

## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Intersection of Politics and Religion in USA

Knut Holdhus  
December 16, 2024



*President Donald J. Trump joins members of his Cabinet in a prayer led by Secretary of Energy Rick Perry during a Cabinet Meeting Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2019, in the Cabinet Room of the White House*



**Tokyo paper takes a look at a USA where politics and religion intersect and compares it to the vastly different scenario unfolding in Japan with its LDP-supported anti-religious measures**

Tokyo, 10th December 2024 - Published as the 47th article in a series in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese.  
[Original article](#)

**Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat - Part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context**

**Politics and Religion in America**

The Background of Trump's Overwhelming Support

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

See part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions: [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See part 4: Media Crossing the Line: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation": [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

---

In late October 2024, just days before the U.S. presidential election, a gathering in the Atlanta suburbs of the key battleground state of Georgia attracted over 1,000 Christian pastors supporting Republican candidate and former President Donald Trump.



*President Donald J. Trump participates in a prayer with African American Leaders and Pastor Paula White Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, in the Cabinet Room of the White House*

During a discussion with Pastor Paula White, Trump's "spiritual advisor", he addressed the assembled pastors, calling them "the most important people" and declaring:

"This will connect you directly with the Oval Office - directly with me."



*Dr. Jack Graham, Senior Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas*

During his first term, Trump established a "Faith Office" at the White House as a liaison with religious leaders. He promised to reinstate this office to provide direct access to the president.

At the end of the gathering, over ten pastors surrounded Trump on stage to pray. Among them, Pastor Jack Graham, leader of a megachurch in Texas, prayed:

"We thank you for raising up Trump as a warrior for Your word and wisdom. As You make him our president once again, we pray You grant him strength, wisdom, and joy."

#### **What if this happened in Japan?**

If similar interactions between politicians and religious leaders were observed in Japan, it would undoubtedly provoke fierce criticism as a "collusive relationship". While leftist forces in the U.S. do criticize the significant influence of Christian conservatives on American politics, there is almost no widespread discourse labeling close ties between politicians and

religious organizations as inherently inappropriate.

Trump's close relationship with Christianity is evidenced by countless examples. For instance, he categorically rejected transgender ideology from a religious perspective, asserting,

"God created two genders, male and female."

His bold stance against extreme LGBT policies, undeterred by leftist backlash, helped him gain broader support among Christians.

#### **Trump's choice for running mate and religious appeals**

Senator J.D. Vance, whom Trump selected as his running mate, is a devout Catholic. During an October campaign rally, when someone in the crowd shouted, "Jesus is King," Vance responded, "That's right. Jesus is King," earning thunderous applause. His comment was also a jab at Democratic candidate Vice



President Kamala Harris, who, days earlier, had dismissed a Christian student declaring, "Jesus is Lord," by saying, "You're at the wrong rally."



*Senator Vance official portrait. 118th Congress, Jan. 26, 2023*

According to an NBC News exit poll from the presidential election, 82% of conservative white evangelical Christians, who made up 23% of voters, cast their ballots for Trump. Additionally, 63% of Catholic voters supported him. There's no doubt that consolidating Christian support was a major factor in Trump's overwhelming success.

#### **Harris' reliance on the "religious vote"**

Harris, too, sought to harness the "religious vote". She actively visited Black churches, which have historically been a cornerstone of Democratic electoral support, especially within the devoutly Christian black community.

In late October, Harris attended a worship service at a black church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a key battleground state. She shared her childhood experiences of attending church and emphasized how those experiences helped her "fully understand the teachings of the Bible and the power of faith." Naturally, no one derided her actions as "too close" to religion.

#### **Contrasting Japan's religious and political landscape**



*Vice President Kamala Harris takes her official portrait Thursday, March 4, 2021, in the South Court Auditorium in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building at the White House*

In contrast, Japan's reaction to the intersection of religion and politics is starkly different. Following the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, public attention turned to the ties between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). This led to widespread condemnation, and the LDP announced a complete severance of ties with the [organization](#). The backlash created a social climate in which any religious involvement in politics seemed taboo, as though religion must have no place in political matters whatsoever.

This perspective is far removed from the norms in the United States.

---

See part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions: [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See part 4: Media Crossing the Line: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation": [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

Related to politics and religion: [Japan: Exhibition Exposes Horrors of Persecution](#)

More, related to politics and religion: [Japan Copying Faith-Breaking Concepts of China](#)

Related to politics and religion: [Courts Using Debunked Concepts Against Minority](#)

Also related to politics and religion: [Dissolution Case: Wild Claims, Illegal Actions](#)

Also related to politics and religion: [Terms from Consumer Law Used to Rob Faith](#)

Also related to politics and religion: [2nd-Generation Members Protesting Persecution](#)

Also related to politics and religion: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And also related to politics and religion: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

More, related to politics and religion: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to politics and religion: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to politics and religion: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more related to politics and religion: [Two European Scholars Warning Japan](#)

And yet more related to politics and religion: [Japan Censured at Religious Freedom Event](#)

And still more related to politics and religion: [Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot](#)

And even more related to politics and religion: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And still more related to politics and religion: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

More related to politics and religion: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More related to politics and religion: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)





# Openness And Transparency Stressed In Interview

• December 15, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



*Openness and transparency emphasized as part of reforms of organizational culture*

Tokyo, 3rd December 2024 – Published as the **46th article** in a series in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article*

Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat – Part 6: **Voices of Religious Leaders**

Reform Means Changing Culture

Part 3 of interview with Tomihiro Tanaka (田中富広), President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in Japan

See part 1, part 2 of interview



Logo of the *Sekai Nippo*

Share:     

### More Posts

 **Media Study: Lie Told 100 Times Becomes Truth**

December 17, 2024

 **Intersection Of Politics And Religion In USA**

December 16, 2024

 **2024: Why Doesn't Japan Accept UN Visit?**

December 14, 2024

 **Focus On Crimes Of Professional Faith-Breaking**

December 13, 2024

 **Reflections On Peter Kim's Recent "Memories" Book**


December 12, 2024

 **Dissolution Amounts To Deprivation Of Rights**

December 12, 2024

 **Exhibition Reveals Inhuman Treatment Of Faith**

December 11, 2024

Search... 

Categories



see [part 1](#), [part 2](#) or [interview](#)

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

See [part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions](#): [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See [part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies](#): [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See [part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations](#): [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See [part 4: Media Crossing the Line](#): [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See [part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation"](#): [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See [part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders](#): [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#)

See [part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context](#): [47th article](#)

**Q:** As a result of the government's request for the dissolution order, many believers interviewed by [this newspaper](#) have been criticized and [discriminated](#) against by those around them. There were also voices calling for the [religious organization](#) to provide mental care to second-generation believers who are particularly hurt.

**A:** There are likely various areas where people have been hurt, and we may not fully understand what the best form of mental health care is. However, we must do what we can. One initiative the [organization](#) undertook, albeit belatedly after this incident [[Editor's note: the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe \(安倍晋三\) in July 2022](#)], is the establishment of "Certified Family Counselors".



Family counselor with young couple. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 15th Dec. 2024

Around 1,450 individuals have registered after completing organizational training, and we have created a system where members can request consultations through a dedicated app.

In the past, people might have thought, "If my consultation gets reported back to the staff in charge of my group, it's better not to say anything." Now, individuals can make appointments on their own and even specify the person they want to consult with.

However, for members who have been hurt and distanced themselves from the group, the most critical aspect is likely the [organization's](#) culture itself. I feel the best way forward is to demonstrate how the culture of the [organization](#) has changed.

**Q:** Although the [organization](#) issued a compliance declaration in 2009, wasn't the reform insufficiently thorough?

**A:** I acknowledge that it was inadequate. I feel the [church's](#) approach to families was lacking. The failure to adequately address this in our education efforts hindered reform.

#### In 2009, the organization issued a compliance declaration

This declaration emphasized that members must not be pressured to donate out of fear or anxiety related to ancestral issues and that no donations should exceed what is reasonable given a



Send us a message

First Name \*    Last Name

Email \*

Your Message \*

Submit



person's financial situation. We repeatedly gave guidance on these points and insisted on transparency in evangelism by identifying the [organization](#) from the outset. As a result, the number of lawsuits dropped significantly.



A Japanese woman offering a donation at a meeting. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 18th November 2024.

Since the compliance declaration, there have been only four civil lawsuits filed by former members involving donations, all before 2016. No such lawsuits have occurred since then.

Even so, we have been criticized by the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* (MEXT) for "not adequately educating on compliance". One of MEXT's questions, as part of its exercise of inquiry rights, was: "Provide proof of compliance education." We have submitted substantial evidence, including compliance education topics from national conferences, lecture outlines, and official documents circulated nationwide.

**Q:** Are you investigating the progress of organizational reforms?

**A:** Our reform efforts are centered on two main pillars:

**1. Urgent measures:**

When accepting donations, we ensure they are not funded by loans, tied to disputes, or likely to harm family life. Both the [organization](#) and the individual must be mutually satisfied before any donation is made. This has been a major focus due to significant public scrutiny.

Regarding donations, we have fundamentally changed our practices. We introduced strict guidelines to ensure compliance, strengthened verification processes, and now issue official receipts to donors.

**2. Cultural transformation:**

Without a shift in culture, there is no future. We aim for fundamental reform to establish an open and transparent [organization](#). This is not something that can be achieved overnight, but we are committed to this vision as a major pillar of our efforts.

Currently, second-generation members have taken on leadership roles, with one-third of regional leaders nationwide being second-generation members. Their approaches to engaging with members, managing families, operating the [organization](#), and conducting meetings reflect a new era for the [organization](#).

This marks a significant transformation for our community and its culture.

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#) of interview

**End of part 6 of the series**

**Featured image** above: Tomihiro Tanaka (田中富広), President of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), during the interview conducted 15th November 2024. Photo: Kato Reiwa (加藤 玲和)

See **part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions:** [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See **part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies:** [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See **part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations:** [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See **part 4: Media Crossing the Line:** [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See **part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation":** [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See **part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders:** [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#)

See **part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context:** [47th article](#)

**Related to openness and transparency:** [2nd-Generation Denouncing Wry Media Portrayal](#)

Also related to openness and transparency: [2nd-Generation Members Protesting Persecution](#)

Also related to openness and transparency: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And also related to openness and transparency: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

More, related to openness and transparency: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to openness and transparency: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, **related to openness and transparency**: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to openness and transparency: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And still more, related to openness and transparency: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

And even more, related to openness and transparency: [Conference on Religious Freedom Violations](#)

Still more, related to openness and transparency: [Japan: Threat to Religious Freedom](#)

Even more, related to openness and transparency: [Call to End Witch Hunt](#)

More, related to openness and transparency: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More, related to openness and transparency: [Japan: 4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to openness and transparency: [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Yet more, related to openness and transparency: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Still more, related to openness and transparency: [Biased Information from Leftwing Lawyers](#)

Even more, related to openness and transparency: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

Even more, related to openness and transparency: [Kyodo News: 100s of Rights Violations Claimed](#)

Even more, related to openness and transparency: [Fabricated Torts Part of Wily Strategy in Japan](#)

**Related to openness and transparency**: [Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal](#)

Related to openness and transparency: [Kishida Administration Giving in to Terrorism](#)

Related to openness and transparency: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

Related to openness and transparency: [Bizarre Atlantic Report Condoning Terror](#)

Related to openness and transparency: [Japan Times: Warning of Terror](#)

Related to openness and transparency: [Did constant hate-mongering cause terror?](#)

« Previous  
2024: Why Doesn't Japan Acc... Intersection Of Politics And R... Next »



First Name

Last Name

Your Email Address

Follow us



I consent to have my personal data submitted to the purposes of the website and respond to my queries.