

World Interfaith Harmony Week Observed in Brazil

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São Paulo, Brazil—The United Nations' World Interfaith Harmony Week was commemorated on February 19, 2016, at the Indian Cultural Center. The event was organized by UPF in cooperation with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), the Brazilian Association for the Freedom of Religion and Citizenship (ABLIRC), the interfaith band Soul of Peace and the Indian Cultural Center (ICC), which provided the auditorium.

Each of the guest speakers had around three minutes to share an interfaith message.

Mr. Mahesh Mahesvara, ISKCON interfaith secretary and founder of the Soul of Peace band, gave the welcoming remarks, and said we belong to one human family independent of our religious faith.

Mrs. Minakshi Mishra, ICC director, said she was pleased to open the Indian Cultural Center to receive all the participants for the event.

Mr. Fábio Ferreira, public relations director of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, spoke about volunteer activities and social projects that are open to people of all faiths.

Dr. Samuel Gomes de Lima, ABLIRC president, spoke about the importance of defending the right of religious freedom.

Rev. Christian Lepelletier, UPF-Brazil vice president, spoke on the importance of interreligious harmony as the first condition for world peace.

Other speakers were:

Mauricio Hondaku, Pure Land Buddhism, Shishu Otani Order;

Dr. Sheikh Mohamad Bukai, a theologian and professor at the Islamic National Union;

Rev. Kazuiyoshi Nakahara, Buddhism Risho Kyossei Kai;

Afonso Moreira, president of the Council of the Sao Paulo Spiritism Federation;

Sheikh Abdel Hamid Metwally, São Paulo Mosque;

João Signorelli, an actor who has portrayed Mahatma Gandhi;

Toninho Macedo, director of the Abaçáí Culture and Revelando Sao Paulo;

Kiko Zambianki, a musician and musical mentor to the Soul of Peace band;

Pastor Eliel Leonardo from the Assembly of God in the city of Guarulhos;

Bishop Dom Flávio Irala of the Anglican Church;

Celso Silvino da Silva, president of the interfaith department of the Brazilian Workers Party.

All the participants agreed that it is very important to meet and to build bridges between the different cultures and religions, and they said that Brazil can be an example of harmony for the world.

The interfaith band Soul of Peace, a unique model of interfaith cooperation between musicians, presented several songs, composed by them, based on values found in all religions, such as respect, tolerance and love of others.

