



Friday 4th December

Interfaith Constituency Meeting



There was the first interfaith constituency meeting at the COP21. 30 people came to the meeting from the Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim faiths. Each shared about their work, pilgrimages, declarations, and future plans. Vikram and Valériane were part of the discussion. Another meeting is planned for next week where the chief of staff to the UNFCCC will come and join.

Press Conference with World Council of Churches

The press conference was titled: Faith groups evaluation of Negotiations. Faith-based community are united in expressing their concern for the poor and the moral issues around climate change. This interfaith press conference was arranged at short notice by the World Council of Churches.





The panel comprised people representing:

- CIDSE Catholic Development Agency,
- Brahma Kumaris, Sister Jayanti,
- World Council of Churches, the Archbishop of Sweden,
- Buddhist Tzu Foundation,
- Caritas International and
- Greek Orthodox Church, an archbishop.

So it was a good line-up. Everyone presented their viewpoints in just two minutes each and then there were questions to each one, again a very quick roundup of ideas.

Sister Jayanti said that the one of the things we can all do, is to change our lifestyle. All faith traditions stand together in asking everyone to make sensible choices and understanding the impact of our choices on the environment. Together we share one planet and one home. Whatever happens in one part of the world will affect the other part. We have to work together for the future.

The Archbishop from Sweden powerfully made some quick points to explain the role of faith leaders:

- To guide leaders in making moral choices by understanding the role of human beings in the creation.
- Religious leadership has the power to influence. Use this wisely both at the grass root level and at the decision making level.
- It is a question of climate justice – whose voices do we hear?
- Be good stewards to our own resources; we have assets in terms of forest and land.

From the audience, there was a call for an Ethical Eating Day on 11th January. Sister Jayanti was asked about behaviour and she said that “This year I have seen more people talk about change of lifestyle than ever before. We suggest taking time for the self, for silent reflection, for contemplation and all traditions are united in that recommendation. If we come back to the basic principles of a spiritual lifestyle, many things can change.”

The final comment was that the faith community is indispensable. They have the voices of hope and the narrative of hope. This we need to counteract paralysis and anxiety that appears as result of climate change.

This conference can be seen on-line at:

<http://unfccc6.meta-fusion.com/cop21/events/2015-12-04-11-30-world-council-of-churches-faith-groups-evaluation-of-negotiations>



After the press conference Sister Jayanti and Sonja met friends from the Green Asia Network in South Korea. They have worked with Brahma Kumaris before in the biodiversity conference in Seoul last year and an interfaith conference earlier this year.

Presentation by Al Gore

Brahma Kumaris attended a presentation by Al Gore who had come to give time to the activists. The hall was packed, but Sister Jayanti, Sonja and Golo managed to get a seat on the front row. In fact, as soon as he started he said that, rather than a lecture, he would speak very briefly and then open up to questions.

He shared that there is a difference between linear cause and effect and systemic cause and effect. He gave a few points of advice to the 500 plus activists present:



- Become an activist in winning the conversations. Do not get angry, do not be too persistent but learn the art of dialogue.
- As a participant of the global market, make sustainable choices. The business will then always respond to the customer.
- Be active in the political process, which is the most difficult process. Become an online-empowered-organization, make many clicks, and use social media and follow-up with personal meetings.



So after 10-15 minutes, when questions started, Sister Jayanti was able to ask: Political leaders have all spoken about lifestyle and values, how do we make this happen in people's lives, how can we bring about a change of consciousness? He said there were many things we could do to change our lifestyle, move to renewable energy sources, make wise decision about what it is we do and buy. He suggested



Sister Jayanti had more skill in answering this question than he had.

The moderator said that the boomerang is coming back to you sister then asked Sister Jayanti to respond. So, she spoke about how all the traditions speak about silence and contemplation and, if we were to do this, then we would have the possibility of listening to the voice of conscience, and our behaviour would then change and we'd be able to move forward together.

Mr Gore then said: "You sound like my daughter – she works with Earth Ethics and she's connected with the Parliament of World Religions and she reminds me of this every day. And, yes, I agree with this."



His answers to many questions were also very practical and indicated his total commitment to serving

humanity and the planet. Mr Gore extended his programme by 15 minutes to answer the huge number of questions. In consequence, he had to leave very quickly but the BK team were able afterwards to meet the moderator who appreciated the question and he was thanked for giving a second opportunity to respond to Mr Gore.



After the programme, Sister Jayanti was interviewed by a student, from VUB University in Brussels, who was doing research of the faith communities' influence on the negotiations (the text from the interview can be seen at www.theinsidersinparis.be)



COP21 Space

Valérieane in discussion arranging more meetings





Concert with Desert Rose and dinner with the German delegation



There was a beautiful concert by Desert Rose at the Centre. Many people had come. There was also conducted meditation throughout the concert which was also very effective.

After the concert, there was a candle light dinner for friends from the German delegation. The special guests were Markus, the person who has been connecting with Golo for some years on behalf of the German Government and has supported the India One project and Vera, the woman who is in-charge of the project on behalf of the German Ministry of Environment. It was a great opportunity for these two friends to meet Sister Jayanti, Francois, Sonja and Patricia.

Interview with Francois Becher

Fréquence Paris Plurielle 106.3 Mhz (a Paris radio station) interviewed Francois Becher in the Brahma Kumaris main Paris centre in Rue Orfila.

Website eco.brahmakumaris.org

(end of report)