

Interreligious Prayer for Peace

Munich, Germany, February 8, 2015



By Magda Haugen and Robert Bentele

At the occasion of the World Interfaith Harmony Week an interreligious prayer for peace took place at the center of the Munich Universal Peace Federation. That is always a special challenge for the Munich UPF, because exactly in this week is also organized the so called MSC (Munich Security Conference). The German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Defense and Secretaries of State and other politicians of many countries are in the city discussing matters of security and peace and surely need our fervent prayers.

We really had an up to date reference.

And the topic: "Where Is Heaven? Is there a (my) Kingdom of Heaven?" was extensively discussed at our vivid gathering of twenty five representatives and believers of seven different religious communities.

The following speakers gave a talk and presented a prayer of their tradition:



Gottfried Hutter, Roman Catholic Theologian

He spoke about the Jewish/Christian definition of God's Kingdom using a Kabbalah-diagram with Hebrew characters. Values such as wisdom, goodness and beauty play a vital role. According to Mt. 6:33 we should first seek the Kingdom of God and everything else shall be given afterwards. Christ should resurrect within every believer and we should all become a (small) Messiah. Finally he prayed with all participants the 'Lord's Prayer'.



Yusuf Yüzay, Islam-Theologian and Imam

He initiated his presentation with sung recitation of a Qu'ran Surah dealing with the question 'where is heaven', and he spoke about that the Qu'ran doesn't exactly explain clearly where heaven can be found, but precisely how Muslims can prepare themselves for heaven. Especially through the study of the Qu'ran and the Hadize, the extra words of the Prophet Mohammad. A Muslim has to endeavor to reach heaven and find the Almighty through purifying his heart.



Michael Rotter, Peace-Educator, Author

Mr. Rotter expressed that the best church or mosque for him would be Mother Nature. There he can deeply experience God and heaven. Then he presented the "Peace-Constitution" for Germany which is following the constitutions of Japan and Costa Rica. He also spoke about that we first should find the peace within ourselves and that we can overcome war through a constant readiness for peace. Finally he prayed with all of us a Celtic prayer in gratitude to water and its creator and mentioned that we should be peacemakers.



Marlene Straub, International Sufi-Order

Ms Straub firstly introduced the Sufi-Order and its founder, Hazrat Inayat Khan, and then spoke about the necessary unity of all religions that the founder brought to the west together with mystical music about one hundred years ago. She expressed that also international marriage can be a means of bringing peace to the peoples of East and West. Regularly she organizes a "Universal Worship Service" honoring all the religions of the world. Finally she performed a prayer of her tradition and shared the 'Golden Sufi Heart: Love – the Lover – and the Beloved One are one.



Helga Huber, Christian Science Church

Mrs. Huber introduced shortly Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the USA. Their central thought is the knowledge of the divine within oneself and the power of healing. The creation is divine and good: therefore we all should recognize the divine and the good within ourselves. The one who makes God present within himself becomes a guarantor for peace. The prayer that she presented focused on esteem, appreciation and trust and that divine wisdom and divine love should always be alive within everyone.

Uta Eilzer, Scientology Church

She offered a prayer for total freedom of war, poverty and suffering and for the keeping of Human Rights, so that all people can worship freely and hold their religious services; and that the Creator may enable all people to reach their understanding of their spiritual nature. We should use our potential that is given by God and that is in the



likeness of God. For her the way of salvation means to find peace within oneself and then develop attention and thoughtfulness for others.



Gisela Münster, Catholic Theologian

Ms Münster was very concerned about the present situation in the world, especially in Ukraine and Syria and asked all of us urgently to pray for peace. That is what we can do. Peace starts there where we live. Thoughts full of goodness and reconciliation are so important. Peace is not only a still air between two wars, but a movement from people to people.

She asked us: "Does peace start from you?" Peace starts from small – with conversation. Then she presented in her prayer a variation of the Beatitudes: Blessed are the ones who love the interests of the others like their own, because they will create peace and unity. Blessed are the ones who are always prepared to do the first step, because they will discover that the others are more open than they first showed...

In between there were musical presentations, songs and songs that we sang together: Oivind Haugen/Guitar: "Halleluja", Gianni Scarcella/Piano: "Make me a channel of your peace" and Annette Bentele sang the prayer of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "Von guten Mächten wunderbar geborgen...."

These songs and the flames of the candles that were lighted by each

participant after he/she had presented the prayer have surely carried our desire for peace to heaven and the tears that have been shed brought them back to mother earth.



Finally **Siegfried Jensen, Pastor of the Unification Movement Munich**, spoke about that the Kingdom of Heaven is not a specific place, but a common project of all of us. Through some pictures from outer space he showed us how small actually our blue planet is and that we have no reason to be conceited. We live on a small stage **in the giant universe. He asked: "Is the Kingdom Heaven only an utopia?" No!** People like Bonhoeffer give us hope. Did we get closer to heaven?

Mr Jensen spoke about the way to **God's Kingdom which was shown by Rev. Moon.** He mentioned the so called **"Three Blessings", to perfect oneself** individually in true love, establish a loving family and create unity with creation. Especially he emphasized the importance of living for the sake of others and the family as a base for the culture of peace. Finally he presented **an invitation for the 'World Peace Blessing' that is the contribution of the Unification Movement for World Peace** as a ceremony of peace and **reconciliation. So let's not wait for peace, but recognize it as our common project.**

There was still a lot to talk about and everybody shared their thoughts and visions having also some snacks and refreshments.

We departed with the knowledge that **God's kingdom is not far anymore.**