

## **„Can religions today still credibly speak of peace, let alone actualize it?’**

This was the topic of the UPF event held in Berlin on 17 February 2024 on the occasion of World Interfaith Harmony Week.

On this occasion, instead of guest speakers with lectures, theories or statistics, the participants had the opportunity to share their personal experiences with their own peace-bringing, living faith. We heard from representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Sufi-Islam, Bahai, Scientology and the Unification movement.



We started by taking turns to read ‚the Golden Rule‘ as it is presented in various religions, while a candle and globe were passed from speaker to speaker. This was followed by several representative prayers for peace, reconciliation, and unity of the forces of good -including religions -against the forces of evil, war, conflict, hatred and destruction. The floor was then opened for free exchange.

An elderly gentleman from the Jewish tradition stressed that God is a living, lively force behind the scriptures and already three-thousand years ago gave mankind instructions as to how to create peace; this force of love is more important in daily life than institutionalised religion.



An African founding pastor of a Christian church in Berlin testified how God had shown Himself to him; his questioning and recognition of a divine presence behind nature and in the holy scriptures led him away from atheism.

The representative of Sufi-Islam spoke of the importance of taking personal responsibility, seeking God and His love and then living a life expressing love, kindness and forgiveness.

The two members of the Church of Scientology explained that God's love expressed in man is necessary for world peace and that the task of religion is to help people to better their characters.

The representative from Bahai prayed that more people would find more love and work on their personal development, thus coming closer and closer to goodness.

The Unificationists present emphasized that only when we work not simply for ourselves but for the common good, with love and compassion, can the purpose of religions - world peace with a human family under God - be realised.

To summarise, everyone was touched by the statements of the other speakers, each of whom was different and yet all of whom stressed that God's love and power must be lived and that we humans bear the responsibility to bring peace. Each testified through his own personal experience that ,his' religion or faith emphasizes the centrality of divine love amongst mankind.



*Report: Gudrun Hassinen (English: Catriona Valenta)*