

Tribute to 20 Years of WFWP Bridge of Peace Program in Europe

The first bridge of peace ceremony was in 1995 in which thousands of Japanese went to America for peace ceremonies. Since then they have served as a vehicle for reconciliation between people of different races, religions and backgrounds. As a Tribute to 20 years of the WFWP Bridge of Peace Program in Europe, Mrs. Rita Seewald and Mrs. Tina Coombs could share deeply about the role the Bridge of Peace ceremony has played in healing wounds of abuse, intolerance, prejudice and war.

Rita Seewald who is the president for WFWP Germany was the first to speak. Rita shared her experience in 1995 at a reconciliation worship service in Frankfurt in which she offered a prayer to ask for the forgiveness for the suffering that Germany had inflicted on other countries. Rita expressed the intense pain that overcame her for the people that had died and suffered during the war. Later they started reconciliation ceremonies to heal this pain and suffering, in the form of Bridge of Peace ceremonies.

Second to speak was Tina Coombs who has been involved in interfaith work in the UK and USA and has served as the WFWP UK secretary general, branch leader, president and European president until 2007. Tina shared that we are a fruit of our past and that we are unconsciously caught in a chain of anger and resentment with internal barriers that need to be challenged. The bridge of peace has been used as a tool for healing and can be used for the development of people and societies. Stable solutions are not developed only through politics but on the basis of personal communication with each other. Tina shared that to be a woman means to carry the heaviest load at all times, which therefore makes sense that women need to build a bridge of peace first. To achieve conflict resolution through the Bridge of Peace, we need to take responsibility, have respect, repentance, forgiveness and commitment. So the question now is where do we go from here?