

UPF-South America Holds WCLC Webinar With Over 1,000 Participants

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South America -- On December 5, 2020, UPF-South America held a World Christian Leadership Conference (WCLC) webinar, with the theme "The importance of Christian unity and cooperation for peace and human development, as well as the importance of broader interfaith cooperation." Zoom participants numbered 517 and 718 watched on YouTube, bringing the total to 1,235 participants from all over South America and the world.

In commemoration of the year since the launch of the WCLC in December 2019, South America's spiritual leaders gathered to offer words of hope for the establishment of a union based on Christian principles, thereby drawing the world's attention to God and thus start strengthening families, uniting nations and protecting the environment.

The event's emcee was Dr. Neudir Simão Feraboli (Secretary General, UPF-South America). Opening the event with his words of welcome and congratulations on WCLC's one-year anniversary, he explained that the main issue we face is peace. To achieve lasting peace we must correct not only the results but mainly the causal issues. Considering that human history has been sown for a long time with blood and war, we can only seek a new result starting from a new cause, with fertile soil to receive the seed of peace. God needs a movement that can melt the wrong world and change it to the right way. This can be accomplished only through love in the same way that Jesus loved his enemies. WCLC South America was initiated with these words, under the banner of UPF and also of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD).

Hon. Charles Schultz Navarro (Former Senator, Republic of Colombia; Pastor, Restored Christian Church of Colombia) briefly prayed, thanking God for the opportunity to testify to Jesus Christ. He proclaimed the opening of this event organized and inspired by Dr. Moon's leadership and asked that we may have insight revealed by God's holy spirit to understand the importance of putting into practice the values of unity and cooperation.

After the presentation of a video on UPF's search for religious harmony, we received the words of Rev. Dong Mo Shin (Chairman, UPF-South America). He began his speech by thanking the religious leaders for their participation, citing the words of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon at the Third Rally of Hope, where she recalled the importance of unity and Christian cooperation for peace and human development. Because of this we are making a call to all believers, at a time when the world faces great division. UPF believes that every strategy for peace must take into account the spiritual reality of our identity, experience and human interaction, based on the principle that we are a family created by God.

Rev. Alejandra Stamateas (Pastor, Evangelical Ministry Presence of God, Argentina; author and professor) started by saying that we live in a de-Christianized world, a world that is in need of salvation. Each day we experience it as if life escapes from our hands. We die because of great catastrophes, but we also die each day a little when we distance ourselves from ourselves, when we do not eat well, when we remain in interpersonal relationships of violence. If we cannot experience God, we are not experiencing anything, and this makes us live on earth in an emptiness. The more distant we are from God the greater

the emptiness we feel. We as the body of Christ have the precious task of expressing Christ to the world, not as a theory, dogma or mandate, but as a spiritual experience.

Rev. Dr. Jesús Manoel Mejía Quiroz (Bishop; President, Pontifical American Catholic University; Ambassador for Peace; Coordinator, IAPD-Peru) For many centuries there has been a division between Christians; this causes a lot of pain and is contrary to the will of our Heavenly Parent. We believe in the power of prayer and unity. Together with all Christian and non-Christian religious leaders from around the world, let's work for unity under the leadership of our Mother of Peace. Together we can offer initiatives that lead us to seek paths of harmony and Peace. We have to look to the future and put aside our fundamentalism. We have much to learn from each other, breaking the boundaries of indifference, because our destiny is the same. Faith must lead us to peace. God did not call for us to compete; rather, we are to be Ambassadors for Peace.



Dr. Rafael Ruiz Gaona (Bishop; Patriarch, Paraguayan National Apostolic Catholic Church) told the participants that thanks to UPF and the Mother of Peace, we are meeting with the leaders of South America and the world to seek all options for peace. Each of us is called to be instruments of peace in our daily walk, in our work, in our family and in the religion that we profess. The integration of creeds is the essence of building true peace, forming a family under God, through interreligious dialogue.

Rev. Jonas de Melo Florêncio, (President, Founder, Mission Cristo Volta Church, Brazil) remembered his participation in WCLC in New York last year. He could see the love delivered by all the participants to Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. In this great global challenge, he said, we are fighting to fulfill peace. The greatest war is the struggle between the human body and the spirit. Nobody gives a caterpillar much value until it goes into a cocoon where the internal fight between the flesh and the spirit begins. After the passage of time this caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly, being able to fly and see a different world. So we must live guided by the spirit of God. After overcoming our internal battles in the cocoon that is the love of God, we will live free and fly everywhere through the Holy Spirit.

Archbishop Chrysóstomos (Leader, Orthodox Church; President, National Council for Religious Freedom-Latin America) observed that during this crisis generated by the pandemic we saw a global catastrophe. Today we have an opportunity to reflect and readjust the way we live, relate, and build our cities. Cities are places where solidarity and extraordinary resilience appeared, where strangers helped each other and essential workers. In cities we are seeing the best of the human spirit and the emergence of faith. Fifteen years ago, UPF emerged, an entity that disseminates in states, international organizations and religions a call to fight for peace and the establishment of a true family of God.

Dr. Carlos Limonge Esterse (Judge; Founder, Crusade for Dignity; Ambassador for Peace) offered that we live in a very volatile world; everything changes very fast and uncertainly. Changes are difficult to predict; with a lot of information available, we don't know what is correct. If we are living in a crisis it is because we have a crisis within us. What is the role of religion in creating change? What has your religion done to build a peaceful world? What is the religion of God? God has no religion There is one thing that all religions have in common, which is God. God wants everyone to live as one loving family, working together to build a better world. To make a change, we must change ourselves first. Everything starts with a thought, moves to the will, and then to action. We must build lasting peace with thoughts of peace, the will to achieve it and actions to practice it.