

# Finding Ways To Reconciliation

Oslo, Norway, 4. February 2016



By Steinar Murud

The Universal Peace Federation of Norway organized an evening conference in Oslo on 4th February as part of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. The event was co-hosted by one of the many Oslo churches belonging to the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the country's majority religion. The theme of the evening was "Finding Ways to Reconciliation".

This was the third year UPF-Norway has commemorated this significant UN

initiative for interreligious understanding by organizing an event for leaders of a wide range of faiths. And this year for the first time, the conference was recognized by the political authorities. Oslo's deputy mayor Khamshajiny Gunaratnam graced the event with her presence. In fact, she opened the event by emphasizing the need for tolerance. Her main point was that in a society with great religious and racial diversity, a large amount of tolerance is definitely needed. We are different and cannot make others think like us. That does

not work. We must show tolerance. But tolerance is not the same as acceptance, but a condition for creating a sense of belonging in a society with great diversity.

Religious leaders representing the Lutheran Church, Sunni Islam, Shia Islam, Buddhism and Brahma Kumaris lit candles for peace while the master of ceremony, Steinar Murud, the leader of UPF-Norway, explained about the significance of the event, how it was initiated six years ago and the great need for such events in a world marred by war and terrorism.

The Rev. Sjur Atle Furuli of the Lutheran Church spoke about the importance of forgiveness, grace and **reconciliation in today's secular society**. We must dare to enter the difficult dialogue and talk about the painful things many have experienced. Imam Sayed Masih Soltani spoke about whom we need to be reconciled with, claiming **that "my worst enemy is the one between my shoulders"**. We have to begin with ourselves and our own use of words as words may trigger wars. Steinar Murud of UPF-Norway mentioned how everyone needs to be reconciled not only with other people, but also with himself and God. An essential requirement for reconciliation and forgiveness is a mature heart. It is the parental heart that is needed in **today's world. A brotherhood of man is not enough. We should even learn to see things from God's viewpoint.**



With deputy mayor of Oslo – religious leaders – panel of speakers