

Morality Forum Update

Standing up for family values in society

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Rally of Hope Encourages Believers to Unite for Peace

Written by Joshua Holmes, American Clergy, Saturday, December 5, 2020

Las Vegas, United States—Universal Peace Federation International, together with the World Christian Leadership Conference (WCLC), co-sponsored the fourth online Rally of Hope with featured speakers who addressed an interfaith audience of hundreds of thousands around the world. The rally was the concluding event in the two-day WCLC Convocation of December 4 and 5, with which WCLC celebrated the first anniversary of its founding. The convocation was held in conjunction with the North American branch of Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), one of UPF's constituent associations. Some of the sessions were held concurrently in different regions of the world and hosted by local IAPD regional chapters with local speakers. In addition to more than 2,000 Christian pastors from the United States and 3,000 clerics from throughout the world, more than a million believers from over 170 nations took part in the Rally of Hope via the Internet. In her keynote message from the International Peace Education Centre in Las Vegas, **Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon** said that, despite all obstacles, “God’s hope and humanity’s hope is to see a unified world … one big family under Heavenly Parent, a world of peace wherein all people live in unity as one family of humankind.”



The emcee of the Rally of Hope was **Archbishop George A. Stallings, Jr.**, the chairman of IAPD-North America and the national co-chairman emeritus of ACLC (USA), who also moderated the final session of the convocation. The theme of the two-day event was “Calling All Believers to Unite and

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GENERAL IMPORTANT NEWS

Christians need to get off the sidelines and become active in politics

December 2, 2020 (LifeSiteNews) — Jonathon Van Maren is joined this week by Dr. Jeff Myers, President of Summit Ministries, and one of America's most respected authorities on youth leadership development. Summit Ministries is a worldview training program for young men and women, educating the next generation on politics, law, academia, medicine, science, and business, all while maintaining a Christian outlook on cultural issues. Myers discusses an article he wrote last month, titled “Christians Must Demand Justice in Election Crisis,” where he highlights important principles of citizenship which every Christian must support and promote during the current post-election chaos. In both the article and the podcast, Myers criticizes Christians who believe that their only duty is to vote on Election Day, and afterwards all actions are solely in God's hands. In reality, he says, “the vote does not get you across the finish line as a citizen, it gets you to the starting line.” Myers refers to the statement that God is in control not only as “bad citizenship, but it's also actually bad theology because the Bible doesn't describe God in that way.”

He describes how the term “control” is not only theologically wrong, but it also “leads people to become bad citizens when it comes to things like figuring out ... what are we supposed to do in the world.” Myers applies this directly to the current post-election day battles to investigate and expose election fraud, in which he calls “election justice,” and that “it is about time that we put to rest ... what we know is fraud and disenfranchising people.” He also applies the idea that Christians need to rise up and take citizen action on culture war issues such as abortion and standing

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Heal America: In a Time of Great Division, the People of God Must Take a Stand.” The rally’s speakers, well-known faith leaders from the United States and other nations, called for interfaith collaboration to resolve problems in the family, society, the environment and between nations—including the reunification of North and South Korea. “We know that when we pray together, God’s Will comes in,” said **Dr. Luonne Rouse**, the national co-chairman of the American Clergy Leadership Conference, acknowledging that 2020 was a year of great difficulties, Dr. Rouse urged the audience to “pray without ceasing,” quoting the Bible’s 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Referring to the theme of taking a stand, **Pastor T.L. Barrett**, senior pastor of Life Center Church of God in Christ, located in Chicago, recalled that in 1955, when Rosa Parks, a black woman, refused to give up her seat in a public bus to a white passenger, she paved the way for Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to champion the civil rights movement in the 1960s. **Pastor Paula White**, spiritual advisor to President Donald Trump, encouraged the pastors to repent and extend God’s love to all nations. **Bishop Noel Jones**, senior pastor of the City of Refuge in Los Angeles, said Christian leaders should amplify Jesus’ truth “that we should love our enemies. ... Our calling to true love and peace transcends democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, socialism, communism and autocracy.” **Bishop Don Meares**, senior pastor at Evangel Cathedral in the U.S. state of Maryland, urged believers to focus on God, be clear about their faith and forgive others as they build a future of “divine peace.”

Cardinal Kelvin Felix, Roman Catholic Archbishop emeritus of Castries in the Caribbean, encouraged believers to “care for each other and to forgive each other at any offense”. **Bishop Ki-hoon Kim**, chairman of the WCLC Promotion Committee, said the WCLC was launched as a “great initiative for world Christianity to work together ... to [realize] a heavenly unified world.” **Archbishop Metropolitan Chrysostomos Celi**, Orthodox Church in Ecuador, said the family must be strengthened, because the family is “the cornerstone to build a healthy society that cooperates well with church and nation.” **Prophet Uzwi leZwe Radebe** from South Africa, founder of the Revelation Church of God, recently renamed the Revelation Spiritual Home, said, “May the WCLC become a force to reckon with, and may it be a platform by which spiritual leaders will forge closer cooperation and ties in addressing these critical issues of our times.” Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov, Russian Orthodox Church, said there is renewed interest in a “spiritual culture” in both religious and civil society spheres. The mission of the church will be to “organize politics, culture and education in our society with the idea to help people develop their spiritual intelligence,” he said.

Music was provided by the Grammy Award-winning gospel artist and pastor Bishop Hezekiah Walker and the 5,000-voice Peace Starts With Me Choir, along with a joint youth choir singing “The Song of Unity.” The WCLC was launched in December 2019 as part of an ecumenical conference and Rally for Peace held in the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, with more than 1,000 Christian clergy and 20,000 laity in attendance.



Almighty God can work in very powerful ways when people take personal responsibility

By John O'Neill

In this edition of the Update, we see how Almighty God has worked in very powerful ways, based on people being willing to take personal responsibility in helping to defeat evil. In the very powerful *Chanukah* article, we are reminded that fasting and praying are good things but not enough. That action is also needed. Saint Augustine stated: “Pray as though everything depended on God. Act as though everything depended on you.” James 2:17 “In the same way faith, if it doesn’t have works, is dead by itself.”

Worldwide, the COVID-19 crisis continues to cause much suffering and hardship for many millions of people. It has been highlighted in previous Updates how the root causes of the pandemic are related to the decline of spiritual and moral values. That this suffering is a spiritually, morally, “**WAKE UP**” call, especially to the advanced nations. Is the call being heeded? In the USA President Biden has wasted no time in bringing in anti-family, anti-godly legislation regarding extreme abortion policies and fully supporting the LGBT agenda. In the UK extreme abortion and divorce laws have been introduced. In the UK in recent weeks there have been further horrendous cases of young men losing their lives through the knife crime epidemic. In separate incidents, 2 of the victims were boys just 15 years old and one was just 13. We know how these crimes are totally devastating for the bereaved families, but also, such heinous crimes have a negative effect on the overall morale of the whole nation, with many parents worried whenever their children go outside of their homes. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has again issued further platitudes about knife crime being a top priority, but we have been hearing such platitudes repeatedly espoused by various recent past prime ministers. The reality is, that they cannot stop it. The root causes of the knife crime epidemic are also related to the decline of the influence of spiritual and moral values in the UK. [J.D. Unwin – Study of 88 Civilisations]

World leaders such as Johnson and Biden are only mocking Almighty God with their evil anti-family, anti-godly policies and legislation and that is why it is vitally important that **collective national repentance is continuous at this time for the evil being enacted in relevant nations**. *Galatians 6:7: Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Isaiah 10:1 Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees.* Religious people, and especially religious leaders, from all the different religions, need to be forthright in speaking out and challenging the anti-godly, anti-family evil policies and legislation introduced by secular, humanistic politicians, which have had devastatingly negative influences on their citizens, exemplified by enormous increases in crimes and social problems in countries such as the UK. The Bible makes it very clear that religious people must speak out against evil: *Ephesians 5:11. Ezekiel 3:18. Isaiah 58:1.* Almighty God is meant to be at the very centre of each nation, centred on Godly family ethics and values. In the UK our laws, institutions, culture, values and customs have been based on our Judeo-Christian heritage. The great civilisations throughout history prospered because of their spiritual and moral founda-

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up for American freedoms. Dr. Myers states that the “founders of the United States did not imagine that [citizenship] would ever be easy, but they did imagine that that it would require eternal vigilance.” Myers expressed both worry and alertness for Christian persecution under a possible Biden-Harris administration, saying a persecution would likely be done through the bureaucratic system. “We might be persecuted to death, but it’s because we’re going to be regulated,” he said. Nevertheless, Myers highlights several ways in which every Christian can take practical measures to make a difference in politics, especially in the local sphere, and it all begins with being well-informed and educated. Lastly, he shares how his organization Summit Ministry firmly believes “that the word of God speaks to every area of life,” which is why it provides information “from a biblical worldview [on] everything from movie and music reviews to specific issues … facing … the culture.”

The 2020 election chaos can be linked to the sexual revolution



Mary Eberstadt

November 4, 2020 (LifeSiteNews) – Mary Eberstadt felt vindicated by last night’s 2020 presidential election results. Why? She has been saying for years that, “The sexual revolution is now having system-wide political consequences.” Eberstadt, who has authored numerous books and essays on the impacts of the sexual revolution, joins The Van Maren Show to discuss how the sexual revolution, the breakdown of the family, and identity politics have brought us to where we are today. “Social unravelling” is what Eberstadt says is happening across the U.S. She highlights the source of this unravelling as the degradation of the family – specifically, the increase in fatherless homes. “If you wanted to see things fall apart the fastest way to do that, the most efficacious thing you could do, would be to increase fatherlessness.” Generations of children have grown up without the safety and security of a loving family. This lack of a family structure has led to the unrest and rioting that we’re seeing across the United States. Van Maren and Eberstadt dive into the current state of society, how we’re still suffering from the impacts of the sexual revolution, and what this means for the future of the U.S.

UK nurse slams DIY abortion as “disgusting” after experiencing “excruciating pain” SPUC - 14 October 2020

Allowing women to “miscarry alone without any medical intervention” is “disgusting” and “backwards” says a nurse who experienced “excruciating pain” after a DIY home abortion. The nurse, who lives in the United Kingdom, spoke to The Telegraph where she criticized UK judges and lawmakers for subjecting women to “unacceptable healthcare”.

The nurse who is in her mid-thirties is calling for a “proper assessments for women in crisis pregnancies rather than being rushed through a process which leaves them traumatised for the rest of their lives” DIY home abortion was implemented in response to the nationwide lockdown caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. Under the DIY abortion scheme, women can get abortion drugs following a phone or video call, without a face-to-face consultation with a medical professional. The

abortion pills are then sent through the post and women perform their own abortion at home with no medical supervision or support. **COVID is not an excuse to disrespect women:** Speaking to The Telegraph the nurse described how her own DIY abortion left her in “excruciating pain” and in need of urgent surgery as her unborn baby had not ‘successfully’ been aborted and was still inside her body. Abortion giant Marie Stopes who supplied the DIY drugs, told the injured woman that no counsellor was available to meet with her. The woman describes how she is now suffering from PTSD and is struggling to return to work. She said: “I’m actually quite shocked that the UK, with all of our research and expertise would approve this,” she said. “It just feels like we are going backwards and that COVID is an excuse to not treat women with respect. For me this is a female issue, if this was happening for men, I’m not sure we would be sitting here **having** the same conversation. With the push to make things so easy, they have forgotten doing no harm and the duty of care in the medical profession…Abortion is so invasive to women...”

“Would they allow their daughters or partners to go through this alone?” The nurse continued: “I’m horrified that in a country where there’s a lot of domestic abuse going on that we could allow a system that could give this pill that could either force someone to miscarry, there’s not enough checks… Do we not respect women’s bodies and their decision enough to give them proper healthcare? And would they allow their daughters or partners to go through this alone in their home without any medical checks? They always separate abortion and miscarriage but these pills force you to miscarry, are we seeing it like that? It’s a forced miscarriage. Would we allow them to just sit in the house while miscarrying? Or would we want them to go and get checked at the hospital. That’s what the pills do so you’re accepting that women can miscarry alone without any medical intervention - it’s not acceptable.”

Family Education Trust booklet

Marriage and Divorce in the Liberal Imagination

Family Education Trust, in cooperation with the Coalition for Marriage, has recently published a booklet based on the address given by Colin Hart at our 2019 conference but updated and expanded in light of the passing of the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act This short, easy to read booklet tells you all you need to know about the benefits of marriage and the harm done by easily available divorce. Within the pages of this short but incisive booklet you will discover:

- What is the true nature of marriage.
- The numberless benefits of marriage to the individual and to society.
- Why the public interest is served by healthy marriages.
- The liberal concepts that have undermined marriage.
- What happens when a society abandons the traditional understanding of marriage illustrated by pertinent historical examples.
- The motives of the pro-divorce lobby.
- The damage done by permissive divorce laws.
- What we can still do to defend marriage in our day.

*This concise booklet serves as the ideal short guide to marriage and divorce in our time. Why not order multiple copies and help communicate its truth to others. Copies of *Marriage and Divorce in the Liberal Imagination* are available from the Family Education Trust at £3 per copy. Order your copy today!*

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The tragic reality of family breakdown

Writing in the Daily Mail recently, Dr Max Pemberton stated: "I am sick and tired of seeing children who are taking the brunt of the emotional fall-out of failed marriages, messy divorces, infidelities and warring parents. I have seen the results of affairs and bitter marriage breakdown countless times: young children and teenagers with emotional and behavioural problems, with unexplained physical illnesses that reflect emotional distress; self-harm, and eating disorders. And this is just the worst cases. Speak to any teacher and they will tell you of the low-level insidious damage that is being done that never makes it to the doctor's waiting room. What's more, the damage it can cause can spread into the vista of adulthood." Research shows the instability caused to children by unstable home life triples the risk of developing emotional problems.

By the time they are 16 years old 50% of the young people in the UK will see their parents divorced. Family stability is vital for the mental and emotional development of our children. Tragically, we are living in a very permissive society that ridicules most of our moral and ethical values such as abstinence. We are bombarded daily by the images and messages that are imbued with sexual connotations from the media and advertisers etc. The sub-heading in a recent article in the Daily Mail stated: *New C4 drama featuring royalty – and LOTS of sex.* Relevant programme makers, sadly, cannot come up with anything wholesome or creative, just base, salacious dross which portrays sexual relationships as being nothing more than a recreational sport. It is grossly irresponsible, as it is common knowledge that the UK has record levels of divorces, STD's, teenage pregnancies, single parents, abortions etc. The devastating effects of family breakdown show how absolutely essential it is for a religious ethos to be prevalent in our nation again. When that was the case back in the 1950's divorce rates were very low. It is vital that as many people as possible, especially religious people, respond by challenging harmful media content and advertisements.

Morality Forum Action

On December 12th, together with other members of the Harrow branch of SPUC, John O'Neill delivered very important *Say No to DIY abortion* information leaflets door-to-door, In the Harrow and Queensbury areas of NW London.

Leaflets, pamphlets, and a newsletter from The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children about DIY abortions have been widely distributed to religious organisations in NW and NE areas of London. The latest *Safe at School* bulletins were also given to the religious organisations as well as being given to people on the streets. Some people on the streets expressed their gratitude for receiving such important information.

In this world many people and nations are in conflict. Many think that by negotiations these conflicts can be solved. These conflicts, however, are basically based on selfishness and resentment, based on fallen nature. And as long as selfishness and resentment cannot be overcome, true peace cannot come. Selfishness and resentment can only be overcome by true love, which includes living for the sake of others, even for the sake of the enemy or enemy nation. God's Kingdom cannot come simply by peace negotiations or truces. True love must be involved. That applies to all conflicts and frictions in this world, for example to the conflict between North- and South Korea: We are the ones that need to break down all the walls in the world by true love. We are the ones that have to bring a love into this world that others think is impossible. We have to bring a true love into this world, a love that loves even an enemy.

Sent out by Bruno Klotz to relevant people on his email list. Bruno sends out a weekly spiritually inspirational email

Information Fact sheets, about the devastating impact of the sexual revolution and the permissive society continue to be sent to various media outlets, and, in particular, to journalists and editors of newspapers, in relation to salacious articles and lewd pictures published in their newspapers and magazines. Relevant information is also sent to newspaper editors and journalists about the appalling trend of quoting crude and vulgar language in reports and feature articles etc. Even though some of the relevant letters in a particular quoted word are replaced by asterisks, the meaning of the offensive word remains clear.

Positive responses have been received from politicians and other key public figures, such as Sir Graham Brady MP, Lord Blunkett, Steve Baker MP and Nigel Farage, in relation to articles sent to them concerning the very harmful effects of lockdowns. Sir Graham Brady confirmed that he had read John O'Neill's article in the 2020 Spring edition of the Morality Forum Update, which highlighted that the root causes of the pandemic were spiritual and moral.

tions. As a loving parent, Almighty God clearly, desperately wants to see people from all religious backgrounds working together in unity and acting as the conscience of each nation. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer became known for his staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship whereby he emphasized: "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

It is very inspiring to know that there is at least one country in Europe which is standing firmly in regard to defending traditional family values through legislation, which - despite strong LGBT opposition - defines marriage as only being between a man and a woman. Families in Hungary are also rewarded financially for the more children they have, as well as various other marriage and family supporting initiatives. Almighty God has given to mankind the formula for, ultimately, stopping the sufferings caused by the pandemic and the other afflictions such as the knife crime epidemic: We need a true love revolution in each nation based on spiritual revivals. Living for others is a fundamental law of the universe. It is from this point that true love begins. This is the reason all religions teach service to others and that genuine love is to live for others' sake. Living for the sake of others centred on Godly universal moral and spiritual values will bring about the better, peaceful world that we all long to see.

By our prayers, repentance and actions may each one of us do our best to be a good example in defending traditional Godly moral and spiritual values, and by challenging evil, harmful government policies and legislation, and also similar harmful media standards. *Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*



TRUE FAMILY VALUES MINISTRY

Freedom and Peace

A. An ideal world is one of freedom

3. Freedom blossoms in true love.

- Bonds of family and society are not coercive, but they are the strongest of bonds, because they are based upon the power of love.
- In true love, obligations are taken on by the will obedient to the conscience.

4. Freedom cannot be sustained only within one family. It must extend to the society, nation and world.

- In history, the cry for freedom has led to political revolution.
- The state must allow both internal freedom . . .
 - Freedom of faith and worship, of thought, of conscience . . .
- ...and external freedom:...
 - Freedoms of speech, assembly, of travel, of redress of grievances, of gaining a fair hearing.
 - Freedoms of economic and political action.
 - Freedom from tyranny.

5. Freedom makes us human.

- Plants grow by natural law; animals adjust to their environment.
- Only humans control ourselves and partially create their world. Only man has freedom to co-create his own environment.
- Only humans have the desire to seek a higher joy and greater accomplishments.
- We are co-creators with God; therefore we are granted freedom by God.
- God gave us a creative nature; by co-creating ourselves in freedom, we help determine our destiny and our world.
- This is an awesome freedom from which many people flee, because they do not comprehend the love and purpose which is the root of true freedom. The notion that we are co-creators in a universe which lacks love and purpose is truly terrible.

6. By living in freedom, we display God's image, fulfilling the first purpose of creation.

7. Freedom is the first characteristic of the world of one great family.

B. Peace

1. Peace requires the absence of struggle.

- Struggle ends by removing points of conflict through

mutual recognition of a higher viewpoint.

- Struggle ends by fostering harmony through the practice of sacrificial love.

2. Peace applies on many levels.

3. One level is individual peace, finding peace within.

- This means the harmony between mind and body.

The conscience can lead the individual when it does not have to struggle against the desires of the body. True mind-body unity is not just the smooth motion of an athlete. We are talking about the mind as an organ of moral reason and spiritual sensibility, not the mind as physical brain. Mind-body unity is not the carefree life that is unexamined and carnal. Pangs of the conscience will inevitably arise in that kind of life. It is not the peace of insensibility brought on by use of alcohol or drugs. True peace arises by living a life of virtue.

• Peace with God.

This begins by removing mistrust, guilt, resentment, denial in relationship to God. It arises by feeling God's gracious acceptance and support, the justification of one's existence in the cosmos.

4. Peace in the family.

- Overcoming conflict between husband and wife.

Practice tolerance and patience, which require maturity. Honest communication (expressing what is true to one's self, not just one's selfish point of view or unreflective reactions). Taking personal responsibility for the mutual problem. Practice repentance to make peace.
- Parents create harmony between brothers and sisters.
- Grandparents create harmony between parents and children.

5. Peace in the community, nation, world.

- Even if the family is at peace within itself, it cannot find peace if the community is full of crime or the nation is at war. The family will inevitably be caught up into the conflict. Brothers divide in civil wars (America, Spain, Russia).
- Field of conflict:
 - Ideology
 - Land and wealth
 - Personality
 - Race, nation or religion
- Conflicting parties must be reconciled with sacrificial love.

Absorb the attack and change the enemies' heart. Absorbing the attack can mean just to suffer, such as the Christians enduring martyrdom in Rome and throughout the world. It can also mean self-defence and counter-attack to end the enemies' power to attack.

World War I
World War II
“Peace through strength” leading to the downfall of communism.

(to be continued...from the book “True Family Values” by Wilson & Pak <http://www.hsabooks.com/books>)

Letters and Emails Received

HI JOHN. Thanks for your updates. I am extremely grateful for your kind consideration about the Vital issue of morality in the society in general. you certainly are performing your moral and ethical obligations. I salute you for the excellent work you are doing for the welfare and betterment of the human being. Please keep up with your very worthy mission. I wish you and your team every success in your noble ventures. UR humble friend. M. W. KHOKHAR MBE. PATRON & ambassador of international NGO MUSLIM Aid. RELIEF AND Development ORGANISATION.

Dear John, Thank you for sharing these articles [Autumn M.F. Update] and for your faithful service to the Lord. May the Lord uphold you, strengthen you and bless you richly. Pastor Chinelo.

Hi John, Thank you so much for providing the attached, [Autumn M.F. Update] and for continuing to alert parents to the dangers to our children the enemy tries to hide in plain sight. God bless you. Kind Regards, Jo Koker.

Thanks for everything, well received. Everlyne Simiyu. [Autumn Update]

Dear Rev. John, I have submitted my view on line [DIY Abortions] Thank you for sharing. Thank you for the hard work that you put in. Our Lord Jesus will reward you in abundance and continue to strengthen you. Have a good weekend and God bless. Taiwo. [Pastor]

Thank you John, Your encouragement and support is greatly appreciated. Blessings Ivana. CBR UK [Short videos shown to the public about abortion]

Dear John, Thank you very much for your thoughtful email and appealing letter [To MP's]. It's really helpful and motivating despite the fact that almost a year has passed since you sent it. With best wishes, Ala Zubovskis

Thank you very much for sharing. I will pass this on to others. Sashi Deen. [Online consultation about DIY abortions]

Dear John, Your messages to Christian churches are really good – importance of family values, true love and living for the sake of others. Also, explaining to religious leaders the vital importance of being in regular contact with their MP's about key moral, family issues. You inspire me! Best wishes, Jacqueline

over that dynamic, thus allowing me some personal control when many other things look like they are falling apart. I am reminded of the words of a famous song, "Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could." Everything we see is created by energy. In the natural world, energy is created through the interplay between two different entities that have an attraction for each other. The negatively charged electron is attracted to the positively charged neutron. They spiral around each other, thus generating energy. This energy allows atoms to be formed and then molecules. Thus, our beautiful physical world is created. The same applies to the human world. Humans generate energy through a similar dynamic, and this energy allows us to create our lives and communities. This life-creating energy comes from the interaction between two different identities which circle around each other.

I would call this dynamic the love and beauty dynamic. To be drawn into life, I typically need to find beauty in something. I might find beauty in developing a new skill, in the dream of having a beautiful garden, or in growing vegetables. And, in seeing that future beauty, I get inspired, I get drawn, and my body is triggered into action. In valuing that future, I get drawn into creating it. Now, the beauty that inspires us to give of ourselves comes in different forms. For example, I know that I am willing to spend a considerable number of hours seeking to find the truth about the human situation. Also, I know that if I perceive something to be an act of goodness, then I will get inspired and give of myself. For example, I am willing to help my daughter renovate her new house, all without payment. When I find something meaningful, I also see it as beautiful. For example, I will spend many hours trying to make our family Christmas get-together a success. I will also invest if I perceive the investment will lead to the creation of joy. And, of course, I can be inspired by beauty itself. I can spend a considerable number of hours in my garden, trying to make it look beautiful. And many are drawn to develop their artistic talents by the same force.

Thus, it is our ability to see the beauty in various aspects of life that draws us in to give of ourselves. This dynamic provides us with the energy needed to develop ourselves into more fruitful individuals. It also inspires the creation of our families, homes, and professions. The free market itself is successful precisely because it is built upon the love and beauty dynamic - on the idea that people develop products and services that others see as representing some form of beauty. Sadly, some people sometimes find it difficult to see beauty, or goodness, or truth, or meaning, or find joy. And when this happens, people can become depressed. They are not triggered into life, not energized by inspiration. At such moments, life can overwhelm. In summary, the love and beauty dynamic is central to our own personal development and to the building of a wholesome family. I believe that the love and beauty dynamic drives life itself. And, I have found that the more control I have over my ability to find beauty in its different forms, and be appreciative of this beauty, then the higher the chance I have of building a life I enjoy.

I started thinking about the love and beauty dynamic some 40

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Love and Beauty Rule the World

By Stephen Stacey

We live at a complicated time in human history. When I look out into the world, I find it hard to make sense of many of the things that are happening. And many of our families are struggling with issues that no previous generation has had to face. It seems as though we have so little control over so many aspects of our lives. However, I believe that there is an essential dynamic that drives much of human existence. And, in my own life, at least, I have developed a large degree of control

(Continued from page 6: Love and Beauty Rule the World)

years ago. At that time, I realized that I was a very critical person. My relationships were far from fulfilling as a result.

So, I started on a journey. I determined to see more of the good in the people around me. For two months, I made lists of all the positive features that I could find in my wife and friends. I took time to get to know their life history better and appreciate how far they had come despite their many challenges. The list of things to appreciate grew daily. I followed this up with a daily 5-minute meditation before I got out of bed. I reminded myself of all the good things I knew about the people I cared about. This allowed me to have a positive attitude when I met them. And, over the years, I learned many other things about the inner workings of the love and beauty dynamic. For example, from the best-selling book, "The Five Languages of Love," I learned that I had to give my wife things that she perceived as beautiful. This knowledge was advantageous when our four children were young, and my wife was often stressed. Because of the book's advice, I learned to do more of the 'must be done now' tasks that my wife was doing every day. In doing ten small tasks – like laying the table, hanging the laundry, etc. – my wife became noticeably less stressed – and looked more beautiful to me as a result. From Dr John Gottman, I learn that though one negative moment in our marriage was enough to harm our sense of togetherness, it would take at least three acts of kindness to restore our sense of unity. Thus, I went through a focussed period of doing five acts of service after a moment of division occurred. A sense of mutual appreciation quickly returned. Over time, I found that I was better able to control the amount of beauty we saw in each other – bringing about longer periods where we felt closeness and joy.

Over the years, I have built up a subconscious library of the good things that my wife does every day, of her good qualities, of the good she has done in the past, and the ways she has grown. Today, when her stress levels rise, and her words come out all wrong, I subconsciously say to myself, "I know three thousand good things about her. How can I not forgive her immediately?" And, what just happened disappears as a memory, I hug her, and let her know she is still the most precious person in my life. I have even come to believe that God sees His children in the same way – thus allowing Him to 'wake up' every morning and create the flowers and sunrise for us, His wayward children. Over the years, I have also come to a place where I find living in the truth of appreciation is a far happier place to be than in the deception of criticism. I like the feeling of being deeply appreciative of my wife - far more than I like the feeling of separation. Thus, I work to find my way back to regaining a sense of appreciation as quickly as I can. I have found that my ability to see the good is typically limited by my lack of desire to look for it. But, yes, I am still learning about how to find beauty in things that I still struggle to find beauty in.

Along the way, I also learned something important about beauty from the true-love albatrosses (the albatross bonds for

life). When an albatross partner arrives home after a few days away, the couple performs an elaborate greeting ritual. They squawk loudly and rub their beaks together excitedly. From them, I learned that it's helpful for couples to have a special welcome-home tradition that they only use only for each other. The ritual needs to express happiness and joy. "Oh, it's you, the special one in my life. I'm so, so happy to be with you again. Please come and be close to me."

The beavers are also true-love animals. Mrs. Beaver has a 'to do' list as long as her tail. She sends her partner out to fix the dam, cut down a large tree with his teeth, and bring home some food. And then she will snuggle him. That's the way true love works. Sometimes, I think about the state of many marriages in Britain today. I sometimes think about how many men go out and work long days in sometimes challenging jobs. And they come home, but there is no snuggling allowed – no appreciation that leads to beauty and hugs. I wonder how Mr. Beaver would feel if that happened to him. And I also wonder about all the Mrs. Beavers who now go out to work today and also do most of the house chores, and wonder if they sense if they are appreciated. Given our current high levels of divorce, I sense that the love and beauty dynamic is far from being alive and well in our contemporary culture. I wonder how many spouses are being taught to criticize rather than appreciate.

You may ask why I have chosen to write about the love and beauty dynamic within 'Morality Forum.' Although I have come to understand that learning to control my sense of appreciation has made a positive difference to my own life, I have also learned that keeping my marriage healthy is also part of my social responsibility. This way, my children are best protected and my community too. Thus, learning to have a sense of appreciation for my wife's goodness is a public duty. It is a central pillar of building a strong community, and no one else can do it for me. I perceive we live in incredible times. I have almost everything I could ever need. Sometimes, it's good to remind ourselves of how lucky we are.

Chanukah's lesson about America in 2020

It's actually about fighting and winning a "culture" war against impossible odds. History is full of seemingly hopeless situations that were overcome by people who refused to give up. If you do your part, God will do His.

December 14, 2020 – Mass Resistance

Since the November elections we have never seen so much despondency and despair. We're hearing from so many people who say they are depressed, see no way out, and are just giving up. And, yes, things are looking worse than ever before. Radicals running state and local governments. Massive election fraud. The Constitution openly ignored. Businesses across America forced into bankruptcy by government edict. The courts ignoring the rule of law. People being fired from their jobs for having the wrong political opinions. Left-wing violence openly allowed, but pro-family protest suppressed. Anti-fa and Black Lives Matter mobs allowed to take over areas of

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cities. The media's aggressive jihad against the truth. The homosexual and transgender movements celebrated in federal agencies. Religious beliefs suppressed and even punished in businesses, government, and public schools. The massive deficit. The "opposition" Republican leadership in Congress with no backbone or will to fight back. The looming oppression of all conservatives. And on and on. "It's finished. America's done. I'm giving up." We're hearing that everywhere. People are feeling beaten and completely powerless. At MassResistance we refuse to see things that way. We must continue to resist these evils!

Chanukah — now more relevant than ever: Today is the 5th day of the 8-day Jewish holiday Chanukah. Most people (and sadly, most Jews) see Chanukah as sort of a Jewish version of Christmas. They don't really understand what it's about and what it teaches us. It celebrates something very important about man and God. Chanukah is in fact relevant to what we're going through right now. It's about struggling against and ultimately winning — with God's help — a seemingly unwinnable culture war against oppressive government and institutions that are thoroughly dominated by pagan and godless forces determined to permanently change society.

Complete oppression: In the second century B.C., the powerful Syrian empire took over Israel. By around 170 B.C., they were ruthlessly forcing paganism and secularism on the country and banning traditional religious practice. It got worse and worse. Pagan holidays, customs, and religious practices were harshly imposed on the citizens of Israel. Statues of pagan gods were erected throughout the country. People were required to bow down to idols and make sacrifices to them. If they refused, they were tortured and killed. Yet this aggression was supported by many Israelites who welcomed the "modern" changes. (Does this sound familiar?) It came to a point where no public acknowledgement of God was allowed anywhere. Sabbath observance, study of the Bible, and other Jewish customs and rituals were completely banned. Bibles were destroyed where found. Sadly, many Jews continued to embrace the pagan customs and willingly abandoned God. And most religious Jews simply complied and offered no resistance. (Does this sound familiar?) As a result, the anti-religious oppression continued unimpeded.

The battle: Finally, a small band of unyielding believers had had enough. Known as the Maccabees (from the Hebrew word for "hammer"), they revolted in their village and then fled into the hills. They formed a resistance movement, and gathered a guerrilla army to win back their country. Such a feat was considered impossible against the powerful Syrian empire controlling the country. But the Maccabees fought on. They refused to give up. Their guerrilla encounters became bolder and bolder. Many Israelites joined them, resulting in incredible successes against the Syrian forces. It was shocking. They had victory after victory. Within three years, they drove out the Syrians and took back their country. With God's help, they finally won!

Chanukah means "dedication": And they brought God back

to Israel. Almost immediately, the Maccabees came into Jerusalem to clean out and re-purify the Great Temple, which had been turned into a pagan shrine where pigs were being sacrificed. But as they re-dedicated the Temple, they found only a one-day supply of holy oil to light the sacred lamps. That one-day supply miraculously lasted eight days - until more holy oil could be made. From that miracle, an eight-day celebration of Chanukah (which means "dedication" in Hebrew) has continued ever since.

Taking back your country: Thus, the holiday of Chanukah is actually about fighting and winning a war against oppressive and vicious state-forced paganism, and overcoming near-impossible odds. This ought to be an annual lesson for us. Even though the forces ruling us want to drastically change society and replace God in our lives with the secular State and ever more ruthlessly impose Godless secularism on us throughout society, do not give up. The battle is not lost. Seemingly impossible circumstances can and will be overcome with God's help. That is God's message to all of us. But you must be willing to fight back. If the Maccabees hadn't stepped up, what would have happened?

Nothing is impossible: History is full of seemingly hopeless situations that were overcome by people who refused to give up. The American Revolution is a good example. And more recently, the world saw how a few revolts by determined people spread and ultimately brought down the vast Soviet empire, which at that time no one thought was possible.

But we must be willing to take action: Finally, we believe there's yet another message to Chanukah. You can't sit on the sidelines. It's necessary for people to leave their comfort zones and take action, if victory is to come. Lately, many people have been saying that they've decided to fight this battle by just praying and fasting. Well, praying and fasting are good things. But the message of Chanukah is, that is not enough. People must join the fight. It's the universal lesson about fighting against seemingly hopeless odds: If you do your part, God will do His. Here at MassResistance we have lots of plans for 2021. America isn't over yet!

Her Voice: providing a platform for women hurt by abortion

Her Voice is a Society for the Protection of Unborn Children initiative which provides a platform for women to tell their abortion story. For many women this can aid the healing process. If done in the right way and at the right time. Many of the women who share their stories through *Her Voice* hope that their stories may help other women who may be considering abortion or suffering after an abortion experience.

Women also want the public to know that suffering after an abortion is common. 'Abortion and Women's Health', a review authored by Dr. Greg Pike and published by SPUC, concluded: "Women experience a range of emotions after abortion, including sadness, loneliness, shame, guilt, grief, doubt and regret." SPUC has produced a booklet of stories shared by these brave women. The *Her Voice* project also invites individuals and organisations to make a pledge to listen respectfully to women.

In these ways the *Her Voice* initiative is challenging the prevailing narrative that abortion is generally a positive or neutral experience for women. *This article was published in the Winter 2021 edition of SPUC ALIVE*



Survivors of Soviet communism are warning the West is becoming totalitarian.

Here's a manual for resisting. Rod Dreher spent several years asking European survivors of Soviet communism if they thought America was drifting toward totalitarianism. They all said yes.

BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, November 30, 2020

(LifeSiteNews) — Baton Rouge is the hometown of American Conservative columnist and best-selling author Rod Dreher. I live in Scotland, where the Justice Minister has proposed a “Hate Crime” law that could result in our prosecution for remarks we make in our own homes. This is particularly alarming to me personally, for the definition of “hatred” these days is wide-ranging, and some believe that “stirring up hatred” includes stating that men who masquerade as women can be a danger to women, especially when these men identify as “lesbians.” I have frequently said this at home, and now I am saying it in print. Come and get me, copper.

Dreher's *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents* is, therefore, of particular interest to me and, unfortunately, of particular interest to all of you LifeSiteNews fans. The book's aim is to give us tools for retaining our “small-o orthodox” faith in God, preventing our children from becoming Woke totalitarians, and ultimately defeating the Culture of Lies currently gathering speed in the West. It is, if you like, a companion volume to Dreher's *The Benedict Option*, which aims at the same thing. *Live Not by Lies* develops Dreher's ideas by presenting us with heroic — and successful — models of Christian resistance to another Culture of Lies, the Moscow-based communist regime that ruled Eastern and most of Central Europe from 1945 until 1989. Dreher travelled throughout the area, interviewing Christians of different confessions who actively resisted the Marxist regime in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. Poignantly, Dreher reveals in his book that the Christian resisters who survived the era did not believe the Iron Curtain would fall during their lifetimes. Their goal was not to survive communist totalitarianism but to be faithful to God and His truth. Dreher's project was sparked by a phone call from “an eminent American physician” whose Czechoslovak immigrant mother had warned him that the same circumstances that ushered in communist totalitarianism had begun to appear in the U.S. The exact event that triggered this warning was the mob hysteria around the refusal of a pizzeria in small-town Indiana to cater a same-sex “wedding.” It wasn't just the mob's calls to burn the pizzeria down, but the fact that the so-called “liberal” elite, including the mainstream media, “normally so watchful against the danger of mobs threatening the lives and livelihoods of minorities” was unconcerned. Dubious but curious, Dreher spent the next few years asking European survivors of communism if they thought America was drifting toward totalitarianism. They all said yes.

“What unnerves those who lived under Soviet communism is this similarity: Elites and elite institutions are abandoning old-fashioned liberalism, based in defending the rights of the

individual, and replacing it with a progressive creed that regards justice in terms of groups,” Dreher writes. “It encourages people to identify with groups — ethnic, sexual, and otherwise — and to think of Good and Evil as a matter of power dynamics among the groups. A utopian vision drives these progressives, one that compels them to seek to rewrite history and reinvent language to reflect their ideas of social justice.” The main difference between the defunct Soviet regime and the growing Empire of Woke is that whereas the former featured the “hard totalitarianism” of physical violence, the latter employs the “soft totalitarianism” of so-called “social justice” ideology, cancel culture, surveillance technology beyond the commissars' wildest dreams, and permissive consumerism. Dreher uses a literary metaphor to illustrate: half of Europe lived out George Orwell's 1984 and now the West is looking increasingly like Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. Dreher devotes the first part of his book to the Woke Revolution and how Big Business, especially Big Tech, signed on to it. Although I was already familiar with the threat Big Tech presents to our liberties, I appreciated how lucidly Dreher presented the evidence. If you haven't already forbidden your children smartphones, you will after you finish reading *Live Not by Lies*. You may also quit your shopping habit, turn down the thermostat, and start fasting more often. Consumerism and comfort, Dreher convincingly argues, have made us weak and cowardly.

Part 2 provides the detailed testimony of what life back in the USSR and its European satellites was like under hard totalitarianism. The stories of imprisonment are brutal. What was done to priests and ministers is almost beyond belief — or would be beyond belief if we hadn't read stories about state violence against martyrs under Diocletian, Henry VIII, and Mary Tudor. But there are also important lessons about radical faith in God, the friendship of small and secret communities, and close-knit, carefully parented families. Dreher believes that uncompromising devotion to Christ, small communities, and loyal families will be absolutely necessary for living not by lies in the coming maelstrom. Of course, the maelstrom may already be here. Between beginning and ending this review, I saw footage of a man in England being arrested by masked police officers, apparently for walking down the street while chatting with strangers. He resists by pulling away, and then breaks down into most un-English wailing. Apparently, he lost his business in one of the many coronavirus lockdowns, and being manhandled by London bobbies has clearly pushed him over the edge. Hearing a middle-aged Englishman scream for help as masked policemen surround him made my blood run cold. “I have no understanding of what's going on,” he cries. Well, anyone who has read *Live Not By Lies* could tell him. We've gone soft, soft as rotten apples, and too many people are willing to give up their rights, and ours too, rather than risk catching a virus that spares 99.9 percent of its victims. Dreher doesn't address the pandemic in *Live Not By Lies*, but he has a lot to say about cowardice and what it can do to you. But that's a big lacuna, by the way. One of the terrible ironies of reading *Live Not By Lies* during the lockdown is that public worship has, in many places, been cancelled or curtailed, elderly people are held separate from their families, and friends are not allowed to visit each other's homes. Christian worship, kin, and community, Dreher's proposed fortress against the lie, are therefore arguably even more difficult to preserve now

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to what they were in 1970s Poland. Thus, if I had an issue with this book, it would be that Dreher did not pen an “Afterword” to discuss the role the unprecedented suspension of civil liberties in the West might play in speeding up soft totalitarianism. And listening to a broken man wailing in the London street, I’m not sure it’s going to be so soft. *Rod Dreher, Live Not By Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents, New York City, Sentinel, 2020, 240 pages, \$27 USD.*

The Great Barrington Declaration

The Great Barrington Declaration – As infectious disease epidemiologists and public health scientists we have grave concerns about the damaging physical and mental health impacts of the prevailing COVID-19 policies, and recommend an approach we call Focused Protection. Coming from both the left and right, and around the world, we have devoted our careers to protecting people. Current lockdown policies are producing devastating effects on short and long-term public health. The results (to name a few) include lower childhood vaccination rates, worsening cardiovascular disease outcomes, fewer cancer screenings and deteriorating mental health – leading to greater excess mortality in years to come, with the working class and younger members of society carrying the heaviest burden. Keeping students out of school is a grave injustice. Keeping these measures in place until a vaccine is available will cause irreparable damage, with the underprivileged disproportionately harmed. Fortunately, our understanding of the virus is growing. We know that vulnerability to death from COVID-19 is more than a thousand-fold higher in the old and infirm than the young. Indeed, for children, COVID-19 is less dangerous than many other harms, including influenza.

As immunity builds in the population, the risk of infection to all – including the vulnerable – falls. We know that all populations will eventually reach herd immunity – i.e. the point at which the rate of new infections is stable – and that this can be assisted by (but is not dependent upon) a vaccine. Our goal should therefore be to minimize mortality and social harm until we reach herd immunity.

The most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk. We call this Focused Protection. Adopting measures to protect the vulnerable should be the central aim of public health responses to COVID-19. By way of example, nursing homes should use staff with acquired immunity and perform frequent testing of other staff and all visitors. Staff rotation should be minimized. Retired people living at home should have groceries and other essentials delivered to their home. When possible, they should meet family members outside rather than inside. A comprehensive and detailed list of measures, including approaches to multi-generational households, can be implemented, and is well within the scope and capability of public health professionals. Those who are not vulnerable should immediately be allowed to resume life as normal. Simple hygiene measures, such as

hand washing and staying home when sick should be practiced by everyone to reduce the herd immunity threshold. Schools and universities should be open for in-person teaching. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, should be resumed. Young low-risk adults should work normally, rather than from home. Restaurants and other businesses should open. Arts, music, sport and other cultural activities should resume. People who are more at risk may participate if they wish, while society as a whole enjoys the protection conferred upon the vulnerable by those who have built up herd immunity.

On October 4, 2020, this declaration was authored and signed in Great Barrington, United States, by: Dr. Martin Kulldorff, professor of medicine at Harvard University, a biostatistician, and epidemiologist with expertise in detecting and monitoring infectious disease outbreaks and vaccine safety evaluations. Dr. Sunetra Gupta, professor at Oxford University, an epidemiologist with expertise in immunology, vaccine development, and mathematical modelling of infectious diseases. Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, professor at Stanford University Medical School, a physician, epidemiologist, health economist, and public health policy expert focusing on infectious diseases and vulnerable populations. To date, nearly 50,000 medical practitioners and medical and public health scientists have signed the declaration worldwide along with over 664,000 concerned citizens who have also endorsed the document. AMAC’s CEO Rebecca Weber has endorsed the declaration on behalf of our 2.3 million members.

Religion – A Way to Peace or a Cause of Conflict?



Mr. Heiner Handschin

Written by Mr. Heiner Handschin, IAPD coordinator for Europe and the Middle East; and Dr. Juraj Lajda, president, UPF Czech Republic - 11 December 2020

Geneva, Switzerland—

Prominent religious leaders spoke at a webinar titled “Religion – A Way to Peace or a Cause of Conflict?”

The conference was held on December 11, 2020, as a joint effort of the Europe and Middle East branches of UPF and the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), a UPF association. The theme was based on the long history of conflict and struggle among different religions.

Introduction: In the modern era, an increasing number of people are turning their backs on traditional institutionalized religion, in favour of a more personalized spiritual experience. Despite the creditability of modern religions wavering, prominent religious leaders gathered in order to share their views and experiences on the topic of: Religion – A Way to Peace or a Cause of Conflict? The webinar included distinguished religious representatives from across Europe as they gathered to debate the most urgent challenge of resolving the arduous history of conflict and struggle between religious leaders and their followers. The debate aimed to tackle questions such as: What are the reasons behind this history of religious conflict and what proposals can be made to reconcile,

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and build necessary trust? Why are these institutions often unable to relate to one another peacefully, as brothers and sisters, despite each religion seeking the same peace and prosperity as one Human Family?

Report: For the first session, held in German with translation into English, the moderator was **Rabbi Kevin De-Carli**, research assistant to IAPD of Europe and the Middle East. He also represents the Interfaith Youth Council of the Geneva Interfaith Intercultural Alliance (GIIA). Rabbi De-Carli explained that the original plan for this conference to include a parallel youth panel could not be fulfilled because, as an officer of a paramedic military unit, he was ordered to combat the second wave of COVID-19 that is currently ravaging Switzerland and he couldn't mandate the original youth panel of GIIA for this conference. Instead, to maintain an intergenerational element, the organizers invited a young Protestant pastor from Austria to act as a respondent. The youth audience was hoping for such a perspective to be included in the meeting. As the first speaker of the panel, **Rev. Dr. Simone Sinn** of the Ecumenical Institute of Bogis-Bossey in Switzerland concisely presented 10 points affirming that religious actors either can be peacemakers or cause conflicts. Religions themselves are not the cause of anything, she said; it is the human actors who make the difference. She stated that debate must be inclusive, focusing not just on the strong majorities but taking into consideration the small and vulnerable ones as well. She emphasized the need for youth to be taught an interfaith perspective. Through these kinds of activities, religious extremism and intolerance can be addressed most efficiently, she said.

The next speaker was **Gurdeep Singh Kundan**, the founder of the Center for Sikh Studies in St. Gallen, Switzerland, a board member of the interfaith group Iras Cotis, and secretary general of the Global Council of Sikhism. Although religious differences historically have been the cause for conflict, it shouldn't be that way, he said. After conferences like this, he said, we should be concerned about practicing our great ideas and make sure there will be a follow-up. In Sikhism, he said, feeding all people is a mandate that goes beyond barriers of religion and faiths, and this activity can be seen as a means to create a peaceful environment among human beings.

Heiner Handschin, the leader of both UPF-Switzerland and IAPD for Europe and the Middle East, pointed out that recent history shows the great potential of religions for peace efforts and conflict at the same time. This should make us think that we need each other to help overcome the "division into different compartments" of the different faiths and, related to that, the potential clash of perspectives of different cultures and civilizations. Youth cannot relate easily to institutionalized religions, which they see as inflexible, he said. He mentioned the interesting concept of "home church" or family as a place of worship that could bridge the generation gaps and bring forth all that good potential of religions.

As the fourth speaker wasn't on the call yet, **Pastor Markus Gerhold** of the Protestant community of Steyr, Austria, gave a short response to the words of the previous speakers.

Pastor Gerhold said he also identified with the point of religion being part of the solution as well as part of the problem. In the current time of social instability, he said, there is a greater tendency toward fundamentalist and extreme forms of religions that seem to give greater stability and a sense of identity. It would be important for the moderate sides of reli-

gion to offer young people an alternative to counter these tendencies. Also there is a need for capacity building, he said, so that religions can become more plurality friendly rather than locking themselves down in narrow and inflexible traditions that don't seem to appeal to young people anymore.

After a lively discussion about human dignity and human ethos as a common point among religions, **Professor Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt**, the final speaker, joined the meeting. Dr. Bielefeldt is a professor of human rights and human rights policy at the University of Erlangen, Germany. He pointed out that in these times religions have become known as having a great potential for conflict, division and struggle, as mentioned in John Lennon's song "Imagine." It even would be understandable to state that religions these days are rather on the side of the problem than the solution, he said, as they are seen in many places as a factor of division. Dr. Bielefeldt stated that religions have a credibility problem, and many times they are really troublemakers. He said there is a need for in-depth self-criticism that can be seen as an appropriate response to the credibility issue. He discussed the existing peace potential that actually does surface in many places, citing examples in Nigeria, Lebanon and Sierra Leone, where practical applications of the message of religions showed some very inspiring results. The religious "openheartedness" in those places went way beyond mere tolerance.

In conclusion he reiterated that religions' potential for conflict or peace is a fact. Through an attitude of rigorous self-critique, religions can become a source of great strength and real contributors to peace in the world.



Chantal Komagata

The second session, which was held in English, was moderated by **Chantal Komagata**, the coordinator of UPF for Europe. The first speaker was **Rev. Michal Jablonski**, pastor and director of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Warsaw,

Poland. He explained that the creators of religions are people, not God. "Religion was born from questions," he said. "From thinking about the world [and] about ourselves." The first clash, he said, comes from the fact that each religion claims its God is the only one and the best one. The second clash is derived from the concept of symbol, considered sacred, when loyalty to it became stronger than the self. The third clash is caused by the existence of different Holy Scriptures, the interpretation of which can divide people and lead to violent confrontations. "That is why we have, in modern countries, the separation of state and religion," he said. Rev. Jablonski advo-



Rev. Michal Jablonski

cated remaining critical toward religion, cultivating the basic principles and taking responsibility. He concluded his talk by emphasizing the significant difference between religions and faith, which depends on our own personal relationship to God.

The following speaker was Hon. Ján Figel' from Slovakia, a former European Commission special envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion outside the European Union. He said: "First of all, I think that religion is not the problem, but neither

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[is it] an automatic solution for peace. ... Religion is part of humanity, part of human history." He spoke about his time as a special envoy for the EU: "Freedom without responsibility will not work, it will die." He also said: "Religious leaders and faith-based organizations should promote openness of minds and hearts, and they should be very active in dialogue ... oriented toward truth, justice, [and the] common good." He also emphasized human rights for all and following the teachings of Jesus to love all people.

Martin Pilka from the Czech Republic, the national president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, began his talk by directly tackling the topic at hand: "I realize that it is our personal choice whether we are the way to peace, or a cause of conflict. ... Religion, generally, is not what decides whether the outcome is good or bad. ... It is our heart, [the] human heart, that makes the decision. The important factor is who prevails in our heart." He continued: "It is our responsibility as religious leaders, and for all of us, to make choices which bring God's light to the world." He encouraged the attendees to make good choices and decisions, in addition to being righteous examples for others.



Dr. Dieter Schmidt

Dr. Dieter Schmidt from Germany, the UPF director for Central Europe, started his talk by stating, "Peace is needed more today than at any time before." Speaking about the role of religion, he said: "Religion has the task to turn human beings toward

goodness and to eliminate their evil nature that finds enjoyment in fighting. ... We have to realize we have a part of fallen nature in ourselves, and we need healing. As a doctor, religion is like a medicine: something we go through to be healthy again or, in religious terms, to be saved."

Dr. Schmidt emphasized the importance of studying the sacred scriptures of world religions, and he encouraged the strengthening of religious education. He spoke of his own experiences in UPF's Middle East Peace Initiative, which took place in Jerusalem in 2003. At that time representatives of Judaism, Islam and Christianity gathered together and gave a tribute to Jesus by symbolically removing the crown of thorns and giving him the crown of glory. Dr. Schmidt stated that God, being a God of love behind all religions, is a Heavenly Parent. We should try to create one human family under God, he said. UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon emphasizes the feminine aspect of God, he said. He concluded by saying, "I hope that we can work together, that we can understand other religions better, because there are so many beautiful ways of devotion."

The final part of the webinar was a question-and-answer session. Many insightful questions were posed to the panellists, who provided thoughtful answers in response. Ms. Komagata, the session moderator, brought the webinar to a close by thanking the panellists who participated in the debate, before a video was shown of an interfaith water ceremony.

(Joshua McGuigan, the press officer in the United Kingdom for Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, an affiliated organization; and Chantal Chételat Komagata, UPF coordinator for Europe, contributed to this report.)

Youth UPF - Youth Leaders in Dialogue with Parliamentarians

Written by Christian Klotz, UPF-UK

London United Kingdom—Young achievers met and asked questions of members of Parliament in an online event held during UK Parliament Week. For the November 5, 2020, meeting, there were over 60 connections on Zoom and 700 views on Facebook.

Universal Peace Federation of the United Kingdom held the event to promote political dialogue and understanding, with a particular focus on young people and the issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Sunhak Peace Prize laureate Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, an Afghan educationalist, commented on Twitter, "Engaging young people with parliamentarians leads us to look at the world through their lenses and open our conscience to today's problems with a broader view of a solution." Rt. Hon. Baroness Janet Royall tweeted, "A pleasure to participate in the Q-and-A this evening, energized by amazing young people."

The parliamentarians included Afzal Khan MP CBE, Rt Hon. Baroness Janet Royall, Baroness Sandip Verma, Paul Scully MP, and Shaun Bailey MP. UPF patron Carole Stone CBE and UPF Chair of Trustees Keith Best also spoke. The panellists briefly introduced themselves first, talking about their career, passions and interests in the context of young people.

It was great to hear from a mixture of younger and older panellists and why they all desire to get young people involved in politics and ensure they are part of conversations today.

Young people then asked questions to the panellists. The questions were directed toward specific members of the panel who were best positioned to answer. Questions focused mainly on the issues that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing for young people, both in the short term and the long term. Some of the questions asked were: How are we supporting young people in starting small businesses, given that we are expecting an economic crisis? When will the COVID-19 crisis end? How can we balance the anti-COVID restrictions with the mental health of the youth? Are university students being consulted? Are universities resuming solely based on a financial decision? If a COVID vaccine becomes available, should vaccination be compulsory? Should politics be taught to everyone in schools as part of the national curriculum?

The panellists gave thoughtful, honest answers and showed real compassion and interest in the issues that young people in particular are facing today. Although many of the panellists said that they could not give definitive answers to some of the questions (there isn't a right or wrong answer to many of the questions), the young people asking the questions expressed appreciation for the answers provided. There was also a strong theme emerging that the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be solved internationally. There is a huge focus on nationalism today (e.g., vaccines being purchased by countries alone). However, the view was expressed that we need global cooperation to resolve such issues. Another theme expressed was that we all need to take individual responsibility to overcome this pandemic. Concluding remarks were given by Dr. Michael Balcomb, chair for Europe and Middle East of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization that is affiliated with UPF. Dr. Balcomb encouraged all young people to get involved and reach out directly to their local member of Parliament in the belief that young people can effect positive change in their area.