

Words of Wilfried Bockholt at the Armistice Commemoration, Malmesbury, 11 November 2018

I have a dream.

My grandfather was born in 1900. He was no longer a boy and no man, when Kaiser Wilhelm II sent him to World War I. He got lucky. Unlike the 17 million dead. Otherwise I would not exist.

My father was born in 1928. He was no longer a boy and no man, when Adolf Hitler sent him to World War II. He got lucky. Unlike the more than 60 million dead. Otherwise I would not exist.

I was born in 1957. My luck! The two big wars have me given a free, democratic country with a wonderful constitution, which are like the Ten Commandments of the Bible or the United Nations Human Rights Declaration.

But I grew up too in a divided Germany. I know the barbed wire and death strip between Germany East and West.

I grew up and got older in the time of Cold War.

But unlike my grandfather and father there was no one who sent me into a war.

I refused military service. Because my constitution gives me the right today.

I have seen Europe make peace. 1957, the year of my birth, the European Economic Community was founded. In 1973 Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark joined the European Community.

In 1973 I was the same age as my grandfather and father, when they were sent to war.

At school, my topic in politics for a weekly report was the Northern Ireland conflict.

Two years later I refused to do military service. Never again war! I have this dream and this hope!

I have a son, born in 1981. He was eight years old when we looked the news in the TV in the evening November 9, 1989 as in Berlin the wall was opened.

It was not a dream!

My son grew up in a country with fewer and fewer military personnel. He grew up in a country that belongs to Europe. A Europe to which more and more countries have joined. Yes, we are Germans. But we are also Europeans. And above all, we are one thing: humans

Like all, no matter what skin colour, which religion or which origin according to the randomness of the place of residence of our parents at our birth. We are one - on this little world! Today my son is almost 38 years old. He was 20, when terrorists attacked the World Trade Centre and the life of 3000 people were extinguished.

My daughter-in-law is Brazilian. And we all wonder what is happening today. We are afraid for our dream! We are afraid for peace in the world!

We are shocked by the change in the political leaders of this world!

Are 30 years after the fall of the wall, are 73 years after the Second World War, are 100 years after the First World War such a long time, that we can forget where power obsession, nationalism, hate, envy and egoism have led Europe and the world in the past?

My daughter has two sons. My grandchildren. They are 8 and 6 years old. They should not experience a war, nor a new cold war. They should experience the same happiness as I and most of us have been allowed to experience for decades.

I have a dream! But this dream is in danger. It is my responsibility to work for it that my children and grandchildren may dream the same dream as me. In peace and freedom. In a healthy world. In which we embrace rather than separate or reject.

Let us all return to the common ground, to the responsibility before God, the creation and the people.

On this little globe in space, which we call "earth"?

I believe that 65 years ago, this idea was the basis for the invitation from the Malmesbury youth workers, to invite young people from Niebüll to Malmesbury for the summer of 1954. Just eight years after the Second World War.

Thank you very much again therefore, that the people of Malmesbury have opened their arms and hearts very far.

Otherwise Diana Kluger and I would not be guests of you here today.

I believe in my dream!

Thank you for listening!