

UPF Frankfurt, Germany Holds Peace Talk at Book Fair

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Posters of the Kando publishing house displayed at the 2022 Frankfurt Book Fair

Frankfurt, Germany - The world-famous Frankfurt Book Fair was the site of a UPF Peace Talk titled "Forgive. Love. Unite."

The panel discussion with Professor Angela Mickley and Pastor Kai Feller was held on October 22, 2022 at the Kando publishing house display at the book fair.



The motto of this year's Frankfurt Book Fair was "Translate. Transfer. Transform." - with messages from

all over the world, translated into many languages in order to bring about changes - above all, changes for peaceful coexistence.

This was perfectly matched by a motto of UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon - "Forgive. Love. Unite." - which the Kando publishing house trade fair team had chosen for the presentation at their display.



The participants in the UPF panel discussion had interesting aspects to contribute:

Angela Mickley, a professor of peace education, conflict management and mediation at the Potsdam University of Applied Sciences;

Pastor Kai Feller, since 2019 the pastor for partnership and ecumenism in the Lutheran Church district of Lübeck-Lauenburg; he also is well known for his opposition to the German Democratic Republic in the late 1980s.



Karl-Christian Hausmann, the chairman of UPF Germany, skillfully moderated the panel discussion, which was followed attentively by a crowd of listeners at the Kando display and additionally by some 100 online participants.

In his introduction, Mr. Hausmann explained the significance of the theme "Forgive. Love. Unite." - which the Kando publishing house addressed in a four-language brochure (German, English, Russian, Ukrainian). The brochure's texts were excerpts from the autobiography of Reverend Moon and reflected his lifelong commitment to peace and reconciliation, marked by his imprisonment in a North Korean labor camp and his personal encounter with North Korean ruler Kim Il Sung 41 years later.

The conversation between the two speakers was shaped by their different backgrounds. Professor Mickley, a native West Berliner, can look back on

decades of practical experience of peace work in conflict areas such as Northern Ireland, South Africa, Namibia, Moldova, Georgia and others. Thus she used various examples to explain how mediation

between hostile parties can work with the aim of shaping future coexistence.

In contrast, Pastor Feller grew up on the other side of the Berlin Wall in the former German Democratic Republic, where he became known through the "Ossietzky Affair." Because of his protest against a military parade in East Berlin, he was expelled from the Ossietzky Secondary School in September 1988 in front of an assembled student body. This reinforced his firm conviction that peace cannot be achieved without freedom. Peace requires a system in which freedom of speech, assembly and religion are guaranteed.



Professor Mickley emphasized: "Peace is something you can really do. There are steps that can be taken." This is true not only in civil war zones: for example, in conflicts between young people in schools, or in coming to terms with injustices in the colonial past.

"Forgiveness can neither be ordered nor forced; it is a voluntary step. But you can get there in a fairly structured way," Professor Mickley said. In her experience, she said, the process from confrontation to encounter to mutual understanding of the other side and possible forgiveness is transformative, because in the course of honest exchange, relationships with each other change step by step until finally reconciliation is possible.

Pastor Feller particularly addressed the situation of people who are abused by the state system and restricted in their actions. He talked about his classmates in the former German Democratic Republic who opposed him under the given circumstances, but subsequently suffered from guilt, blamed themselves and even experienced depression - with the perpetrators themselves becoming victims of the repressive state system. Those students needed Pastor Feller's forgiveness to be relieved from that burden.

However, the situation is different with regard to violent aggression - whether by a skinhead group against an individual or by one country against another, he said.

The first thing to do here is to stand by the victim and stop the perpetrator. This is the phase we are in now, regarding the conflict between Russia and Ukraine - an "asymmetric" conflict, as Professor Mickley called it.

But she added something important: At any point in time, especially after the end of a war, non-political groups and organizations are called upon to build bridges. For although the weapons may be silent, sustainable peace requires the healing of wounds, the will for new togetherness, and a clear goal for a common future.