HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership Newsletter

Thomas G. Walsh April 19, 2024



April 19, 2024 Volume II, Number 6

1st HJI International Conference on Peace and Public Leadership

HJI held the **1st International Conference on Peace and Public** Leadership: Addressing the Challenges of Our Times on April **11-13**, 2024 with distinguished panelists from around the world.

Ten sessions discussed topics central to the challenges facing today's society. In this first international conference the presentations only scratched the surface of these important global issues, which HJI will continue to address through academic research and future scholarly encounters.



Dr. Thomas Walsh, President, HJI concluded the conference stating "We want to become a conveneing center that brings together leading figures to provide thought leadership, widsom, and insight that can impact the world positively as we work primarily to acheive peace."

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Report on HJI Conference Session Published in *Bitter Winter*

Dr. Massimo Introvigne, Founder, CESNUR; Editor, Bitter Winter, commented on the sucess of the HJI International Conference in <u>Bitter Winter</u>.

"While there are other critical situations, including in France, what is happening in Japan is unprecedented in a democratic country in our century"

	gious Movements and Contemporary Threats to s Freedom
	Moderator Dr. Michael Mickler Distinguished Professor of Historical Studies, HJI
	Moderator Dr. Franco Famularo Board Chair, HJI; President, FFWPU Canada
(g)	The Global Forecast for Religious Freedom - Stormy Skies Ahead Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice; former Chair, U.S. Commission on Int'l Religious Freedom
	How Can Scholars of New Religious Movements Best Contribute to the Religious Freedom Debate? Dr. Eileen Barker Emeritus Professor, London School of Economics; Chairperson and Founder, Information Network Focus on Religious Movements
	The Religious Liberty Crisis in Japan After the Assassination of Shinzo Abe, 2022-2024 Dr. Massimo Introvigne Founder CESNUR; Editor, Bitter Winter

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HJ International GRADUATE SCHOOL for PACE and PUBLIC LEADERSHIP	HJI PRESENTS THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP
	APRIL 11-13, 2024
	PUBLIC LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES
8:45-10:15 PM EST - Session III - Chri Friday, April 12 8:00-9:30 AM EST - Session IV - Philo 10:00-11:30 AM EST - Session V - Net 2:00-3:30 PM EST - Session VI - Fait 8:00-9:30 PM EST - Session VII - Eor Saturday, April 13 9:30-11:00 AM EST - Session VIII - Th	ation Worldview and Conflict Transformation istology and Women: Relevance for Peace w Religious Movements and Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom h and Family at the UN: Challenges and Opportunities nomic Democracy as an Essential Component of Positive Peace he Future of the United Nations: HJI Student Presentations spects for Peace in Israel and Palestine
All sessions will be virtual. All times listed For More Details and to Register Visit hji .d	d are Eastern Standard Time, as in New York, USA. edu/event/International-Conference

HJI held the 1st International Conference on Peace and Public Leadership: Addressing the Challenges of Our Times on April 11-13, 2024 with distinguished panelists from around the world.

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Click Here for Speaker Bios

Watch the Recordings





Moderator

Vice President, Women's Federation for World Peace, USA; Doctoral Student, HJI
China and Taiwan - Competing Narratives
Dr. Thomas Ward Provost; Professor of Peace and Development, H.
Pax Americana and the Responsibility to Protect

Mr. Christopher Kenedy Graduate Student, Peace Studies, HJI

Human Desire as a Counter-Intuitive Source of Peace

Dr. Claude Perrottet Adjunct Professor, HJI

Respondent

Dr. Basil Ugorji ori d CEO, International Center for Ethno-lediation (ICERMediation); Adjunct Professor, HJI

8:45-10:15 PM EST - Session III - Christology and Women: Relevance for Peace

8:45-10:15 PM EST - Session III - Christolo Traditional Christology, which is meant to show God's intention to build the Kingdom of God through His incarnation in Jesus Christ, has lacked the element of divine femininity. The consequence is that Christianity has fostered attitudes that privilege men above women, and societies that discriminate against women and other marginalized people. This deficiency has been identified and addressed by twentieth-century theologians, among them Rosemary Radford Ruether (1936-2022), who elucidated ways that Jesus Christ displayed the love and work of God who is feminine as well as masculine. The authority of God's feminine voice has also been a feature of new religious movements in Korea, which draw upon shamanistic folk religion where female mudangs have privileged access to Heaven. The fullest expression of gender balance in Christology is Unificationism, which proclaims the advent of the Only-begotten Daughter standing side-by-side with the Lord of the Second Advent. Advent.

Long-term peace issues have been discussed at least since Kant's Perpetual Peace and they are central to the notion of Conflict Transformation. This approach seeks to supplement the short-term resolution of conflicts that leaves in place the seed for future conflict. The presentations in this session will apply the perspective of Unificationism in discussing innovative approaches to understanding the other (comparative narratives on Taiwan)

the other (comparative approaches to understanding the other (comparative narratives on Taiwan), exploring the nature of American foreign interventions past, present, and possible future, and investigating the role of desire satisfaction vs. degrowth in peace processes.



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Moderator Dr. Theodore Shimmyo Professor of Theology Emeritus, HJI

Rosemary Radford Ruether's Christology

Ms. Bruna Allen Graduate Studen nt, HJI

The Religious Feminine in Korean New Religions

Dr. Alexa Blonner stralian Association for the Study of Religion

From the Feminine in Christology to the Feminine in Ontology: Opening to a Gender-Balanced Understanding of God

Dr. Andrew Wilson

Professor of Scriptural Studies, HJI

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

8:00-9:30 AM EST - Session IV - Philosophical Issues in Religion and Peace

Moderator Ms. Angelika Buczynski

Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Special Projects, HJI

The session delves into the intricate dynamics The session delves into the intricate dynamics of religion, war, and peace in the Third Millennium, emphasizing historical ties and contemporary challenges. One explores the resurgence of religiously-fueled warfare amidst modern complexities, warning of existential threats. The other addresses philosophical hurdles in Unificationism hindering integration into social and political spheres, emphasizing the need for conceptual frameworks. Both underscore the urgency of critically examining and evolving philosophical underpinnings to navigate contemporary global challenges.



Religion, Peace and War in the Third Millennium

Dr. Ronald Brown Professor of History and Political Science, Touro University

Moderator

Ms. Miyoung Eaton Secretary General, Research Institute for the Integration of Word Thought; Doctoral Student, HJI

Philosophical Issues for the Advancement of Unificationism to the Sociopolitical Sphere Dr. Keisuke Noda

10:00-11:30 AM EST - Session V - New Religious Movements and Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom

New Religious Movements (NRMs) have tested the limits and helped define the boundaries of religious freedom. They have functioned as "canaries in the coal mine," often being the first to feel the brunt of religious repression. At the same time, NRMs have provoked public reactions. More broadly, religious freedom faces a global crisis. The Pew Foundation has documented increased levels of restrictions on religion and social hostility worldwide. Other research confirms connections between restrictions on religious freedom and cycles of violence, poverty, instability, extremism, other human rights violations, and full-scale civil war. This session will consider contemporary threats to religious freedom, appropriate responses and future prospects.

While human dignity, the family, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion are affirmed in the UN charter and the UDHR, the UN has been impacted by the culture wars, resulting in a challenging environment for religious freedom and advocacy of the "natural" or "traditional" family. Member states at the UN are divided on the issues of the faith and family. The USA and Western European countries tend to promote progressive values, while often the more traditional or authoritarian countries, including many Islamic states, affirm

ften the more traditional or authoritarian es, including many Islamic states, affirm traditional family. The right to freedom

Moderator

Dr. Michael Mickler

Moderator

Dr. Franco Famularo Board Chair, HJI: President, FFWPU Canada

The Global Forecast for Religious Freedom-Stormy Skies Ahead

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett dation for Human Rights and .S. Commi<u>ssion on</u>

How Can Scholars of New Religious Movements Best Contribute to the Religious Freedom Debate? Dr. Eileen Barker

The Religious Liberty Crisis in Japan After the Assassination of Shinzo Abe, 2022-2024 Dr. Massimo Introvigne Founder CESNUR; Editor, Bitter Winter

2:00-3:30 PM EST - Session VI - Faith and Family at the UN: Challenges and Opportunities

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derator Ms. Lynn Walsh

Adjunct Instructor, Title IX Coordinator, HJI

Speaker

Dr. Ján Figeľ

Dr. Jan Figel Former European Commissioner, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia; First European Commission Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion Outside the EU

Speaker Me Sharon Slater





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A MAGAZINE ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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A Conference Discusses the Religious Liberty Crisis in Japan and Internationally

04/15/2024 MASSIMO INTROVIGNE

A* | A-

While there are other critical situations, including in France, what is happening in Japan is unprecedented in a democratic country in our century.

by Massimo Introvigne



The poster for the conference's session "New Religious Movements and Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom."

On April 11–13, 2024, New York's HJ International Graduate School of Peace and Public Leadership (HJI), which is connected with the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU, formerly known as the Unification Church), organized a conference on "Peace and Public Leadership: Addressing the Challenges of Our Times." On April 12, a session was devoted to "New Religious Movements and Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom," chaired by Michael Mickler, Distinguished Professor of Historical Studies at HJI, and Franco Famularo, Board Chair at the same HJI and President of the Canadian branch of the FFWPU.

Katrina Lantos Swett, President of the Lantos Foundation, who was twice Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, spoke on the theme "The Global Forecast for Religious Freedom: Stormy Skies Ahead." The gloomy title, she explained, first refers to the fact that billions of human beings live in countries where religious liberty is severely restricted, such as "China, Nigeria, Iran, Russia, North Korea, to name just a few." Sometimes, governments themselves persecute religious minorities, including the Uyghurs, House Church Christians, and many others in China. In other cases, authorities are not able to control non-state actors that terrorize religions they do not like, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, whose very name proclaims that "education, or Western education, is forbidden," Lantos Swett said. In Russia, she added. "an authoritarian government has co-opted and corrupted the social influence and credibility of the majority faith to serve the government's goals," including by "blessing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine."

After mentioning the persecution of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua. Lantos Swett focused on an egregious case of violation of religious freedom in a democratic country, Japan, where a "determined assault on the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification" is being conducted by the government. She reflected on "how troubling and quite frankly, profoundly undemocratic are the multi-pronged efforts we see in Japan to dissolve and eliminate an entire belief community. This is not how a rights-respecting and confident democracy treats minority faith, and Japan is fairly close to undermining its claims to be a nation that honours human rights, including, very importantly, article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."



Katrina Lantos Swett. Source: Lantos Foundation.

"Those of us who view Japan as a democratic ally, an important counterweight to China," Lantos Swett added, "can't really stay silent while a country that in many respects does a good job defending democracy, and defending human rights, is going seriously and perilously close to running off the rails when it comes to their treatment of the Family Federation."

Lantos Swett compared what is happening in Japan to the attitude of those who in American popular culture are called "mean girls." the high school girls who believe they represent the elite and engage in "social bullying" of those who are not part of their group. Japan "targets a faith community in this way," and this is "just wrong," Lantos Swett concluded.

Eileen Barker, Professor Emerita of Sociology at the London School of Economics, and arguably the world's most senior scholar of new religious movements, explained to the audience that there is a difference between the role of a sociologist of religion and the role of an advocate. To stress that you look at a religion with the neutral gaze of the social scientist is "the best way you can be an advocate." Barker said. This does not mean, she added, that sociologists cannot have strong feelings for religious liberty, and they can help protecting it by debunking misinformation about religious minorities.

"One of the things that is very important is the comparative method, putting new religions in context," Barker explained. For example, "if you are reading in the papers that a certain 'cult' member has committed suicide, and this is perfectly true, and you read the next day that another 'cult' member has committed suicide, you might start thinking, well, what is it about the 'cults' that makes people commit suicide? However, if you are a social scientist, what you might do is compare the rate of suicide in the new religions with the rate of suicide in the general population, or even better population that is matched with the members of the new religions for things like socioeconomic status, etc. And if you find that the rate of suicide in the general population is twice that of the new religious movement, then you might say, well, what is it about the 'cults' that stops people committing suicide?" The question would thus be reversed.

Barker took another example from her early study of the Unification Church, reported in her landmark 1984 book "The Making of a Moonie." At that time, the excuse for what she called the "horrific" practice of deprogramming was that the Unification Church converted its "victims" through the "irresistible" technique of "brainwashing." which only deprogrammers claimed they were able to reverse. Barker's research found that more than 90% of those who attended a Unification Church seminar, where they were allegedly "brainwashed," did not join the Church and "most of those who did had left within a couple of years." "So, this meant that the techniques were not all that efficient or effective," she concluded.





Eileen Barker visiting Eastern Asia.

Barker added that several questions remain for further discussion: how social scientists can effectively explain to the general public that "brainwashing" is a myth and that the "bad" behavior of some new religious movements (NRMs) should not be generalized to criticize all NRMs, and how they can "translate" the experiences of those who are happy to join and remain in the NRMs in terms understandable to those who regard them as "strange" and threatening.

I discussed in more detail the crisis of religious liberty in Japan after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. July 8, 2022, was a morning like many others. As scholars, human rights activists, politicians, women and men concerned for freedom of religion or belief, we woke up knowing that as in any other day believers will suffer for their faith in several parts of the world. Some will go to jail in China, Russia, Iran, or North Korea. Perhaps some will be tortured and killed. Perhaps devotees of religious minorities will be attacked by mobs once again in Pakistan or Nigeria. What we did not know is that one of the worst religious liberty crises, certainly the most dangerous in a democratic country in our century, was about to erupt in a most unlikely place, Japan, a country renowned for its defense of human rights in international fora.

All, however, started changing on July 8, 2022, when Abe was assassinated by a man called Tetsuya Yamagami, who claimed he wanted to punish him for his cooperation with organizations connected with the Unification Church. The assassin said he hated the Unification Church because his mother, a member, had gone bankrupt in 2002 as a consequence of her excessive donations to her religion. Forces that had fought the Unification Church for decades, including the Japanese Communist Party and its allies, which resented its successful anti-Communist political activism, saw in the tragedy an opportunity to launch a national campaign—not against the assassin, or those who might have excited him to act twenty years after his mother's bankruptcy, but first against the Family Federation, then against the Jehovah's Witnesses too and all kinds of conservative religion, seen as an antisocial force.

I mentioned three developments in Japan, which in fact threatens all religions. First, in seeking the dissolution of the Family Federation the government has reversed what has been its own interpretation of the law on religious corporations for decades. Now the government claims that a religious organization can be dissolved, with drastic consequences, even if it has not been found guilty of any crime, based simply on the fact that it has lost some civil (as opposed to criminal) cases. Second, legislation has been passed limiting the possibility of religious groups to solicit donations, and allowing those who have left a religion to recover the amount of what they donated many years after the donation happened.



The author, Massimo Introvigne, participated in the conference connected via Zoom from Moab, Utah.

Third, through regulations, directives in form of Questions & Answers, and even brochures distributed in schools, a new notion of "religious abuse of children" has been introduced. Forms of "abuse" mentioned in these texts include involving children in religious activities, exposing them to conservative moral beliefs and trying to protect them from brands of entertainment their parents object to for religious reasons, and even teaching them that those who transgress moral rules may go to hell. The Questions & Answers and the brochures also qualify as "sexual abuse" hearing confessions where minors are counselled on issues related to sexuality, which is of course common in most religions with

I mentioned that in 2022 I called the assault against the Unification Church/Family Federation in Japan the worst religious liberty crisis in a democratic country in the 20th century. In 2024, I not only maintain this opinion but note that the situation has become even worse. Of course, Japan is not alone. Lantos Swett, the daughter of a Jewish Holocaust survivor who became a U.S. congressman, noted an alarming resurgence of anti-Semitism in several countries. I and others compared the campaigns against "cults" in Japan and in France, where a dangerous new anti-cult law has just been passed punishing "psychological subjection" by "cult leaders" with heavy jail penalties. In fact, there is evidence that anti-cult organizations and governmental agencies in France and Japan are working together.

By the end of the 20th century, scholars believed that they had finally debunked the pseudo-scientific theory that "cults" use "brainwashing" and are intrinsically different from genuine religions. What were called the "cult wars" had ended, at least in democratic countries and with the possible exception of France. It looks like "cult wars 2.0" are coming, with new characters involved such as the anti-human-trafficking agencies that try to expand their power and funding by claiming that recruiting "victims" into "cults" is a form of trafficking. As we won the "cult wars" once, we can win them again. Often in history liberty, not tyranny, emerges victorious, unless its defenders withdraw from the fight.



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A group of believers in a new religion (not to be confused with the Ahmadiyya community discriminated against in Pakistan) are persecuted in various countries.

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Via Confienza 19

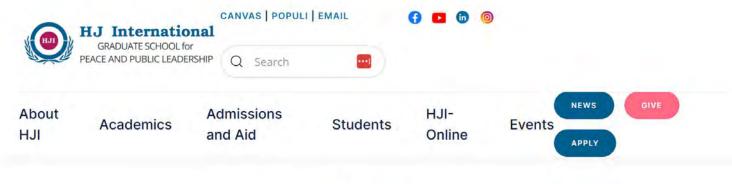
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10121 Torino Italy

info@bitterwinter.org





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HJI WELCOMED MASATO SUDO TO 43RD STREET

APRIL 03, 2024

HJI Welcomed Masato Sudo to 43rd Street

On April 3rd, HJI welcomed Masato Sudo, son of HJI alum and early FFWPU pioneer educator, Rev. Ken Sudo (M.Div. 1995). Rev. Sudo passed away on December 22, 2023 at [...]



MARCH 31, 2024

HJI President Speaks to HJI Alumni and Friends in Montreal, Canada

HJI President, Dr. Thomas Walsh, visited Montreal on March 30-31, 2024, for meetings with Dr. Franco Famularo, and HJI Alumni and Chairman of HJI's Board of Trustees, and with other [...]



MARCH 26, 2024

Family of International Alumni Visits HJI Campus

On March 26, HJI was pleased to welcome the family of Pr. Sudheer Kumar Kondru from India, HJI Doctor of Ministry Graduate; Class of 2019. His family is very proud of his [...]



MARCH 01, 2024

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Professor Ward invited as speaker to Columbia Law School Program "The Legacy of WWII Asian-Pacific Comfort Women."

Professor Ward invited as speaker to Columbia Law School Program "The Legacy of WWII Asian-Pacific Comfort Women." Thomas Ward, HJI Provost and





JANUARY 18, 2024

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Chapel Service: Thanksgiving Reflections on the Era of the Barrytown Providence

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DECEMBER 06, 2023

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Perspectives on the Crisis in Gaza

Perspectives on the Crisis in Gaza On Tuesday, November 21, HJI was pleased to co-host a panel discussion with the Higher Purpose Forum (HPF) entitled, "Perspectives on the Crisis in [...]



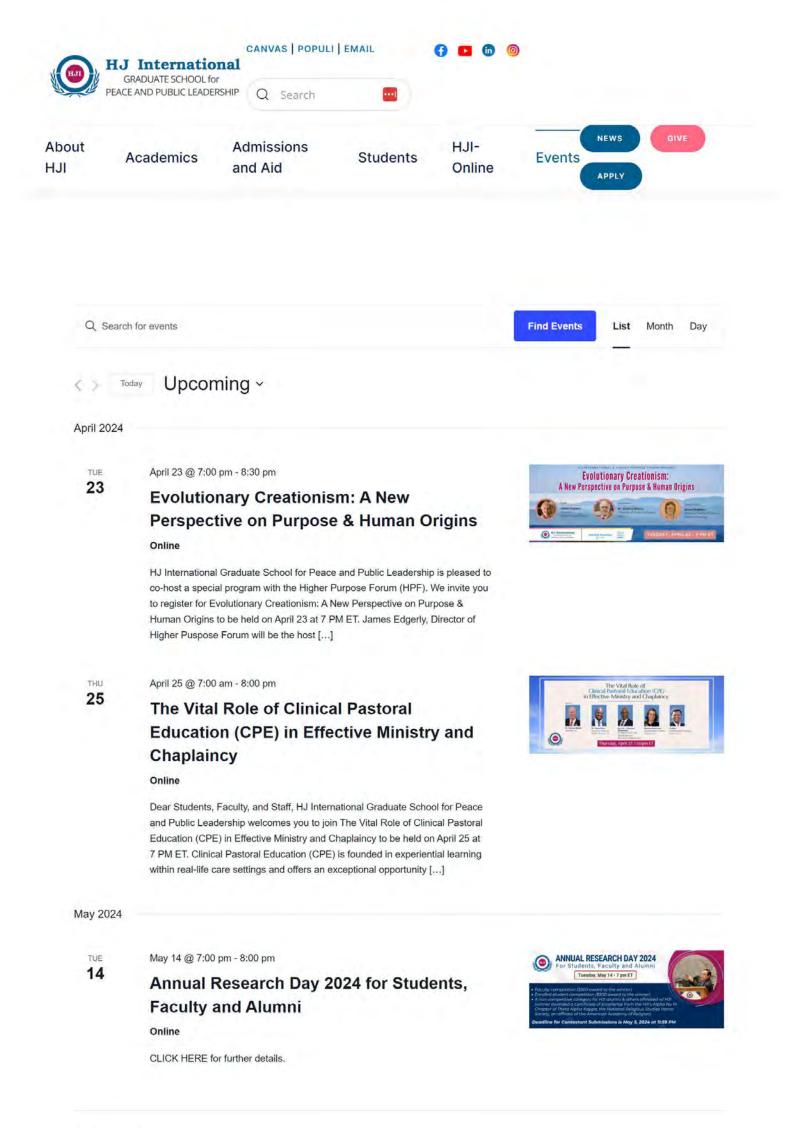


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