

UPF France marked the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week

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Paris, France -- UPF marked World Interfaith Harmony Week with a program about an individual who strived to build bridges between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

On February 1, 2018, the French chapters of UPF and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, held an evening program about the scholar and politician André Chouraqui (1917-2007), including a showing of the film *André Chouraqui: l'écriture des écritures* ("The Writing of Scriptures").

Held at Espace Barrault, the UPF and WFWP headquarters in Paris, the meeting gathered 50 participants, including Monseigneur Jacques Gaillot, the bishop of Partenia; Mr. Lanciné Camara, president of the International Union of African Journalists; scholars and NGO leaders.

The film was introduced by Emmanuel Chouraqui, son of André Chouraqui, who made this film on his father's life and achievements to stimulate interreligious dialogue. Mr. Edmond Lisle, president of *Fraternité d'Abraham*, a well-known interreligious association co-founded by André Chouraqui in 1967, commented on the film and the founder's life.

André Chouraqui was a Jewish writer, scholar and political leader, well-known in the francophone world for his translation of the Bible and the Quran. Born in Algeria in 1917, raised in a Jewish community under French colonial rule, he experienced from youth the complex interaction between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Educated in France, active in the French Resistance during World War II, he was able to transcend the suffering imposed by anti-Semitism into a passionate search into the sources of Judaism and the common, underlying truths connecting Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Politically active in the new State of Israel as vice mayor of Jerusalem, he helped shape his country's education policies. When the Six-Day War broke out between Israel and the Arab world in June 1967, he co-founded the *Fraternité d'Abraham* together with Jesuit Father Michel Riquet, the writer Jacques Nantet, and the rector of the Great Mosque of Paris, Si Hamza Boubakeur, to promote dialogue among the three monotheistic religions. His 1969 book *Letter to an Arab Friend* expressed his deep longing for reconciliation between enemy brothers.

He then assiduously pursued scholarly work -- translating the Bible and the Quran, writing numerous books, striving through language to outline the bridges and commonalities between the three monotheistic traditions -- until his death in 2007.

After the captivating film on André Chouraqui's life, vision and achievements, his son Emmanuel opened the discussion, together with *Fraternité d'Abraham* President Edmond Lisle. The evening was rich in spiritual inspiration and cultural information.