

Paris, France - The Reality of Life after Death and Contemporary Society

Jean-François Moulinet
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Paris, France—A new series of interreligious forums started with the topic “The Reality of Life after Death and Contemporary Society.”

The planned “Dialogue and Alliance” series will be organized jointly by UPF-France with the French chapters of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) and the Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP), two affiliated organizations.

The first of the interreligious forums was held on June 3, 2017, at the Espace Barrault conference center located in Paris’ 13th District. More than 70 participants crowded the hall, including Ambassadors for Peace, members of co-sponsoring organizations and new guests.



UPF-France President Jacques Marion introduced the first session, stating that the objective of the forum was not simply to satisfy some intellectual curiosity on spiritual phenomena but to give the issue of life after death the place it deserves in debates on matters as diverse as human development, family and cultural identity, euthanasia, suicide, religious extremism, etc.

The first panel, on the theme “Preparing on Earth for Eternal Life: Religious Voices,” was composed of religious representatives who gave their views on how belief in life after death gives meaning to the way we live our lives.

Mr. Raymond Ganserlat, president of the Lao Buddhist Association of Northern France, and Mr. Michel Thao Chan, president of the Circle of Reflection of Nations, who was speaking on behalf of the Venerable Sengphachan Bounheng, abbot of the Wat Lao Bouddhahaviham Pagoda, spoke on the theme of “Death in Theravada Buddhism.” “According to the Buddha’s teaching,” they said, “death is only a manifestation of the impermanence of phenomena. There cannot be life without death. Thus, to meditate on death is nothing but to meditate on life. The matter here is not to share a conviction, but to share a knowledge that

can free us from fear. This knowledge allows believers to live with serenity and helps the dying to overcome suffering through prayer.”

The next speaker was Mr. Dominique Calmels, the national director of communications of the French chapter of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the financial director of a major French company, Accenture. He explained about the Mormon belief in life after death, in which one is to come in the presence of God, and said that the Mormon ritual of baptism is practiced on behalf of ancestors in the spirit world. A Mormon temple where such sacred rituals of baptism and marriage are held was built recently near Paris, he said, the first of its kind in France.

Mr. Jean André Galeyrand, a political scientist and the secretary general of the Association Gate of Light, recalled his lifelong spiritual search through practices in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sufism. He described vividly some of the powerful experiences that connected him to a higher spiritual reality.



The final speaker was Mr. Didier Guignard, the chair of FFWPU-France. He gave a presentation on the reality of the spirit world and the process of spiritual growth in human life. Describing three stages of life, he said that life in the womb was a preparation for life on earth, where we breathe air, and that, in the same way, life on earth was a preparation for life in the spirit world, where we breathe love. He concluded with a brief description of the process of spiritual growth after death according to the principle of “returning resurrection.”

The second session, “The Reality of the Spirit World: Testimonies of Life Experiences,” was introduced by Jean-François Moulinet, president of FFWPU-France. He told how his own search about the spirit world had led him to meet Mr. Jean Prieur, a prominent and prolific writer who passed away in 2016 at the age of 102, and who was instrumental in bringing the issue of life after death to the fore in France in recent decades.

The main speaker was Mr. Etienne Drapeau, founder of the monthly magazine *The World Beyond*, who had made the trip from southern France early in the morning to attend the forum. He described how over thirty years ago, as he was a successful businessman, he had been led through several life-and-death experiences to take on the mission to promote knowledge about the spirit world, to relate messages from the spirit world and to publish information on spirit-based phenomena.

He described the multiple ways in which the spirit world manifests itself to us, and related some of the messages from well-known departed people, including Padre Pio and Jean Prieur. The main message from spiritual messengers, he concluded, is that the world is moving toward “one global religion based on love,” beyond dogmas and religious barriers.

On this Pentecost weekend, in this crowded room, everyone’s attention was caught by each speaker, and time was too short to deal with all the questions.

The event concluded with the awarding of Ambassador for Peace certificates to three individuals: a member of the Executive Board of the Tunisian National Chamber of Women Heads of Enterprises; a Franco-Syrian consultant and psychologist on intercultural matters and an activist for peace in Syria; and a Coptic Egyptian professor, writer and painter residing in France.