



500 Years ago – Luther Today - Us

Berlin, Germany, September 30, 2017

By *Sigrun Botembe*

UPF members from Hamburg and Berlin, along with some guests met in the Berlin Baha'i-Community center and had a very enjoyable discussion about the Reformation - as it was in the past and how it is today.

Such was the interest stimulated by the event, that it overran its time by almost two hours!

The purpose was not to hear about Luther's life or his famous theses; these facts are well known to all. We wanted to know something more precise. How does God relate to mankind and vice versa? What kind of relationship did Martin Luther have with God? Our brother, the Catholic theologian from Austria, Heinrich Krcek, taking as his starting point the various ways in which the word 'credo' can be

translated, showed us how a relationship of trust between God and mankind, and especially between God and Luther, developed. Encouraged by the openness of our speaker and his easily understandable language, we asked many interesting questions and offered comments at the end of the presentation.

Today the world knows in the same afternoon what happened that morning. How was it in Luther's time? How much did he know about contemporary events? Although the new medium of the printing press helped, it cannot be compared with today's information systems. What was simultaneously happening in the world? What could Luther know? What could influence and motivate him? I, (Sigrun Botembe, teacher of ethics) examined these issues in my presentation. I considered the enormous geographical discoveries, conflict with Islam, rivalry

between the different European powers, the Inquisition, conditions in the Vatican, as well as other issues. At the end, we had more understanding of Luther as a child of his time.

Ulrich Ganz, Hamburg UPF representative, gave the third presentation. He focused on the role of women and the family and expressed the opinion that the marriage between Luther and Katharina von Bora and their family life was a significant aspect of the Reformation. This brought us back to current problematic issues, and we realized that reformation is an ongoing process, in which all of us, also UPF members must engage.

The discussions continued for longer than planned; individual talks continued later over refreshments. We need to hold more such events in the future. Many thanks to the speakers and the diligent organizers!

