

20th UN International World Day of Families 2014

Stuttgart, Germany, 17. May 2014



Once again, we made a point of holding a celebratory event in the premises of the Universal Peace Federation, to mark the UN International Day of Families. It was a colorful, international group, young and old, who met determined to devote some time to deal more intensively with the topic of the family, here and now.

First, Hubert Arnoldi explained a little about the origin and purpose of the event, and encouraged the participants to see the original value of the family not only from the viewpoint of religion, but as an essential core of what society means today. He also mentioned that we have to pay attention to the threat from destructive, family-hostile ideologies, and without fail work together to propose solutions.



Our musical virtuoso, Christop Fröher, Ambassador of Peace and holder of a family award, played us a wonderful piece on the flute, to attune us, so to speak, to the topic.



After this, we had the honor of hearing a presentation by Hilde Piepenburg on the topic: 'The Family- Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'. We were given an impressive picture of the development of the family in the course of history. The nuclear family consisting of father, mother and children living together in one separate household is a relatively new phenomenon which first appeared in Middle and Western European cities some time before the industrial revolution. The bourgeois family created a special type of ethos which eventually led to the acknowledgement of the rights and freedom of the individual as well as the development of modern economy and democracy.

The power for the development of society today as it was yesterday is to be found in the dynamics of well-functioning families. The challenge parents meet today is to educate children guided by love, which means to respect and foster their personality, to set clear boundaries and to raise them to become independent, autonomous, responsible and peace-loving human beings. The most effective way to achieve this is an authoritative - not authoritarian – style of education. How to achieve such parental competencies is well described in Michele Borba’s book, ‘Parents do make a difference’. The 8 development goals she calls for are: Self-confidence, assertiveness, communication skills, responsible problem solving, cooperation, self-motivation, perseverance and empathy.’

Autonomous, assertive families, who practice love and solidarity, can also be politically effective and promote peace in society and effect justice. To hold men and women as equal in position and value does not mean that they should be considered the same. Allowances must be made for their differences, and that means also that the functions that are considered ‘womanly’ are no more to be devalued, but rather are to find full recognition. The work of education is not private but rather is public, since its ‘product’ is of advantage as ‘human capital’ to the whole society. This work should be held equal to paid employment in contributing to a pension because the pension system rests on two pillars: the contributions from paid employment and the generative contribution of families in the form of children who will support the system in the future. Therefore today’s unbalanced situation must be eliminated.

Mrs. Piepenburg also mentioned that the family as an institution is threatened today by ‘gender’ ideologies that claim to undo male and female biological identities by annulling traditional gender roles and creating new ones. These ideas are being propagated world-wide with public money.

Such topics, and an invitation to participate in current demonstrations for family values, were a few of the important points that we discussed with animation. We were in agreement: now, at the latest, is the time to stand up with renewed vigor for the original, natural family of father, mother and children. The informative books from Gabriele Kuby were warmly recommended as reading material on the topic.

To conclude our meeting, the family award was given to Aiko Yamada, an artist from Japan who lives in a three-generation household and is very active in familial and social domains.

This wonderful and important event was brought to an end with lively discussion over coffee and cake, and a souvenir group photo.

Many thanks to all who worked hard to make this a successful event; we will continue no matter what!

Report: Hubert Arnoldi

