

Our Outreach Work with a Book Table

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By Herbert Beyer

For several years now, our book table has been a regular feature on the Oberbilk Market in Düsseldorf. In the beginning, Makoto Noguchi, our community leader, began to distribute leaflets there on his own. At that time, we spoke about a certain proportion: from each thousand people who were approached, one guest came to our center. If that were to be considered the only measure of the success, our work could hardly be seen as being worthwhile.

But in time, an increasing number of members discovered the possibility of approaching people here and discussing respective worldviews. This really is a win-win situation. We can learn something more about their everyday life and can develop more appreciation and gratitude for the security and vision that our worldview has brought us. On the other hand, we have an opportunity to share something about our values and faith. The book table offers a good platform for this activity.

We use the book table in order to promote certain special events, such as the recent concert with Seiko Lee. But we also distribute invitations to our regular monthly intercultural and interreligious prayer group events, held by UPF



Düsseldorf. One of our more prominent guests, met at the book table, is a protestant theologian who has already given several presentations on various topics to this prayer group. On 06.11.2017, to mark the 500 anniversaries of the Reformation initiated by Luther, he will speak about 12 people who have directly supported Luther.

During the election campaign, I met an SPD (Social Democratic Party) member of parliament at the book table and gave him my UPF visiting card. As soon as I obtain material with which it is appropriate to approach a member of parliament, I will again contact him. A further positive aspect of our book table is the PR work that is accomplished, since the book table is situated diagonally opposite the regional court.

Once a month, I usually have the support of a Japanese sister from Cologne,

Yumiko Gross. My second 'man', also a sister, unfortunately returned to her native country.

I get much pleasure from having assumed responsibility for the book table in Düsseldorf. Nowhere else is it possible to have such a ready and free access to people and to engage them in conversation. It is a pity that so few of our members take this opportunity. Almost all of the guests who regularly attend our community center come as a result of this witnessing activity.

The motivation behind any activity is very important for me, because this affects its value and success. On this note, I would like to encourage anyone else who has interest to establish a book table and to have positive and inspiring experiences like mine.



Sergio Brina, my wife Masako and I at the book table distributing invitations for the benefit concert with Seiko Lee