



HJ International

GRADUATE SCHOOL for
PEACE and PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

3RD HJI CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP **Addressing Root Causes of Contemporary Threats** **to Religious Freedom**

August 1-3, 2025 New Yorker Hotel, New York, New York
All Sessions and Meals in Sutton Place, 3rd Floor

The HJI International Conference Series on Peace and Public Leadership is dedicated to exploring topics related to religion, peace and public leadership, including issues such as religious freedom and ecumenical and interfaith relations. Since the founding of HJI in 1975, then known as Unification Theological Seminary, there have been many occasions when scholars have been convened for consideration of important issues impacting our world. The HJI International Conference Series continues this tradition.

This conference will focus on the topic of “Assessing Root Causes to Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom.” While religious freedom is enshrined in many constitutions, mentioned in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and affirmed in the UN Charter, religion remains under threat in countries across the world. Recently, the FFWPU of Japan is facing dissolution; numerous religions, particularly minority religions, suffer discrimination in countries across the world. Suffice to say there are many governments and many non-state actors who do not respect the principle of freedom of religion or belief.

Friday, August 1

Afternoon

Arrivals and Registration

6:30 PM

Welcome Dinner

7:30-9:30 PM

Opening Session I: Introductions and Orientation to the Program

As an opportunity to get acquainted, this session will include self-introductions, an orientation to the program schedule and overview of the topics that will be discussed in conference sessions.

Welcome and Orientation to Conference

Thomas Walsh, President, HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership

Demian Dunkley, President, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification USA

Introductions: Each participant may take up to five minutes to introduce themselves, their background, interest in the topic, etc.

Saturday, August 2

7:30 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM

Session II: Historical and Sociological Perspectives

Moderator: Thomas Walsh, President, HJI

Panelists: **Massimo Introvigne**, Visiting Professor, University of Turin: *The Anti-Cult Movement: A Definition and Five Models*

Rebecca Moore, Professor Emerita of Religious Studies, San Diego State University: *Controlling the Narrative About Religious Freedom*

Holly Folk, Professor of Religion, Western Washington University: *Proxy Wars: Religious Minorities as Scapegoats (Virtual)*

Respondents: **Eileen Barker**, Professor Emerita of Sociology, London School of Economics (Virtual)

Michael Mickler, Distinguished Professor of Historical Studies, HJI

Discussion

11:00 AM

Break

11:30 AM

Session III: The Case of FFWPU Japan

Moderator: **Michael Jenkins**, President, Universal Peace Federation, USA

Panelists: **Shunsuke Uotani**, Secretary General, Universal Peace Federation Japan: *The Anti-FFWPU Movement in Japan*

Hirohisa Koide, Special Advisor, FFWPU Japan: *Deprogrammers and Their Associates Used Me and My Family for Two Years*

Patricia Duval, Attorney: *Violations of Judicial Independence and Due Process (Virtual)*

Respondents: **James Edgerly**, Founder, Higher Purpose Forum (Virtual)

Massimo Introvigne, Visiting Professor, University of Turin

Discussion

1:00 PM

Lunch

2:00 PM

Session IV: The Wider Context

Moderator: **Franco Famularo**, President, Universal Peace Federation, Canada

Panelists: **Nicole Bauer**, Professor of Religion, University of Graz, Austria: *Religion as Risk? The Violent Potential of Religious Practices and Its Implications for the Concept of Religious Freedom*

Marco Respinti, Director in Charge, Bitter Winter: *Root Causes of Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom: Consequences of Modern Atheism*

Thomas Walsh, President, HJI: *Civilizational States and the Management of Religious Freedom: China, Eurasia, Islam, and the West*

Respondents: **Thomas Ward**, Professor, Peace and Development, HJI

Daniel Fromson, Staff Editor, The New York Times Magazine

Discussion

4:00 PM

Break

Session V: The Role of the Media

Moderator: **Jacques Marion**, President, Universal Peace Federation, Europe and the Middle East

Panelists: **Hans Noot**, Deputy Director, Human Rights Without Frontiers and **Willie Fautre**, Founder, Human Rights Without Frontiers: *The Role of Media in the Stigmatization of Religious and Belief Minorities*

Peter Ross, Esq., Attorney: *Eulogy for an Epitaph*

Thomas Ward, Professor of Peace and Development, HJI: *When the Media Gets it Wrong: False Narratives and New Religious Movements*

Respondent: **Franco Famularo**, President, Universal Peace Federation, Canada

Discussion

6:30 PM

Dinner

8:00 PM

General Review and Discussion

Sunday, August 3

7:30 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM

Session VI: The Role of Governments and International Organizations

Moderator: **Rebecca Moore**, Professor Emerita of Religious Studies, San Diego State University

Panelists: **Jan Figel**, President, Forum for Religious Freedom, Europe: *Religious Freedom Climate Change: Rights and Responsibilities, Values and Virtues*

Aaron Rhodes, Former Director, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (1993-2007): *Root Causes of Respect for Religious Freedom*

Richard Swett, Former US Ambassador to Denmark and Former Member of the US House of Representatives (D-NH): *Understanding the Correlation between Religious Freedom, Economic Prosperity and Democratic Institutions*

Respondent: **Michael Jenkins**, President, Universal Peace Federation, USA

Discussion

11:00 AM

Break

11:30 AM

Closing Session: Opportunity for each participant to share thoughts, comments and final reflections or recommendations.

12:30 PM

Lunch and Departures