

## UPF Buenos Aires, Argentina: Interreligious People for Sustainable Development

Miguel Werner  
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Buenos Aires, Argentina -- "Interreligious People for Peace and Sustainable Development" was the theme of a webinar panel organized by UPF-Argentina on July 23, 2020. This webinar was organized along with the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD). Speakers were Dr. Adrián Maldonado, director of the Study Center on Law and Religion at the Adventist University of the Plata; Melody Amal Khalil Kaban, member of the Islam Institute for Peace; Pastor Martha de Rodríguez, Women of Faith Movement for a Different Nation; Father Horacio Varela Roca, Catholic priest from the Buenos Aires Archdiocese; and Rabbi Dr. Fishel Szlajen, director of AMIA Culture and full member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.



Moderator was Dr. David M. Frol, third vice-president of the Argentine Council for Religious Freedom (CALIR), high priest of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Ambassador for Peace. A brief speech was given by Carlos Varga, president of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification-Argentina. After the presentations, there was a QandA session coordinated by communicator Graciela Almada, founder of Music for Peace and an Ambassador for Peace. The opening was in the charge of Miguel Werner, secretary general of UPF-Argentina, who introduced the context of the historical interreligious dialogue work that resulted in the launch of IAPD in 2017 by Dr. Hak Jan Han Moon.

Panelists spoke on the five issues that were proposed as IAPD-Argentina's lines of action: Religious Freedom, Interreligious Fellowship, Family and Common Good, Service and Peace Culture, and Peace

with Creation. Religious Freedom means: Promoting knowledge and mutual respect, freedom of conscience and religion; Interreligious Fellowship: Promoting meetings for interreligious dialogue and cooperation; Family and Common Good: Revitalizing the sacred value of marriage vows shared by different religions, gender equality, the gift of being parents, education of children based on family values, protection of adults, intergenerational bonds, and social integration; Service and Peace Culture: Developing initiatives to serve the neighbor with dignity and comprehensive and community fulfillment; and Peace with Creation: Joining forces to reconcile our bond with nature, encouraging harmony with our "common house."

This was the second webinar in Argentina's leadership areas series, with more than 130 online connections and 234 people registered, mainly from Argentina but also from various American and some European countries. The first webinar was a panel of parliamentarians held in June, where the special guest was Simão Feraboli, Secretary General of UPF-South America. In the following months, we will have panels with journalists, academics, and business people. We will also have a special series of parliamentarians who will deepen IAPP-Argentina's lines of action: Education and Values, Dignity and Human Rights, Governance and Transparency, Development and Cooperation, and Environment and Sustainability.



Parliamentarians Zoom-webinar video: [click here](#).

Video links of presentations:

"Religious Freedom"

Dr. Adrián Maldonado - [Youtube link](#)

Director of the Study Center on Law and Religion at the Adventist University of the Plata

"Interreligious Fellowship"

Melody Amal Khalil Kabalan - [Youtube Link](#)

Member of the Islam Institute for Peace

"Family and Common Good"

Pastor Martha de Rodríguez - [Youtube link](#)

Women of Faith Movement for a Different Nation

"Service and Peace Culture"

Father Horacio Varela Roca - [Youtube link](#)

Catholic priest from Buenos Aires Archdiocese

"Peace with Creation"

Rabbi Dr. Fishel Szlajen - [Youtube link](#)

Director of AMIA Culture and full member of the Pontifical Academy for Life

**QandA session:**

Graciela Almada - [Youtube link](#)

Communicator and Founder of Music for Peace

## **Brief Speeches:**

Carlos Varga - [Youtube link](#)

President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification-Argentina

## **Goal:**

To claim the role that religions are called to play in the realization of a society and world where we live together in peace and overall well-being as one great family, according to universal, transcendent shared values. To promote dialogue, knowledge, mutual respect, and interreligious cooperation, extended to representatives of the public sector, civil society and the private sector, in order to build the common good of humanity and the planet that the sacred scriptures claim and for which our ancestors, descendants and people of good will yearn.



## **Background:**

UPF's founders greatly appraise the essence of all spiritual traditions for raising people's culture and souls, for their valuable contribution to education, conflict resolution, support in social dramas and promoting peace. For this reason, they have promoted interreligious meetings and activities for decades, establishing different entities, such as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (1954), the International Religious Foundation (1983), the Religious Youth Service (1986), and the American Clergy Leadership Conference (2000). They promoted the Middle East Peace Initiative, in which thousands of religious leaders marched in this region to encourage the "sons of Abraham" to reconcile as true brothers.

In a broader context, Rev. Sun Myung Moon proposed a renewal and revitalization of the UN Peace Principles by creating an Interreligious Council which provides greater cooperation between the public sector and all religions. On November 13, 2017, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon established the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) in Seoul, Korea. On August 4, 2018, it was launched in São Paulo, Brazil, during the Summit "Peace and Development in Latin America: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values."

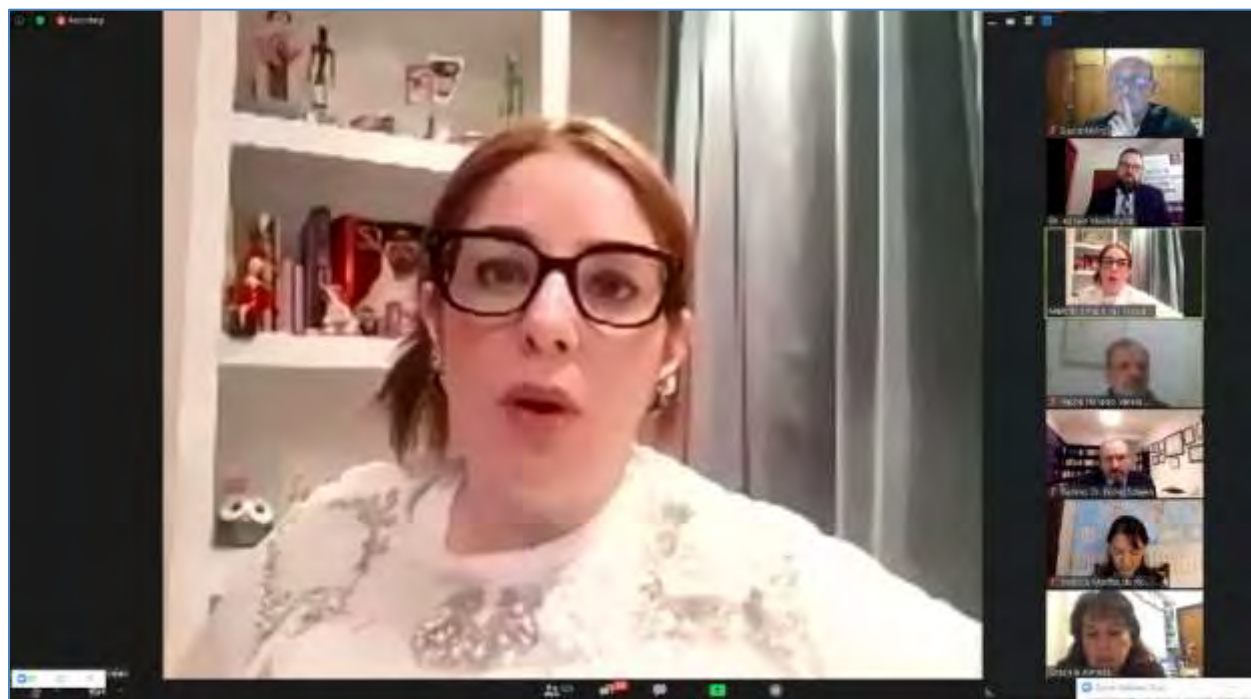
It is worth remembering that on October 20, 2010, the UN General Assembly, in Resolution 65/5, proclaimed "World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs." World Interfaith Harmony Week falls in the first week of February of every year. Its purpose: "the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions in enhancing mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people."

## **IAPD-Argentina:**

Our spiritual essence and the wisdom of the scriptures are fundamental to enlighten the grim present among the clogging of old paradigms and the deep crisis that humanity and the planet face, which could eventually deepen issues in times of COVID-19 with more conflicts and social and global uproar.

In such a daunting context, people of faith and religious institutions are called to keep nurturing universal

transcendent values. We hope to renew the senses and inspire hope with innovative answers; to create meetings where new collective proposals and initiatives allow us to overcome divisions and injustice; and greater commitments, sustained by common good, for a better and healthier coexistence and mutual prosperity.



The Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) seeks to contribute to this endeavor with humbleness and sincerity, recognizing the light from above, with different names according to each tradition, investing collective efforts for our yearning for fellowship and solidarity. In this sense, they organize activities, initiatives and projects related to the following lines of action and themes in Argentina: 1. Religious Freedom; 2. Interreligious Fellowship; 3. Family and Common Good; 4. Service and Peace Culture; 5. Peace With Creation.

[IAPD International](#)

[UPF international, regional and local webinar series](#)

