach it takes in pursuing this goal.



After each of the four roughly thirty-minute presentations, the participants met in small groups for lively discussions. Many different religious backgrounds were represented including Christianity, Islam, new religious movements, and meditation groups.



Karl-Christian Hausmann, chairman of UPF Germany, delivered the first presentation entitled Universal Values as a Foundation for World Peace. He reaffirmed UPF's conviction that there are universal values and principles, similar to natural laws, which have already been formulated to some extent in world religions. He identified three fundamental universal values without which no sustainable peace is possible. Because, as Jordan Peterson the Canadian psychologist and non-fiction writer states: if a society forgets its moral values, nihilism and terror will reign.' Therefore on the one hand religions are indispensable as a source of values, and on the other hand their cooperation is an essential prerequisite for peace.



In the second presentation, Gudrun Hassinen, deputy chairperson of UPF Germany, spoke on the topic The Cause of Conflict. She addressed the origin of mankind's conflict-ridden nature which leads to destructive egoism and alienation from our inner divinity. Her remarks were based on a new interpretation of the first chapter of the Old Testament, formulated by the founder of UPF.



Expanding on this thread in the next and third presentation, Reconciliation and Peace-making, Mrs Hassinen explored the question as to whether a formula for peace and reconciliation could be derived from the biblical story. In this context, the tragic story of Cain and Abel and how this example of a destructive relationship was later overcome by Jacob and Esau, was dealt with in depth. Decisive in conflict situations, whether on a personal or national level, is always that we are aware of our responsibility in front of our Father and Mother God, and that we chose the way of reconciliation.

Dr. Dieter Schmidt, UPF representative for central Europe, delivered the fourth and final presentation, UPF's Approach to Solutions. He referred to Rev. Moon, the founder of UPF, who understood through experience that we should forgive our enemies in order not to be dominated by bitterness and resentment. Using various examples, Dr. Schmidt explained what the principles of UPF mean in practice. for interreligious peace work, strengthening marriage and the family, and for peace and security. He presented innovative projects and initiatives of UPF, such as the Peace Road project, and stressed that we should be guided in all things by a culture of service to others.

In conclusion, we discussed what kind of contributions have to be made in order to realise world peace. The participants unanimously agreed that peace begins in one's own heart, with God the Creator and Parent, and in our own environment - with the prospect that this peace will expand and that those making decisions on national and international levels will also follow their own way of peace and incorporate it in

their far-reaching decisions.



Finally, Mr. Khwazik Mamozai from Nürnberg was appointed Ambassador for Peace in recognition of his many years of work in the Afghan Cultural Association in Nürnberg. He stated that he sees this award also as a call for further commitment.

A regular supply of fruit, cake and drinks and a lunch buffet at the end, contributed to the success of this most enriching seminar. Many thanks to all who participated!



Report: Gudrun Hassinen. English: Catriona Valenta