

UPF International: The End of May Speaks in Many Religious Voices

Tageldin Hamad

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In the closing days of "UPF's Month of Family," Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Bahá'í and Buddhist observances form an unusual sequence that points toward memory, sacrifice, spiritual renewal and care across generations.

For several days at the end of May 2026, the calendar seems to slow down and listen. One religious tradition after another enters a sacred season. Jewish families gather for Shavuot. Christians celebrate Pentecost. Muslim communities prepare for Eid al-Adha. Bahá'ís observe the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. In parts of Asia, Buddhists mark Waisak or Wesak.

These observances do not proclaim the same message, nor should they be blended into a single spiritual narrative. Yet their close proximity is striking. Together, they create a rare moment in which different faiths speak, each in its own voice, about what human beings receive, what they owe, and what they pass on.

At sunset on May 21 Shavuot begins, continuing through the next day in Israel and through May 23 in many Diaspora communities. Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. It is a festival of revelation, but also of transmission. What is received from God is not kept as a private possession. It is taught, remembered and carried into the life of a people.

That is why Shavuot belongs naturally in a reflection on family. Families are not only places of affection. They are where language, moral memory and reverence for what came before are handed down.

On May 24, Western Christianity celebrates Pentecost, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. The scene remembered by Pentecost is not quiet withdrawal, but awakening. Those who have been uncertain are given courage to speak. Those gathered in one place are sent outward.

Pentecost therefore carries an unmistakable public meaning. Spiritual life is not complete when it remains enclosed within the individual. It matures when it becomes service, witness and responsibility for others. In a month devoted to family, Pentecost adds another dimension: a healthy home is not a closed circle, but a place from which concern for the wider world can grow.

A few days later comes Eid al-Adha, expected on May 27 in many Muslim countries, with national dates determined through moon-sighting authorities and therefore subject to variation. The Feast of Sacrifice recalls Abraham's obedience to God and is lived through prayer, family gathering, generosity and care for those in need.

Eid al-Adha brings sacrifice out of abstraction. It is expressed through hospitality, sharing and attention to people who might otherwise be left at the edge of celebration. In that sense, it speaks directly to one of the deepest truths of family life: love becomes credible through what people are willing to give.

The sacred rhythm continues. Bahá'í communities observe the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh on May 29, commemorating the passing of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith in 1892. Marked with prayer, reflection, and quiet reverence, the observance honors a life dedicated to spiritual unity, peace, and the oneness of

humanity.

Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate Holy Pentecost on May 31. On the same date, Buddhist communities in Indonesia and Malaysia mark Waisak or Wesak, part of the broader Buddhist commemoration of Vesak as an observance honoring the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away, while the date of Buddhist celebrations varies across national and religious calendars.

These later observances widen the frame. The final days of May are not shaped by one faith alone, or even by the three Abrahamic traditions alone. They show a world in which distinct spiritual calendars continue to form the inner life of communities across regions and civilizations.

Seen separately, each observance has its own theology, memory and ritual life. Seen together, they reveal something else as well. They show that religions still carry moral vocabularies that secular language often struggles to replace. Covenant. Spirit. Obedience. Sacrifice. Love. Compassion. Remembrance.

These are not decorative words. They describe ways in which human beings are formed. They shape how parents teach children, how communities honor elders, how generosity is practiced, and how people learn that life is larger than individual preference.

This is why the late month of May sequence fits so naturally with the close of UPF's Month of Family within the "100 Days of Serving Community" campaign, leading toward the [United Nations Global Day of Parents](#) on June 1. A family is often the first place where sacred memory becomes ordinary life. Children see whether gratitude is practiced, whether elders are heard, whether celebration includes generosity, and whether faith makes people more attentive to one another.

Long before values are discussed in public forums, they are quietly learned around tables, in prayers, in acts of care and in the way one generation receives the next.

That is also why interreligious understanding matters. The United Nations has recognized this through [World Interfaith Harmony Week](#), and UPF has sought to nurture it through the [Interreligious Association for Peace and Development](#). Yet the deepest reason is simpler than institutional language alone can express.

When people of different faiths meet with seriousness and respect, they discover that the other is not merely a representative of a tradition, but a person carrying memories, hopes, griefs and responsibilities much like their own. Dialogue begins there, not in agreement on everything, but in the refusal to let differences become estrangement.

The peace vision advanced by UPF founders [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and the late [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#) speaks to this human closeness through the idea of One Family under God. It does not ask religions to lose their distinct voices. It asks people to hear those voices without fear, and to recognize that reverence for God, care for family and concern for one another can open a shared moral space.

The end of May therefore feels less like a crowded calendar than like a conversation moving from home to home across the world. In synagogues, churches, mosques, Bahá'í communities and Buddhist temples, people will remember revelation, spirit, sacrifice, love, sacred history and awakening. They will gather with family, light candles, pray, share meals, give to others, listen to old stories and teach them again to the young.

These gestures will look different in every tradition. Still, taken together, they say something quietly important. Peace begins wherever people learn to receive life with gratitude and to answer it with care.



INTERRELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

UPF maintains that any successful strategy for peace must take into account the spiritual dimension of our human identity, experience and interactions. Based on this worldview, UPF initiated the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development as a partner organization to the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace. Through interreligious dialogue and exchange of viewpoints among the world's religions and faith-based organizations, terrorism, violent extremism and the world's ills can be proactively addressed. Religious leaders are well-situated to deal with community-based concerns and can play a significant role in reconciliation and building a culture of peace. Due to their moral authority and emphasis on human rights based on the principle that we are one family created by God, religious leaders can help rebuild divided societies and assist in humanitarian services for the alleviation of hunger, disease and trauma due to violence and war. The world's religions and faith-based organizations can provide a unique set of valuable resources for achieving a just and peaceful world.

- [The Founding IAPD Resolution \(South Korea, 2017\)](#)
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The End of May Speaks in Many Religious Voices



Panel Upholds Importance of Family Culture in Latin America



UPF-Peru Marks Mother Earth Day, Appoints Peace Ambassadors

Founding IAPD Resolution

November 10-14, 2017 at the Lotte Hotel World Seoul, South Korea

As participants in the Interreligious Leadership Conference sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation and the American Clergy Leadership Conference on November 10-14, 2017, focused on the theme, "Addressing the Critical Challenges of our Time: The Role and Responsibility of Religious Leaders and Faith-Based Organizations," we affirm the unique and essential role that religions are called to play in bringing about a world of lasting peace, a world in which people of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, cultures, and worldviews may live together in mutual respect, harmony and cooperation, as one family under God.

Throughout the ages religion has served as a guide to humanity, leading us from darkness to light, establishing the foundations of morality, and providing a vision of the good society. The teachings and scriptures of the great religious traditions are humanity's greatest treasures. We dishonor them at our peril.

We also recognize that persons within each of our religions have fallen short and failed to embody those universal ideals that are espoused within our traditions. Religion, too often, has given rise to conflict.

We resolve to overcome the divisive tendencies that have emerged within religion and to work to promote dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation so that we may more effectively work to solve the critical challenges of our time, including poverty, hunger, injustice, environmental degradation, family breakdown, corruption, conflict and violence.

Not only should religions cooperate with one another---Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, and others---they should also work together with the leaders of governments and civil society and the private sector, as partners for the sake of building the world envisioned by our founders, our ancestors, and, indeed, all people.

We applaud the leadership of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband Rev. Sun Myung Moon for their vision and work over many decades to establish one family under God. On this day, November 13, 2017, we endorse the proposal to establish a new interreligious association, known provisionally as the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development.

Backgrounder and Purpose of the IAPD

According to the UPF founders, world peace can be attained only when the endeavors of the world's political leaders are supplemented by the wisdom and efforts of religious leaders. The world has shifted increasingly towards viewpoints that are materialistic and secular in nature, thus losing sight of the profound wisdom to be found in humanity's spiritual heritage. UPF maintains that any successful strategy for peace must take into account the spiritual dimension of our human identity, experience and interactions.

In addition, through interreligious dialogue and exchange of viewpoints among the various world religions, religious issues can be directly addressed in order to resolve the crises arising from terrorism, violence and religious extremism. Religious societies are also well-situated to deal with community-based concerns; they can be most effective in solving conflicts related to justice and the rule of law. Due to their moral authority and emphasis on human rights and human dignity, they can also play a key role in re-building shattered societies, and offering humanitarian services for alleviation of hunger, disease and trauma due to war. The combined work of all religions will once again make religion relevant in the daily affairs of humankind.

Launch of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD)

At the conclusion of the 2017 Interreligious Leadership Conference (November 13, 2017), more than 400 delegates including leaders of religious organizations and faith-based groups, parliamentarians, academics and other leaders, representing more than 60 nations unanimously resolved to form the IAPD as a new international association of religious leaders dedicated to bringing world peace.

On this historic occasion, Dr. Thomas G. Walsh, the chair of UPF International, served as the moderator. Dr. Michael Jenkins, the national co-chair of ACLC, read the statement made by UPF co-founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon on August 18, 2000, in which he called for the establishment of an interreligious council at the United Nations.

Interfaith prayers were offered by Bishop Jesse Edwards, a member of the executive board of ACLC (USA), Ven. Pramahaboonthin Taosiri, the president of the Thai Buddhist Society of Sweden, and Dr. Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, the chief imam of the All India Imam Organization, India.

IAPD Programs and Development

In 2018, inaugural conventions were held on six continents around the world. IAPD assembled global religious leaders and tapped into the profound wisdom found in humanity's spiritual heritage. Religious leaders and faith-based organizations provide the moral compass to deal with the social problems in contemporary society – sexual abuse and exploitation, crime, hunger, terrorism, and more.

Religious leaders and faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to influence thinking, mobilize moral authority and be role models for others to follow. Most especially, religious leaders and faith-based organizations can help raise awareness as well as give moral guidance. By bringing together the different faiths and working together for the common good, IAPD stands at the forefront of a revolution of the culture of heart and filial love, and help usher in a world of lasting peace and happiness.

In 2018, the IAPD expanded and developed as a project of UPF. The newly formed organization initially focused on creating an international structure aligned with the principles for good governance and ethical practice. Two religious leaders will be selected to serve as IAPD International Co-Chairs along with 13 IAPD Regional Co-Chairs representing the following designated regions: Africa, Asia, Canada, Central America and the Caribbean, Eurasia, Europe, Greater China Region, Japan, Korea, Middle East, North America, Oceania, South America.

Conclusion

IAPD harnesses the goodwill and wisdom of the religions and faith-based organizations which are called to play a unique and essential role in bringing about a world of lasting peace, a world in which people of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, cultures and worldviews are called to live together in mutual respect, harmony and cooperation. UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon describes the ideal world as "One Family Under God," and, teaching by example, says that the path to such a society is through people leading a life of true love and living for the sake of others.

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