



Do Not Hesitate to Share Your Smile. It is a Renewable Resource!

Bro. Golo and sis. Sonja in St. Petersburg, Russia

4-9 July, 2018

“We have tons of information about how human activity threatens the ecological equilibrium of the planet Earth. We have tons of information about technologies that can prevent further pollution of nature. However, in order to make all of that knowledge work we require the values of trust, love and care.” This was the key point of a series of insightful motivational sessions held here in July with the participation of **BK Golo from Germany** and **BK Sonja from Denmark**.



Neither summer vacations, nor the attraction of the FIFA World Cup taking place in Russia these days, could prevent lots of people, both experts and public, from coming to Lighthouse on 5 July for the session on **“Life in Harmony: the Confluence of High Values and Clean Energy”**. Brother Golo and sister Sonja shared the success stories of using clean energies at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters and retreat centres and developing the international Environmental Initiative.

The audience was greeted by **Mr. Yuri Shevchuk, environmental adviser to the governor of Leningrad region, chairperson of the Green Cross organization**. “The event we are taking part in today is both beautiful and informative. We have met people who are doing their best to make our planet clean, light and free from both physical and moral, or spiritual, pollution.”



A get-together for special guests after the main event became a friendly tea-table discussion of environmental and spiritual issues by experienced and passionate scientists, environmentalists, university professors and entrepreneurs.

Prof. Mikhail Ignatiev, chairperson of St. Petersburg branch of the international organization “Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs”, expressed his concerns about the volatile situation in the world saying, “By 1995 the humanity had succeeded in considerably reducing the risk of a nuclear conflict. The Pugwash movement that brings together scholars and public figures across the world to prevent the nuclear threat even received the Nobel Peace Prize for that achievement. However, the situation has deteriorated dramatically since then. The level of mutual trust between countries and political leaders has plummeted to a new low. When nation states and their leaders mistrust one another, the role of grass-roots is fundamentally important.”



Mr. Oleg Mukhin, vice-president of the Astronautics Federation of Russia, shared his vision of the relationship between man and the Earth, “Humans are unique among all the living beings, as they possess the ability to know the self. I feel that the Earth is also a living entity that responds to human aggressive behaviour with tsunamis, earthquakes and other calamities. We have to realise the existence of a deep connection between human beings and the material world.”



Ms. Olga Madison, co-chair of the NGO “Keep St. Petersburg Tidy”, coordinator of numerous large-scale international projects, underlined the importance of environmental education for kids. “Consider our project “The Green Flag”. It unites about 18 million children worldwide. However, the actual number of project participants is much bigger because every child is related to at least two adults, be it their parents, grandparents or teachers. In this way, so many

millions people have been working hand in hand to make our planet green, blue and beautiful!”

Ms. Elena Golovina, head of the laboratory “Weather and Man” (St. Petersburg State Hydrometeorological University), suggested the experts discuss the issue of motivating college and university students. “Inspiring young people to realise their true inner self amidst the negative environment they are exposed to, is a very challenging but important task.”





On 6 July, bro. Golo and sis. Sonja visited the **Ecological Union of St. Petersburg** and met its chairperson and staff members. **Mr. Semyon Gordyshevsky, founder and chairperson of the Ecological Union**, said at their meeting, “It is interesting that both the BK Environmental Initiative statement and the Charter of our Ecological Union have the same article about individual responsibility. Normally, people expect someone else should do everything for them. Very few start with the self. Your organization, essentially spiritual, has now come to carrying out environmental projects, and I feel that this is a very reasonable and appropriate development.”



The same day another meeting took place at the headquarters of the Russian Geographical Society, a unique museum-like art-nouveau building hosting the largest geographical library in Europe. **Prof. Vladimir Razumovsky, vice-president of the Russian Geographical Society**, personally conducted a guided tour of the headquarters for his guests. Then a friendly dialogue took place about the importance of combining technological, intellectual and spiritual resources of humanity for addressing the most pressing issues in today’s world.