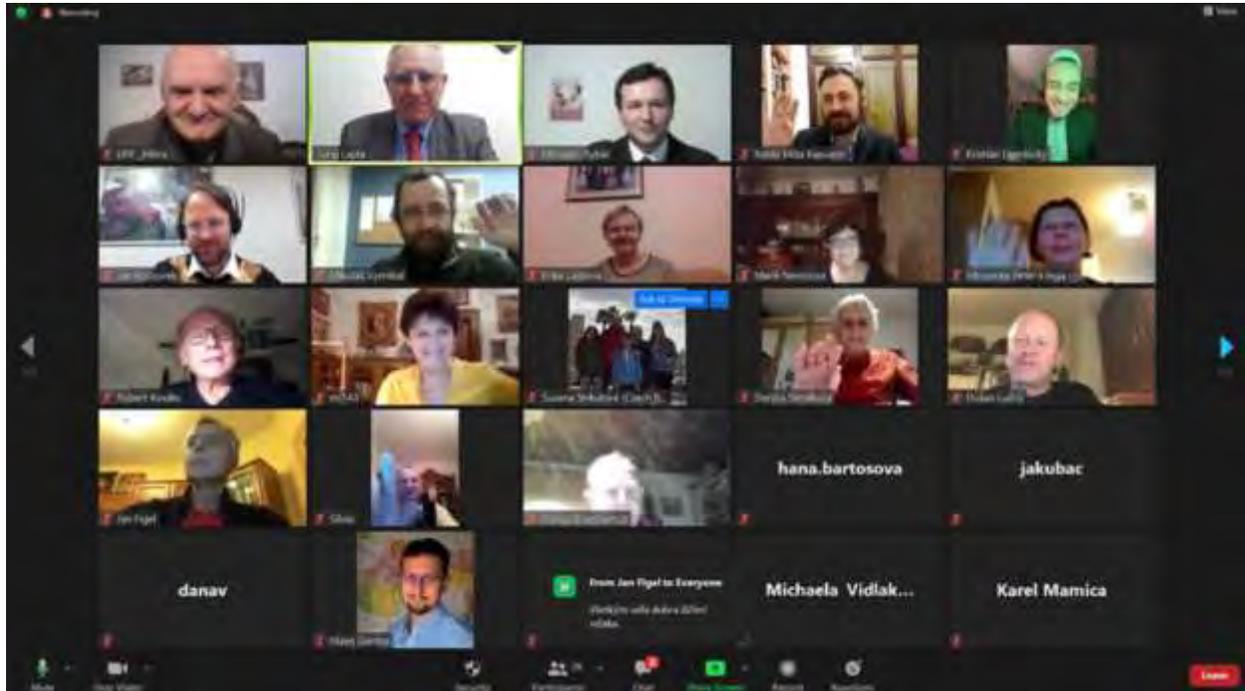


UPF-Czech Republic's Webinar Approaches Faith from Four Points of View

Juraj Lajda
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Prague, Czech Republic -- UPF invited four prominent speakers to give their views at an online discussion on the value of religion.

The Slovakian and Czech chapters of UPF jointly organized a one-hour webinar with religious representatives to discuss the topic "Religion – a Way to Peace or a Cause of Conflict?"

A total of 30 participants, from both the Czech Republic and Slovakia, attended the January 21, 2021, webinar, which was held in both the Czech and Slovak languages.

The speakers were:

Rabbi Michail Kapustin, the main rabbi from the Federation of Jewish Communities in Slovakia

Kristian Dembický, a Muslim student activist

Rev. Mikuláš Vymětal from the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

Rev. Miroslav Rybár, president of the Slovakian chapter of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization that is affiliated with UPF

Dr. Juraj Lajda, president of UPF in the Czech Republic, moderated the discussion.

Rabbi Michail Kapustin said that in Judaism there is no word for "religion." The word itself has a great power and influence. Similar to atomic power, which can be used for good or bad purposes, also the word

can be used for good or evil. Religion in good hands can help people. Most important is to have a good heart, he said; then religion can be a way to peace.

Kristian Dembický, a student of Islamic studies, said it is up to people who represent religion if peace or conflict is realized. Historically, there have been periods of wars and peace. There have been times in some countries when the Jews ruled over Muslims in a peaceful way and vice versa. Religion in its essence should definitely serve as a way to peace, he concluded.



Rev. Mikuláš Vymětal said that God is more than a religion. Each religion recognizes God only partially. Faith is a relationship of an individual to God. Reverend Vymětal said that UPF and FFWPU were established by Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon to bring peace among nations, religions and people based on good families, which are the cornerstone of peace. We also need to be at peace with nature, he said. To create peace is the main purpose of each religion.

The final speaker, Rev. Miroslav Rybár, said that religion itself is not the active factor, but it represents some internal relationship of human beings to God. The expression of this relationship formed various confessions, doctrines and rituals, and finally institutionalized religion. Originally, God did not plan to establish a religion. It came into existence as a result of the Human Fall. The role of religion is the way to bring people back to God. The goal of religion is to create a world without religion but not a world without God, he said. Marriage and family can unite religions and fulfill this goal.

The presentations were followed by a discussion, which was moderated by Miloš Klas, the president of UPF-Slovakia.

All the panelists expressed their appreciation for the conference, and many participants' responses were also positive.