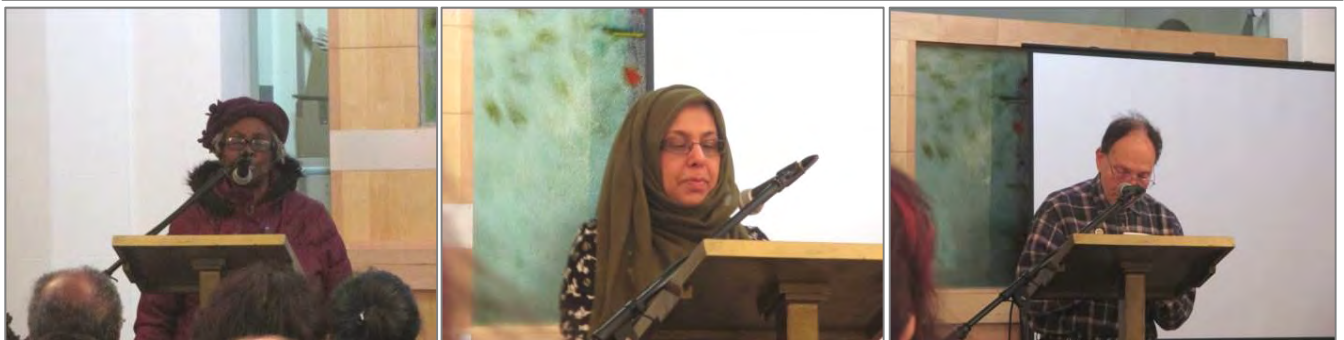


Interfaith Worship Service

"Becoming One Family Under God"

The Al Mahdi Institute, Birmingham, UK, January 18, 2015



Jean Douglas - Yasmin Fazal - Bert Gedin

By David Earle

Coming so soon after the tragic events which occurred in France recently, the Interfaith Service we had planned for January 18th was extremely poignant. A fusion of Anglican, Catholic and Pentecostal Christians came together with Muslim brothers and sisters, and people of Jewish descent to share in a joint

service with our Unificationist family, under the theme of 'Becoming One Family Under God'.

We were privileged to be able to hold our service in the prayer room of the Al Mahdi Institute, with the full blessing of the Institute's Founder, and its current Director and Senior Lecturer, Sheikh Arif Abdul Hussain. Sheikh Arif, truly an enlightened being, has spoken at our Interfaith Peace Blessing

each year since 2012, and participated in the Blessing with his wife in 2013. All who hear him speak testify to the universal wisdom which emanates from a place deep inside his heart.

We began with two songs, one of which - 'Morning has Broken' - was made famous by the singer Yusuf Islam, formerly Cat Stevens. This was followed by interfaith prayers from the Christian, Muslim and Jewish

traditions. (The very appropriate Jewish prayer is printed at the end of this article.)

We then stood and said Family Pledge No 4 from the Unificationist tradition, promising to try and "build the Universal Family" together. This was followed by a Christian and a Muslim song, from Maureen and Sabira, and then extracts from World Scripture from the section on 'Unity and Community'.

After another devotional song, 'Be Thou My Vision', containing deep words from the Christian tradition, David Earle spoke on the theme of Becoming One Family Under God, quoting from Father Moon's words contained in the beautiful new Holy Book, the Cheon Seong Gyeong. This is really a work of art, and such a precious resource, along with World Scripture, particularly for occasions such as these.

We concluded our worship with the song 'Make Me a Channel of Your Peace', often associated with the Prayer of St Francis of Assisi, and 'The

Times They Are A Changing', a modification of Bob Dylan's original song. And then a concluding prayer, offering up our collective devotion to God.

Thanks to our members for their help with music and technical support, Sunday School, welcoming and refreshments, and for the more than 40 guests who had the courage to join together with us in such a humble and respectful way.

Prayer from the Hasidic tradition, Mystics of Judaism.

(quoted from 'Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim' by Edward Hays)

My Beloved One, how easily do I allow fear to be the soil of my life.

Ten thousand fears cluster at my door: fears of death and of life, Fears of thieves and evil, fears of sickness and old age,

Fears of unemployment and war, fears of being shamed and injured.

How easily do politicians and preachers, merchants, militants and advertisers,

Feed off my countless hidden fears, promising protection and salvation. Yet in You, and You alone, do I find sufficient strength to live my life unafraid.

I firmly believe that You love me, with all my faults and failings, And if I am in Your embrace, whom or what should I fear?

Teach me the wisdom of caution, to live with a watchful eye, and liberate me from all fear.

O Blessed One, You are my insurance and my pledge.

You are my defense and security, my ground.

In Your love is my sole safety; of whom shall I be afraid?

Do not think that the words of prayer, as you say them, go up to God.

It is not the words themselves that ascend; rather it is the burning desire of your heart

That rises like smoke to Heaven.

If your prayer consists only of words and letters, but does not contain your heart's desire,

How can it rise up to God?



Rev Maureen Foxall - Symbols of our faiths - Shazeen Iqbal

