

## International Day of Peace Observed in Germany

Gregor Sattler and Hubert Arnoldi  
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Berlin, Germany—UPF marked the UN International Day of Peace with programs in two of Germany's major cities.



### Bonn

Reports about UPF serving those in need were the highlight of the International Day of Peace celebration in Bonn.

The commemoration of the United Nations day was held on September 20, 2015, by the local chapters of UPF and of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization.

Meeting under the UN-designated theme for 2015 of "Partnerships for Peace – Dignity for All," the participants heard about projects in which WFWP and UPF members were involved this year.

The audience was deeply impressed by a report on a German/Austrian couple who have been caring for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This summer UPF members from Bonn supported their activities and provided for a special celebration, which brought much joy to both children and adults in the refugee camp

Another topic was the aid that was given to Nepal after the Himalayan nation was struck by a devastating earthquake on April 25, 2015. Members of UPF not only donated food and material goods but also provided human help by meeting the people in need on site.

On a lighter note, beautiful pictures and some episodes from the "Peace Road 2015" initiative were presented, a project that was embraced especially by young people in over 120 countries. In the spirit of the UPF founder, the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, they walked and bicycled for peace on all continents. Some went to hot spots, such as the border between North and South Korea. In Germany several teams cycled along the former Iron Curtain and along the former Berlin Wall. Most impressive of all was the report about a 65-year-old Japanese-American UPF member who crossed the United States on foot in less than 90 days.

The audience was encouraged to get involved in local activities, such as the monthly "Silence for Peace" or the annual "Prayers of the Religions," organized by activists of different faiths.

Musical contributions from various countries, selected texts and poetry based on the motto of the Peace Day provided inspiration but also fun.

After the official program ended, a lively discussion continued among the audience, who came from all over Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South America and Asia, showing clearly that "Partnerships for Peace—Dignity for All" was a matter close to everyone's heart.



## Stuttgart

A highly motivated group of people met in Stuttgart on September 20, 2015, to observe the UN International Day of Peace and to express their passionate and heartfelt desire for peace.

The latest International Day of Peace message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in which he spoke about strengthening the ideal of peace between people of all nations, was read aloud.

This year's theme is: "Partnerships for Peace—Dignity for All." It is essential to highlight the importance of all segments of society and to intensify cooperative efforts in the pursuit of peace. The valuable partnership of governments, NGOs and faith-based groups is essential for the work of the United Nations.

"Today should be a day of cease-fire and nonviolence." The UN asks that on this day all people have an attitude of rejecting animosity and inspiring and educating each other on the topic of peace.

The Stuttgart event opened with a performance of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata by pianist Daniel Henrich.

Following this, representatives of several religions offered prayers and readings in a festive atmosphere, and the candle and water ceremony was carried out.

Representatives from the Sufi-Mihr Foundation stressed the importance of devotion, of allowing oneself to be guided by God's representatives and of each person living his or her religion. Volker Steinlein, a Christian Scientist, emphasized the supreme value of unconditional love and that each person should strive for peace. Peace comes from recognizing and practicing spiritual insights. Myself, the family, siblings-praying and doing and finding one's identity.

Tomasz Krzyzowski from the Stuttgart chapter of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization that is affiliated with UPF, stressed the necessity of finding powerful peaceful solutions amid war, and translating them into relationships. Manfred Schick reminded us of the sad fact that evil is still very powerful, and that our subconscious is very burdened. We need a lot of humility to be able to listen.

Margit Henrich saw the Human Fall as the origin of the current animosity as it points to the horizontal path for science and politics. But as long as we are unable to find the vertical path, which stresses the pursuit of an understanding of the honor, will and love of God, and as long as science and politics are not harmonized with faith and religion, they will remain greedy and egoistic and lead to new wars. Then she read five texts on the topic of peace from the Anthology of Sacred Texts.

In conclusion, Hubert Arnoldi, secretary general of the Stuttgart chapter of UPF, read an excerpt from the book World Scripture on the topic of peace (p.994): God wishes to give us freedom and peace for a particular reason, and that is that we should reach perfection as His partner. Thus peace is not the final goal, but rather the beginning of something greater: true love, true society and heaven on earth. Peace has meaning only in the context of God's plan. The misuse of freedom as taking the opportunity to sin leads inevitably to servitude. Thus God gave us a conscience as an inner compass to guide us in the direction of goodness, and gives every child loving parents to educate him toward peace.

He ended with a quote from Albert Einstein: "Peace cannot be achieved by violence. It can be reached only by understanding."

After a group photo, there was an ongoing intense discussion.