

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Unificationist Religious Activity After Outlawing in Japan

Knut Holdhus
May 17, 2026



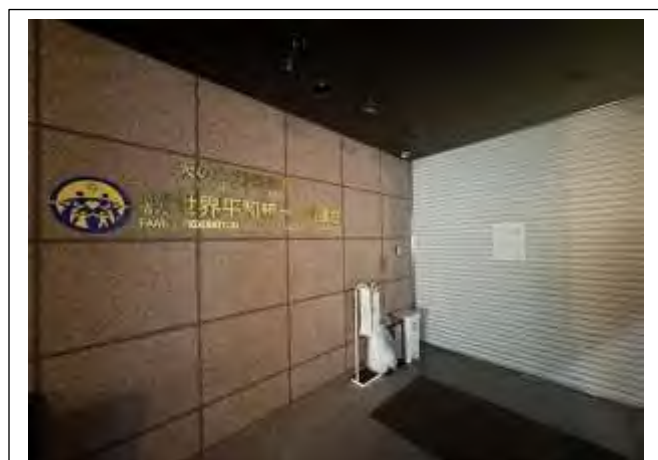
Preserving religious activity after dissolution. Illustration: ChatGPT,



Seeking continuity, Japanese Unificationists pursue reorganization under new structures to safeguard constitutionally protected religious activity after court-ordered dissolution

The South Korean weekly current affairs magazine Sisa Journal (시사저널) published on 17th May 2026 a [report](#) titled "['Dissolution Ordered' - Unificationism in Japan Attempts Revival Under a New Name](#)".

The [article](#) by reporter Kim Hyeon-ji (김현지) describes how the Japanese branch of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - in Korea often simply called [Unificationism](#) (통일교) - faces one of the most serious crises in its history. On 4th March, the Tokyo High Court [ruled](#) that the [religious organization](#) should be dissolved, affirming an earlier [lower-court decision](#). Under Japanese law governing religious corporations, liquidation procedures begin immediately after such a [second-instance ruling](#), even while [appeals continue](#).



The Japanese headquarters of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in Shibuya, Tokyo, where a court-appointed liquidator has entered

The [Sisa Journal](#) reports that the dissolution process moved very quickly. [Liquidators](#) reportedly arrived at churches across Japan within hours of the ruling. Clergy and staff were allegedly forced to [vacate buildings](#) with little time to prepare. Employment contracts for many workers were later scheduled for termination as part of the winding-down process.

However, according to the [Sisa Journal report](#), the [religious organization](#) did not simply accept the end of its activities in Japan. Instead, leaders of the dissolved [organization](#) appear to have begun exploring ways to preserve operations through other legal structures. Reporter Kim writes that two major strategies emerged almost immediately after the [court ruling](#). First, an existing nonreligious

foundation connected to the [Family Federation](#) changed its registered objectives to include religious activities "involving ceremonies and education". Second, former senior officials reportedly began preparing an entirely new organization under a different name.

These moves are controversial because critics argue they undermine the purpose of the court's dissolution order. Supporters of the relatively large minority faith, however, argue that the [organization](#) is defending religious freedom and attempting to continue lawful activities despite what they see as unfair government intervention.

Changes to an Existing Foundation

One of the clearest signs that the [organization](#) intended to continue operating came only days after the [Tokyo High Court decision](#) on 4th March.

According to the [Sisa Journal article](#), an affiliated entity called the Hyojeong Education and Culture Foundation had originally been established in Tokyo in 2018. At the time, it was registered as a general incorporated foundation with nonreligious purposes such as scholarship programs, youth education, and cultural development activities. On paper, it functioned as an educational and cultural organization rather than a religious corporation.

That changed shortly after the [court ruling](#) against the [Family Federation](#). On 7th March, just three days after the [dissolution order](#), the foundation amended its registered business purposes. The revised registration added language allowing the association to conduct activities involving religion, ceremonies, and religious education. This was not a minor administrative adjustment. Some viewed it as an attempt to create a legal vehicle through which the [religious body](#) could continue operating even if the original religious corporation was dismantled.

The timing attracted particular attention. The amendment occurred immediately after the [court ruling](#) and while [liquidation procedures](#) were beginning nationwide. To observers, it appeared that the leadership of the [religious organization](#) had already prepared contingency plans in anticipation of losing the case.



Rev. Masaichi Hori, here in January 2026

Another detail that fueled speculation was the appointment of a new representative director for the foundation. The position was given to Masaichi Hori (堀正一), a former president of the Japanese [Family Federation](#). His involvement strongly suggested continuity between the dissolved [organization](#) and the newly modified foundation. The registration changes were formally completed on 13th March.

Under Japanese law, general incorporated foundations are generally permitted to revise their objectives unless the changes directly violate laws or regulations. Officials from Japan's Ministry of Justice declined to discuss the specific case publicly but acknowledged that such amendments are ordinarily accepted in principle.

The broader implication is significant. Even if the original religious corporation loses its legal status, affiliated entities may still be able to continue many practical activities associated with the [movement](#). That could include educational events, ceremonies, community gatherings, and potentially the continued collection of donations from supporters.

Critics argue this amounts to a circumvention of the court ruling. They believe the dissolution was intended not only to eliminate the [organization](#)'s legal corporate status but also to stop the structures through which it carried out its operations. If essentially the same leadership, networks, and supporters continue functioning through a different corporate form, opponents argue the dissolution loses much of its practical effect.

Supporters of the religious minority see the issue differently. They argue that changing the foundation's objectives is a lawful administrative step intended to protect believers' freedom of religion and association. From this perspective, the state may dissolve a particular legal corporation, but it cannot prohibit individuals from organizing new groups or continuing religious practices under another structure.

Plans for a New Organization

[Sisa Journal](#) points out that at the same time that the foundation was being restructured, reports emerged that former [Family Federation](#) executives were considering the creation of an entirely new organization.

According to the [weekly magazine](#), Japanese media first reported these plans in early April 2026. According to those reports, former leaders of the [Family Federation](#) intended to establish a new group specifically designed to continue religious activities after the dissolution of the original [organization](#). Masaichi Hori (堀正一), the same former leader connected to the foundation changes, was reportedly expected to head the new entity as well.



Japanese [Unificationists](#) street preaching in front of Nagano Station in Nagano, Japan on May 16, 2026

The proposed name reportedly drew directly from the English abbreviation of the [organization](#)'s full international title: "[Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)", commonly shortened to [FFWPU](#).

The reported goal of the new organization was straightforward: preserve the [religious movement](#)'s operational continuity despite the legal destruction of the [old corporation](#). Observers believe this would allow the faith community to maintain worship services, organizational structures, fundraising systems, and member networks under a different legal identity.

The issue quickly became politically controversial in Japan. Legislators questioned whether authorities should allow organizations closely connected to the dissolved [religious corporation](#) to continue operating under nearly identical leadership and branding. According to the [Sisa Journal report](#), questions were reportedly raised in Japan's House of Representatives about whether authorities would approve efforts to rename existing organizations or register new entities connected to the [movement](#).

Japanese authorities, however, avoided giving detailed public answers. Officials reportedly declined to comment on specific applications or hypothetical future decisions.

The situation highlights a broader legal and philosophical question facing Japan. Dissolving a religious corporation does not automatically eliminate the religious beliefs, communities, or personal networks associated with it. Members remain free to organize unless specific criminal violations occur. As a result, even a major legal defeat may not permanently end the movement itself.

For opponents, this possibility is deeply frustrating because they believe the [organization](#)'s activity system and influence networks could simply reappear under a different name. For supporters, the attempt to reorganize represents resilience and the continuation of constitutionally protected religious activity.

What happens next will likely depend on Japan's [Supreme Court](#) ruling, future regulatory decisions, and whether the reorganized [movement](#) can retain enough financial and organizational support to survive the many attacks largely orchestrated by campaigning enemies like the large Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and a large network of leftwing activist lawyers that has worked continuously for 40 years to eliminate a movement that has grown far bigger than what hostile activists feel comfortable with.

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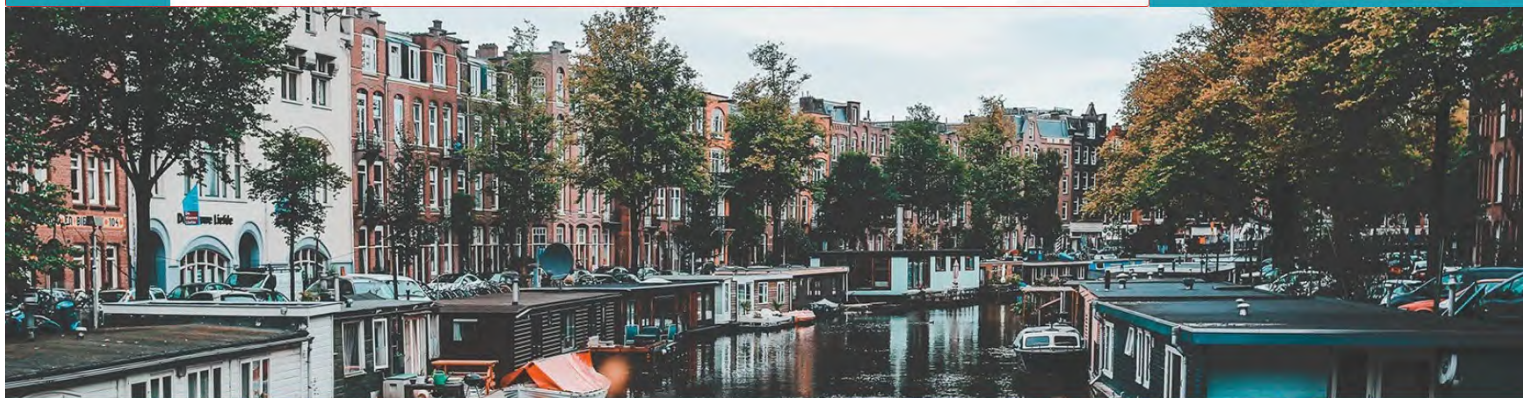
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Logo of the Sekai Nippo

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**[Feature Interview]
Family Federation
Dissolution Issue; Unite
in the Spirit of Dr. King!**

“It Resembles the Structure of Racial Discrimination”

Interview with Archbishop George Stallings of the Independent Catholic Church “Imani Temple”

by Yosuke Yamazaki (山崎 洋介)



Imani Temple African-American Catholic Congregation on Maryland Ave, NE in Washington, DC. Photo (2012): Farragutful / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 3.0 Unp

Archbishop George Stallings of the Independent Catholic Church “Imani Temple”

The United States was founded on the principle of religious freedom. How does a Christian leader who has long been involved in the black church movement and the defense of religious liberty in America view the dissolution order against the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*)? We spoke with Archbishop George Stallings of the independent Catholic church “Imani Temple”.

Interviewer: Yosuke Yamazaki (山崎 洋介)

See also [Faith Leaders Condemn Crackdown on Federation](#)

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“Painful to Witness the Persecution”

– **What is your view of the dissolution order against the Family Federation?**

It is deeply painful for me to witness the current persecution of the *Family Federation* in Japan, especially because I personally saw how the church founders, Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#) and Dr. [Hak Ja Han Moon](#), devoted 34

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years in the United States to defending religious freedom.

What causes me even greater pain is that, as an African American, I have personally experienced discrimination and unjust treatment. I believe religious freedom – which concerns human dignity – is a right as important as the civil rights that Black Americans fought to obtain through their struggle against discrimination.

“The Government Is Taking Away Believers’ Right to Decide for Themselves”

– How do you view the situation in Japan compared with the religious freedom you experienced in the United States?



Former Roman Catholic archbishop Emmanuel Milingo leading a consecration of clergy at the Imani Temple in Washington DC in 2006. Photo: AndreasMar / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#)

I have benefited greatly from religious freedom in America. It was because of that freedom that I was able to leave the Roman Catholic Church and establish the Black-centered independent Catholic church “Imani Temple”. Only in America could I freely express my faith without persecution.

However, the Japanese government has decided that [Family Federation](#) members are “brainwashed” and is pursuing the [religious organization’s](#) dissolution on the basis of donations. The Tokyo High Court is not supposed to judge religious beliefs, worship, or the financial practices of a religion, yet it has stepped into that realm and is trying to deprive believers of the right to make their own decisions.

“If Separation of Church and State Collapses, Religion Itself Will Collapse”

– What are your thoughts on the relationship between religion and the state?

The principle of separation of church and state – that the government must not interfere in religion – is a fundamental principle clearly stated in the U.S. Constitution and must be absolutely upheld. If this principle collapses, religion itself will move toward destruction.

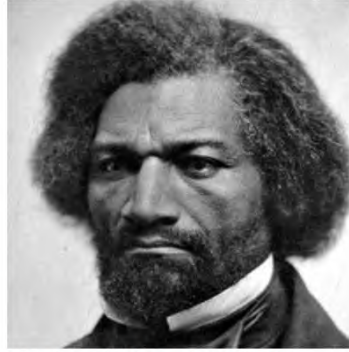
What makes this especially serious is that such a problem is occurring not only in communist countries, but also in Japan, a nation that has built a reputation as a democracy. Someone must stop this trend.

Think about the history of America from slavery to the civil rights movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many other leaders fought for justice, and Black Americans expressed their hope for freedom through songs even under severe oppression. The Negro spiritual “Oh Freedom” says, in essence, “Before I’d be a slave, I’d rather be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free.” For them, the longing for freedom was inseparable

from faith. It also reflected the conviction that evil state power must be resisted.

I see this issue as an attempt by the “empire” of the state to impose its values and strip away religious freedom.

Frederick Douglass, the black leader of the abolitionist movement, said: “Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.” If we do not stand up now, those in power will take away even more freedoms. That is why this is the time to unite and proclaim the truth – and through that, victory will surely come.



Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. He was the most important leader of the movement for African-American civil rights in the 19th century. Photo (1856): Buaidh / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#)

“It Definitely Reminds Me of the History of Discrimination Against Black Americans”

– Do you see similarities between the discrimination experienced by African Americans and the current situation in Japan?

Absolutely. In fact, I often think about what is happening in Japan in light of the historical experience of African Americans.

The abolitionist movement in America eventually led to civil rights legislation because not only Black Americans but also others stood up and raised their voices. Likewise, in Japan, resisting the actions of the government and the [High Court](#) will require the cooperation of other churches. If the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#) is allowed, the impact will spread to other religions as well. If churches in Japan unite and speak out together, it is possible to overturn this decision.

Japan needs leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – people who speak boldly and courageously based on faith. As long as the government and courts believe they can do anything without consequence, the situation will not change. But if people resist persistently and show determination, victory will come into view.

“Silence Allows the Abuse of Power”

– How do you view the fact that many religious organizations in Japan remain silent regarding the dissolution order against the Family Federation?

It is a **sign of cowardice. They fear becoming targets themselves, and they fear going against the wishes of those in power. But that silence is precisely what allows the government’s excessive use of power** and further threatens religious freedom.

The [Family Federation](#) has not committed criminal offenses, yet a dissolution order was [approved](#) based on civil matters. This creates a [dangerous precedent](#) that could extend to other religions as well. The religious community should be united in stopping it.

I see this situation as reflecting the words of 2 Timothy 3:5 in the New Testament: “Having a form of godliness but denying its power.” Outwardly, they maintain faith, but through fear they deny the true power of religion.

What is needed now is for the religious world to overcome fear, unite, and speak truth to power. If they

remain silent, religious freedom will be further violated, and other religions will face the same danger.

“The Simultaneous Religious Suppression in Japan and Korea Is Strange”

– In Korea, Family Federation President Hak Ja Han has reportedly been held under confinement for six months.



In

Mother Han being released on 27th March 2026 for urgent medical treatment after being held detained in a tiny cell for more than six months. Photo: FFWPU

Korea, not only the [Family Federation](#) but churches that positively influence society are being targeted, even though they have committed no crimes. The allegations against [President Han](#) have not been proven, and no valid basis has been presented for holding her for six months.

It is strange that similar religious persecution is occurring simultaneously in Japan and Korea. Why are religious organizations suddenly being persecuted and prosecuted now? It is difficult to understand.

The governments have not demonstrated why intervention in religion is supposedly necessary to “protect the people”. They treat believers as though they are powerless citizens incapable of speaking out for themselves if problems arise. The same is true in Korea. If the [religious organization](#) were truly committing human rights abuses, there would be far more complaints from victims, yet such voices are limited. In other words, the government’s claims do not match the actual response of citizens.

“The International Community Must Raise Its Voice”

– Regarding the Japanese government’s response toward the Family Federation, what role can the international community and the United States play?

Realistically speaking, it would be difficult for the U.S. government to force Japanese courts to overturn their rulings. What can be hoped for is that pressure from the international community will accumulate and encourage the [Supreme Court](#) to reconsider the decision.

The current Japanese government believes it can exercise its power in a corrupt manner and determine the fate of religious organizations.

The possibility that the Supreme Court will overturn the [High Court’s decision](#) may not be high, but even so,

people must not remain silent. What is needed is a voice powerful enough to shake the conscience of the nation.

See also [Faith Leaders Condemn Crackdown on Federation](#)

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Featured image above: **George Stallings** – Born in 1948 in North Carolina, USA. After being ordained as a Roman Catholic priest, he devoted many years to the Black Catholic movement. In 1989, he founded the independent Catholic church “Imani Temple”. The following year, he publicly declared his separation from the Roman Catholic Church on a television program and was subsequently excommunicated. He also served as chairman of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC), which promotes interfaith tolerance and reconciliation. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

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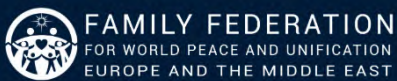
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