

## **Report 3: Women Encounter Women**

### **Content: Sharing Praxis in Religions:**

#### **Christianity, Buddhism and Islam**

Simon Peters Hus, Islandsvej 4, 6000 Kolding

1 -6 pm. February 28, 2026

### **Preparations**

The preparation for this event was in January during the meeting of all volunteers in the church. Then on February 22, the group met again in to finalize the program. Women from 3 -4 religions said yes to share about their faith and practice. Cards of questions for groups around tables were used for conversation/discussion after the presentation of the 3 ladies. There were also women who said yes to come with cakes. A volunteer said yes to take care of the children.

Volunteers came earlier to arrange the place. The tables were prepared. The blackboard was moved to the front. Sound system and microphone were set in order. Four tables with chairs around were arranged. Two long tables for coffee and tea, cakes, fruits were also prepared. A table for children with materials for stone painting and drawings were set forth on another table.

It was cold and heavily raining the whole day which hindered some of the women with children who used to walk on the road to reach the meeting place. And it was Ramadan week for the Muslim women. The women from Ukraine had just done the excellent program in remembrance of the 4<sup>th</sup> year-war of Russia in their own country.

The above factors affected the attendance of women who used to come every Women Encounter Women event, also called *Kvinder møder kvinder* in Danish language. It is an event that takes place every last Saturday every month. And on this day, it was meant to share and understand our way of living in harmony in spite of differences in religions, inspired by the call the UN World InterFaith Harmony Week has posed upon us.

And on this last Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> of February, there were only 15 women and 2 children who joined, representing 5 countries of origin: Sri Lanka, Syria, Denmark, Philippines, Poland and three religions: Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. But we had a good time.

## **The Program**

**Coffee time, personal talks around the table**

**Songs for women**

**Intro to the UN World InterFaith Harmony Week**

**Presentation of the 3 ladies (opened to questions after each presentation)**

Akila on Buddhism

Sultan and Khabat on Islam

Jessica on the Protestant Christianity

Gotcha on the Catholic Christianity

**Conversations around tables with some cards**

**Rounding off**

**Cleaning Up**

## **Knowing our names/ Coffee Time**

The event started with having coffee and cakes. Ladies from Sri Lanka, Philippines and Syria came with cakes with recipes from their own countries of origin. Coffee, tea and fruits were on the table.

The materials for children's creative activities and cards for conversations were also made ready by Lone Krogh Møller, the coordinator of the Cross-Cultural Ministry of Kolding Deanery.

The song sheets were prepared by Elizabeth, also made available on the tables.

Elsebeth Fischer Nielsen presented the program and introduced the speakers. Everyone was then invited to take coffee and cake and what they could find from the long table.

Elizabeth Padillo Olesen led the singing: welcoming each other by singing welcome words in 5 languages accompanied with body movements: "Hej gooddag, hello Guten Tag, Welcome Welcome (2x), Buenos dias(2x) (*In Danish, German, English and Spanish*)

It was followed by a song celebrating women; "Viva, Viva, alle kvinder" (Hurrah Hurrah, all women) with an adopted melody from Tanzania and also adding more verses by singing the names of their countries to sing hurrah for. Hurrah, Hurrah, Poland, Syria, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Denmark.

There was time for them to choose a song from the song sheet. The song requested was "I believe in angels", a song of the Abba musical group from Sweden. Women could joyfully affirm themselves as angels through the tasks in life and service they are engaged in.

## **Information on UN World Inter-Faith Harmony Week (especially for those who came for the first time)**

After the singing, Elizabeth spoke to introduce part of the history of UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, on King Abdullah 2<sup>nd</sup> of Jordan, a Muslim leader who endorsed the proposal for the World InterFaith Happy Week to be celebrated by member countries in the UN on September 2010 and was ratified by the UN General Assembly in October 2010 thereby celebrating the first week of February 1-7 as World Interfaith Harmony Week. Invitation to mark this week has been a global event during the first week in February, but free space has been given that many more events can be continually celebrated until the first week of March. It is required to register every planned event and submit the report of every event, being carried out. The submission of reports is on March 8<sup>th</sup>. A link on the WIFHW homepage will be also shared with them where they can read the reports.

This year is the 8<sup>th</sup> year we have participated in marking the UN World InterFaith Harmony Week since we started in 2019. In 2023 our work in Kolding, shared through the reported events, received attention and was granted the Second Silver Medal Prize and an amount of 3 thousand dollars which went into the furtherance of the work of the church for strangers and refugees. There were expressions of rejoicing over the recollection of this win among women, a reminder to inspire as we continue to be involved in marking UN WIFHW.

## **Presentations /sharing from Women: on Buddhism, Islam and Christianity**

The following therefore presented on their religion and the praxis in actual life:

1. **Akila Dulashini**, a doctor from Sri- Lanka and has just been in Denmark for nearly a year and now is able to present in Danish language some points in Buddhism in her own daily practice:
  - a. The value of daily meditation in her life, which gives her peace and harmony inside her being.
  - b. The five things to observe in order not to hurt or destroy others
    - 1) Not killing
    - 2) Not telling lies
    - 3) Not stealing from others
    - 4) Not being unfaithful in all relationships
    - 5) Not getting drunk or sick by alcohol and other excesses or lusts
  - c. Do good and help others all the time to everyone or all, even to those who do bad against us. Just give love.
  - c. Do offerings like flowers or food before the statue of Buddha.
  
2. **Sultan R. Zibar (Kurdistan)**, refugee from Syria, a former teacher in her own country, now working and studying and doing voluntary work for Danish Refugee Council. She is joined by Khabat, from the same country:

### **Shared about the five pillars in Islam:**

- a. Declaration of faith, on Allah as the only God and Muhammed as His Messenger
- b. Prayer five times in a day before Mecca, (*and sometimes wondering when traveling, which direction is Mecca and GPS sometimes is a good help.*)
- c. The work of charity, helping and giving those in need
- d. Fasting, Ramadan / Khabat could not eat with us, but she joined to be with the women, and partly supported Sultan's presentation.
- e. Pilgrimage to Meccah

Doing good and kindness to others, family, friends and country is essential in any religious faith.

Denmark organizations often call for volunteers to help and she is so glad to be part in the network of programs that call people to fellowship with one another by eating together and presenting what they can offer and show to the people that they also have the capacity to love and share even earlier as we started as refugees in this country and received by great hospitality. Sultan baked cake for women, and she is often active in other activities by contributing prepared food, a menu from her home country for people in Denmark to taste.

3. **Jessica Reinert**, originally from the Philippines, working in Denmark in the health sector, sharing with women on her Christian faith within the Protestant Church.

From a family with a father who is a pastor, she learned the Bible from childhood and as a youth and student, got the task to lead the singing in the church for worship services.

### **How does she practice her Christian life ?**

- a. Every morning, she sends sms messages to her family in the Philippines and friends and attached is her prayer for the day. Prayer has been a good help in her life, feeling connection with God who is the source of blessings.
  - b. Her faith has also taught her forgiveness. She went through very painful divorce, and prayers and Jesus' teaching on forgiveness helped her to accept what happened. without harboring hatred in her heart. Jesus' crucifixion on the cross, asking to forgive those who do us wrong, meant a lot to her.
  - c. She doesn't have to be identified as a Christian, but she wants that people can see that she is by how she lives in love to all people: family circle, colleagues in job, and those far away and those she does not know but who need help. She has some projects in the Philippines, she is supporting which help others in need.
  - d. She wants to get more time to read the Bible. At times she writes songs from biblical texts to share with friends. Jessica plays guitar and makes songs.
  - e. She said, she does not have to labor much to be accepted. She is already accepted and loved by God in Jesus.
4. **Gotsha, The lady from Poland** on her Catholic Christian praxis  
Mentioned some points of the Catholic Sacraments which meant a lot for her...
- a. She loves going to church every Sunday, loves the fellowship and the songs and the reading and the sermon
  - b. The Sacrament of the Bread and Wine is something she participates in. She is a bit critical when a person who is divorced is prohibited from this sacrament.

- c. She loves using the rosary necklace for prayer in her hand and doing her personal prayers.
- d. Confession is a good chance to share her problem, burden or sin with the priest and she finds forgiveness and guidance, happy to have a good relationship with the priest she can talk with.

*Note: few questions were raised and they were encouraged to continue the conversation in small groups.*

### **Group Discussion/Conversation in 3 tables**

And using the prepared cards for discussion ...

Time to ask questions and giving others to share. Three groups were made around 3 tables, providing also possibility for a possible translator in each table when necessary.

### **Leading questions on the provided cards on the tables (in English)**

How do you practice your faith?

Do you believe in God or do you believe in something different?

Where do you go to be with others who have the same faith as yours?

What does your faith mean to you in your everyday life?

### **Elsebeth Fischer-Nielsen summarized the presentation and discussion and what binds us as one people...with common affirmations:**

We believe in God or in the higher being that gives us purpose and meaning in life.

We are people who need to be with others or belong to in a community.

We make mistakes and we are happy to be corrected or forgiven so that broken relationships could be rebuilt again.

We all thirst for love and to be loved, wanting security and blessings.

We have all the capacity to give love, to help and share what we have to help the needy and those who are suffering.

We are people who seek God by our own efforts: by prayers, by our offerings and good actions to help others, and God meets us where we are.

We are people of different religions, but we can be friends, workers and ambassadors for peace, justice, and good will.

**Closing song:** “Jeg er med jer alle dage, indtil verdens ende

Alle dage, Alle dage.” accompanied with guitar

*A song declaring that God is with us until the end of the world, and in all days and in all days.*

**Common tasks after the session ended:**

Cleaning up, sharing remains of the cakes, washing up in the kitchen.

Follow up talks and goodbye.

The program ended at 6 pm.

**Enclosures:**

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*Photos of women during that afternoon.*

*Reel video on the afternoon:*

*Photos of the cards for the tables*

