

## UPF Colorado, USA: IMAP Webinar Explores Issues of Morality in Media

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# PROMOTING A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AND MORAL MEDIA IN A POST-MORAL WORLD

Tuesday, September 24th, 2024 @ 2 PM EDT



**Penny Rankin**

Vice President for  
Children and Youth,  
National Council of  
Women of Canada



**Mrs. Wendy Francis**

National Director of  
Politics, Australian  
Christian Lobby



**Peggy Yujiri**

Moderator  
Executive Director,  
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**IMAP, United States** – Over the past decade, social media platforms have gone from being seen as virtuous connectors of human beings to globally despised promoters of misinformation, hate speech, porn and child exploitation. New online media platforms have virtually eliminated print media and given a bully pulpit to those who excel at creating controversy and division. Given the pervasive shift to a worldview in which there are no moral absolutes, what can people of faith do?

The International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), in its webinar on September 24, 2024, explored the topic, "Promoting a Socially Responsible and Moral Media in a Post-Moral World." Panelists **Ms. Wendy Francis**, national director for politics for the Australian Christian Lobby, and **Ms. Penny Rankin**, vice president for children and youth for the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), addressed the issues with both wisdom and conviction.

In response to a question about what people of faith can do to advocate for moral media, Ms. Francis suggested that they become journalists themselves, get to know journalists, contribute their voices through social media, and continue to speak the truth, but respectfully at all times. She brought up recent proposed legislation in Australia that would seek to censor free speech for people of faith and stressed the importance of working to defeat such measures.

Ms. Rankin agreed that engaging with journalists is vital and, at best, it is done by building personal relationships, which entails patience and the ability to listen respectfully to opposing opinions. She encouraged everyone to support the efforts of others in their communities and to recognize the vital role that faith communities play in serving others. She challenged the audience to be brave and not to worry about appearing foolish, but rather to trust that God is supporting their efforts. In Canada, Ms. Rankin's organization is supporting a bill that would require age verification for youth to access porn online.

Ms. Francis also emphasized the importance of calling out situations when they violate norms of decency, emphasizing the importance of sticking to the facts and not using hype or exaggeration. She gave an example of an instance when she was able to get an inappropriate mural taken down at a state fair in her home state by starting an online petition, which garnered tremendous support and an almost immediate reversal. She often utilizes the Freedom of Information Act to gain access to relevant facts. Ms. Rankin and her allies have also had numerous successes, including in getting Visa and Mastercard to stop taking payments for Pornhub in Canada and elsewhere.

On the topic of how they utilize the media to get their message out, Ms. Francis said she pays attention to which journalists open her releases most frequently; she looks for social media channels that "speak her language," and reaches out to build bridges. She has her own YouTube channel "Fridays with Francis" that reaches a wider audience. Ms. Rankin finds that, post-pandemic, it is easier to reach people through Zoom, and her organization therefore has developed a range of online programs and seminars.

In conclusion, all participants were encouraged to be engaged and involved, to never give up, and to pray and seek God's guidance in their work.