

UPF Principles of Peace explained at an interfaith roundtable in Russia

Dmitry Samko
February 6, 2015



Moscow, Russia—The secretary general of the Moscow branch of UPF-Russia explained the UPF Principles of Peace at an interfaith roundtable attended by religious leaders, scientific and creative intellectuals, journalists and public figures.

The roundtable "Spiritual Dialogue of Christianity and Islam as a Guarantee of Stable Social Development and Interethnic Harmony" was held in the Moscow House of Nationalities on February 6, 2015. It was organized by the Foundation for Unity of Russian and Georgian People together with the Harmony and Light Foundation, which supports social and spiritual programs.

Opening the roundtable, the deputy director of the House of Nationalities, A.B. Drozhzhin, emphasized that in the context of globalization, any careless or reckless phrase can spark outrage in national and religious communities around the world. It's up to national public associations and the state, working together, to bring about dialogue between cultures and harmonization of international relations. The Moscow House of Nationalities has been doing this for more than 15 years and is ready to share its experience with all interested parties, he said.

The author and host of the program "Dialogue of Civilizations," Sergei V. Dvoryanov, outlined the main ways that the state can prevent ethnic and interfaith tension, and said that civil and social institutions can play an important supportive role.

In his speech, Dmitry Samko, secretary general of the Moscow chapter of UPF-Russia, told about the five UPF Principles for Peace and described activities being conducted in connection with the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week.

The Russian Orthodox rector of St. Nicholas Church on Bersenevka, Father Kirill (Sakharov), urged the audience to remember the positive relations that Christians and Muslims enjoyed during the Soviet era.

Obvious blasphemies against religious authorities should not be allowed, he said, and improved knowledge of other faiths would help to counter stereotypes.



The renowned theologian, scholar and translator of the Qur'an Valeriya M. Porokhova stressed that freedom comes on the basis of a high level of culture, which is taught in the family, at school, and through national traditions.

I.V. Nikulin, the chair of the interregional public organization known as Justice, said that from time immemorial Russia has been a multinational country, with all faiths coexisting peacefully. A lot of conflicts appeared only after the collapse of the Soviet Union, he said.

At the end of the roundtable, the participants watched the trailer for the film *The Humane Face of Islam*, and then they unanimously decided to propose an initiative to the foundation *Harmony and Light* to create a religious channel that would present programs about various religions.

UPF-Russia would like to thank N.L. Pikemen, V.V. Politov, F.D. Solovey, O.V. Vasilyeva, and N.S. Petrova, staff members of the Moscow House of Nationalities, for organizing and conducting the roundtable.