



September Newsletter

Universal Peace Federation is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the UN ECOSOC. Together with our global network of ambassadors for peace we are working towards building a more peaceful world.

Universal Peace Federation Marks 20 Years as
a Global Beacon of Peace



Watch Day of Peace Video Now

The Universal Peace Federation marked its 20th anniversary this September, coinciding with the United Nations International Day of Peace, highlighting two decades of fostering dialogue, reconciliation, and cooperation across faiths, nations, and communities. Founded in 2005 by Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han, UPF has grown into a global movement active in over 190 countries, guided by the conviction that humanity is one family under God. Rooted in principles of moral conscience, compassion, and living for the sake of others, UPF has launched practical peace initiatives from South Asia to the Middle East, while mobilizing youth and leaders alike through programs such as the Peace Road and Youth and Students for Peace. As UPF President Dr. Tageldin Hamad emphasized, this milestone is not only a celebration but a call to political, religious, and civic leaders to embrace dialogue, reconciliation, and bridge-building as urgent responsibilities in shaping a future of shared peace and prosperity.

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Faith Leaders Unite in Seoul: Advancing Peace and Defending Religious Freedom



The Universal Peace Federation’s World Conference of Religious Leaders, held in Seoul from August 19–22, 2025, gathered 60 prominent faith leaders, scholars, and peace advocates from 16 nations to advance interreligious solidarity, defend religious

freedom, and promote the vision of humanity as one family under God. Through prayers, panel discussions, and symbolic acts such as the Water Ceremony, participants emphasized the moral responsibility of faith leaders to guide humanity toward reconciliation, mutual respect, and lasting peace. The conference highlighted urgent global challenges, including restrictions on religious expression, and concluded with the adoption of a joint declaration affirming religious freedom as a universal and inalienable right, pledging solidarity across faith traditions, and committing to uphold truth, love, justice, and peace as the ethical foundation of global civilization.

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AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE SPOTLIGHT

From Staten Island to Liberia: A Life of Peace and Service

Rev. Dr. Demetrius S. Carolina Sr., Senior Pastor of First Central Baptist Church in Staten Island, NY, is a respected spiritual leader, educator, and advocate whose career reflects a deep commitment to peace and justice. In addition to nearly 30 years of pastoral service, he has held civic roles such as Commissioner of Human Rights for New York City and member of the Civilian Complaint Review Board.



As Executive Director of the Central Family Life Center, he advanced programs in youth development, senior care, mental health, and violence prevention—including launching Staten Island’s “True2Life” Cure Violence initiative. With advanced degrees in educational leadership, he also founded Dior Consultants LLC and expanded his

mission globally by establishing churches and a school in Liberia and lecturing at the University of Liberia. In 2024, the Universal Peace Federation named him an Ambassador for Peace in recognition of his lifelong dedication to uniting faith, service, and education.

[Read the Full Article HERE](#)

Peace Road Rally in Cincinnati Marks International Day of Peace



[Watch the Peace Road video Here](#)

On September 19, 2025, more than 100 women clergy from across the nation joined the Universal Peace Federation of Ohio and the ACLC–Women in Ministry for a Peace Road Rally in downtown Cincinnati to commemorate the International Day of Peace. Held at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, the event combined prayer, song, and reflection on the vision of “One Family under God,” emphasizing reconciliation, unity, and the ongoing struggle for justice. Speakers highlighted both the historical significance of the Freedom Center and the urgent need to confront modern-day slavery and division, while a symbolic march to the Ohio River concluded with prayers of remembrance and renewal. Widely covered by local media, the rally stood as a powerful expression of interfaith solidarity and the enduring call to build peace through faith, service, and shared humanity.

[Read the Full Article HERE](#)

Bridging Faith and History: The 3rd Annual Interfaith Bus Tour of Boston

The 3rd Annual Interfaith Bus Tour of Boston brought together 34 participants from diverse faith traditions in Rhode Island for a day of learning, dialogue, and fellowship centered on African American history and its enduring spiritual legacy. Visiting historic churches, mosques, and monuments, participants reflected on themes of resilience, justice, and reconciliation while deepening bonds across cultural and religious divides. Beyond the sites themselves, the shared meals, prayers, and conversations transformed the bus into a “moving sanctuary of peace,” fostering genuine trust and friendship. The tour concluded with renewed commitments to unity and service, standing as a living example of how interfaith collaboration rooted in history can inspire harmony and hope for the future.



[Read the Full Article HERE](#)



Universal Peace Federation Marks 20 Years as a Global Beacon of Peace

This September, as the world observes the **United Nations International Day of Peace**, the **Universal Peace Federation (UPF)** also commemorates its **20th anniversary**—two decades of advancing dialogue, reconciliation, and global cooperation under the conviction that *humanity is one family under God*.

Founding a Movement for Peace

Launched at New York's Lincoln Center in 2005 by its founders, **Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han, also known as Holy Mother Han**, UPF was envisioned as more than an organization. It was the birth of a movement—a bold effort to unite institutional power with spiritual and moral conviction. At its founding, Rev. Moon declared, *"The mission of UPF is to renew the existing United Nations and provide a new level of leadership."*

This vision has since guided UPF's growth to more than 190 nations, with a network of over 100,000 **Ambassadors for Peace** serving at both grassroots and global levels. Their efforts echo the International Day of Peace's global call to replace division with dialogue and conflict with reconciliation.

The Founders' Philosophy of Peace

At the heart of UPF's mission is the philosophy of its founders, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han, also known as Holy Mother Han. They taught that **peace begins in the family**, where empathy, responsibility, and reconciliation are first nurtured. They emphasized that **living for the sake of others** is the path to healing division, and that men and women must rise together as moral leaders in shaping a peaceful world. This vision directly complements the International Day of Peace, which affirms that lasting harmony requires the contributions of all people—across generations, cultures, and genders.

From Principles to Action

UPF's work is grounded in five guiding principles:

- Humanity is one family under God.
- Our highest values are moral conscience and compassion.
- The family is the school of love and peace.
- Living for the sake of others is the path to reconciliation.
- Lasting peace requires cooperation across ethnicity, faith, and nation.

These principles are not abstract—they have fueled practical peace initiatives across the world. From the **South Asia Peace Initiative** and the **Middle East Peace Initiative** to the **Northeast Asia Peace Initiative**, UPF has convened heads of state, religious leaders, and scholars to tackle some of the world's most protracted conflicts. The **Peace Road movement**, uniting millions in symbolic and practical action, and **Youth and Students for Peace**, which equips young people with values-based leadership, illustrate how UPF brings ideals into practice.

A Call to Peacemakers

Reflecting on this milestone, **Dr. Tageldin Hamad, President of UPF**, offered a call to action: *"Let us recommit today: to bold dialogue where others remain silent; to reconciliation where others choose division; to building bridges where walls divide. If not us, who? If not now, when?"*

As the International Day of Peace reminds us that true peace requires both inner transformation and collective action, UPF's 20-year journey stands as a testament to the enduring power of faith, service, and moral leadership. UPF's legacy is both a celebration and a charge—to carry forward the work of healing and cooperation so that the decades to come are marked not by conflict, but by shared prosperity and hope.



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From Staten Island to Liberia: A Life of Peace and Service >

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Faith Leaders Unite in Seoul: Advancing Peace and Defending Religious Freedom

Seoul, South Korea — August 19–22, 2025. The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) hosted the **World Conference of Religious Leaders**, convening 60 international faith leaders, scholars, and peace advocates from 16 nations. The gathering underscored dialogue, mutual respect, and shared responsibility as essential tools for peacebuilding, while highlighting urgent themes of **religious freedom, interfaith solidarity, and the vision of one family under God.**

Over the course of four days, the program wove together interfaith prayers, keynote addresses, panel discussions, and cultural programs. Representatives of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, indigenous traditions, and other faiths joined in a symbolic **Water Ceremony**, affirming humanity's common origin and shared destiny. Delegates also addressed the growing need to safeguard **religious freedom** as a universal value and foundation for lasting harmony.

In his keynote address, **Dr. Tageldin Hamad, International President of UPF**, emphasized the sacred responsibility of faith leaders in an era of global instability.

"Peace and unity are urgent as humanity stands at a critical juncture facing profound challenges that will shape our shared future. Faith leaders are entrusted with a heavenly mission to guide humanity. We are gathered here not to debate, not to divide, but to declare: We are brothers and sisters before God. We are guardians of truth. We are defenders of the freedom of faith."

Regional sessions shed light on peacebuilding efforts in **Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas**, with special focus on youth mobilization, reconciliation across divides, and building bridges across cultures.

Among the notable contributions:

- **Dr. Michael Jenkins, President of UPF-USA**, presented a case study on religious freedom in Korea.
- **Attorney Patricia Duval**, keynote speaker, highlighted global trends and challenges in protecting liberty of conscience.
- Panelists including **Pastor Mark Burns (USA)**, **Jatinder Singh Birdi (UK)**, **Rev. Richard Greene (USA)**, **Pandit S.R. Tewarie (Netherlands)**, **Rev. Prescott Butler (USA)**, **Imam Shahid Tameez (UK)**, and **Dr. Surinder S. Gill**

(USA) underscored the urgent role of interfaith cooperation in overcoming global crises.

The conference concluded with the **adoption of a joint declaration on religious freedom**, affirming universal values and a collective pledge to advance interreligious cooperation, reconciliation, and respect for human dignity. Delegates departed with a renewed determination to work together beyond the conference, strengthening interfaith unity and advancing peace worldwide.

2025 Statement by World Religious Leaders for Religious Freedom and Universal Values

Today, civilization stands at a historic and critical crossroads. Advances in science and technology and institutional sophistication are precisely organizing society, yet increasingly narrowing the space for religion and spirituality.

Human civilization, however, has never been sustained by laws and institutions alone. At its very foundation lie religious contemplation and spiritual wisdom.

If laws have provided the framework of society, religion has served as its guiding spirit and moral compass. Religious freedom is not merely an individual right—it is a fundamental value that upholds the conscience and dignity of a person, as well as the moral integrity and cultural identity of a community. From this perspective, the true Sovereign of this world is God, our Creator. We must recognize that the civilizations and laws that people create have their origin in God, in religion, and in the human conscience and original good mind.

Yet we are witnessing a growing number of cases throughout the world in which religious practice and spiritual expression are being restricted or suppressed. Law is meant to serve the cause of order and peaceful coexistence; it must never become a tool to infringe upon the freedom of the human spirit.

If our culture of spirituality, its values, and religious freedom are curtailed under the rule of law, this will undermine the very foundations of civilization.

Religious freedom and universal values are a shared heritage that all humanity must protect. Therefore, we, who are participating in the 2025 Conference for World Religious Leaders, strongly urge the following:

1. We solemnly pray that religious freedom be absolutely guaranteed.

Religious freedom is a universal and inalienable right of humanity that must be guaranteed without exception. Discrimination or persecution based on religious beliefs, as well as hatred and distorted narratives directed toward religion, undermine the trust that sustains our global community. We earnestly pray that all nations will respect and uphold religious freedom in accordance with their constitutions and with international norms.

2. We promise to stand in solidarity beyond the boundaries of our respective faiths and doctrines, based on the higher dimensions of truth, conscience, and spirituality.

Mutual respect and cooperation among religions are essential conditions for the sustainable peace and coexistence of humanity. As religious leaders, we will continuously raise our voices and take action to help humanity restore its spiritual and moral dignity, overcoming discrimination and oppression.

3. We declare our commitment to safeguard the universal values of truth, love, justice, and peace.

Universal values are our religious heritage and form the ethical foundation of humanity. It is religion that protects and implements universal values that open the way to solidarity and coexistence. We call upon political, social, and religious institutions to cooperate in upholding and realizing universal values, which serve as the spiritual norms for all humanity.

We, the participants of the 2025 Conference of World Religious Leaders, hereby declare that religious freedom and universal values form the bedrock of a civilization worthy of humanity's future. We declare our resolve to end all forms

of discrimination and hatred and pledge to forge a new era of peace through global spiritual solidarity.



Bridging Faith and History: The 3rd Annual Interfaith Bus Tour of Boston

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From Staten Island to Liberia: A Life of Peace and Service



Rev. Dr. Demetrius S. Carolina Sr. is a spiritual leader, educator, and advocate whose life exemplifies the call to peace. As Senior Pastor of First Central Baptist Church in Staten Island, NY, he has served in pastoral ministry for nearly thirty years, including the last two decades at First Central. Licensed into ministry at the age of sixteen, his journey has been marked by a consistent commitment to faith, justice, and the upliftment of communities.

His influence extends well beyond the pulpit. A former Commissioner of Human Rights for

the City of New York, Dr. Carolina also served on the Civilian Complaint Review Board, ensuring accountability and fairness in policing. As Executive Director of the Central Family Life Center, he oversaw more than twenty programs with eighty staff members, addressing youth services, senior care, mental health, and anti-violence initiatives. Under his leadership, Staten Island's "True2Life" Cure Violence initiative was launched, treating violence as a public health issue and transforming some of the borough's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Education has always been central to his mission. He holds advanced degrees in educational leadership and administration and founded Dior Consultants LLC, a certified MWBE firm providing training and consultation for nonprofits, churches, and schools. His vision is global as well, having founded five churches and a school in Paynesville, Liberia, and serving as a visiting lecturer at the University of Liberia.

In recognition of his outstanding service, Rev. Dr. Carolina was appointed an Ambassador for Peace by the Universal Peace Federation in 2024, upon the recommendation of Mr. Barry Cellar. His life's work—uniting faith, civic service, and education—reflects the very essence of peacebuilding.

Years as a Global
Beacon of Peace

Annual Interfaith Bus
Tour of Boston

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Peace Road Rally in Cincinnati Marks International Day of Peace

Report by Christopher Fox, Executive Director, UPF-USA Ohio

On September 19, 2025, in collaboration with the Universal Peace Federation of Ohio, the ACLC–Women in Ministry National Conference hosted a Peace Road Rally in downtown Cincinnati to commemorate the International Day of Peace. Over 100 women clergy from across the nation gathered in front of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, under a clear blue sky, on a plaza symbolic of both freedom and reconciliation.

Dr. Michael Jenkins, President of UPF International and Chairman of UPF North America, welcomed the participants and reflected on the vision of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the True Parents of Humankind. He emphasized that the Peace Road is a global initiative to realize “One Family under God” and that this year’s rally was a local expression of the worldwide call for unity and healing.

Faith leaders including Dr. Elaine Hasan of Cincinnati and Rev. T.L. Barrett of Chicago offered prayers, songs, and encouragement. Their words highlighted that lasting peace requires reconciliation across divisions and a willingness to love one another as God loves us. The administrator and historian of the Freedom Center also shared reflections on the region’s history of slavery, Ohio’s role as a Free State, and the ongoing struggle for justice—reminding participants why the work of peace must continue.

The rally concluded with a symbolic march to the Ohio River, led by two young people carrying the Peace Road banner. As the group sang Follow the Drinking Gourd, participants honored the enslaved men and women who once crossed those same waters in search of freedom. Prayers at the river became a deeply spiritual moment of remembrance, repentance, and renewed determination to confront modern-day forms of slavery and injustice.

The event received extensive coverage from WCPO News, which broadcast four segments throughout the evening, amplifying the call for peace to a wider public.

Special thanks are extended to the UPF, ACLC, WFWP, and FFWPU members in Ohio and Kentucky whose dedication and unity made the rally possible. Their service ensured that this gathering became both a commemoration of the International Day of Peace and a living testimony of the Peace Road vision.



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Bridging Faith and History: The 3rd Annual Interfaith Bus Tour of Boston

For the third year in a row, peacemakers and community members from Rhode Island came together for a unique journey of discovery, dialogue, and fellowship: the Interfaith Bus Tour of Boston. Organized in collaboration with Imam Waleed Muhammad, this year's event gathered 34 participants representing a wide range of faith traditions, united by a common vision of peace and understanding.

The tour focused on exploring African American history in Boston, tracing the spiritual and cultural legacy that continues to shape the city and the nation. Participants visited historic churches, mosques, and monuments, engaging with the stories of resilience, justice, and faith that echo through these sacred spaces. Each stop offered not only an educational experience but also a spiritual encounter—inviting guests to reflect on the deep connections between history, faith, and the ongoing work of reconciliation.

What made the journey most powerful, however, was not only the sites themselves but the spirit of fellowship cultivated along the way. As participants from diverse backgrounds shared meals, conversations, and prayers, they built bridges of trust and friendship that crossed the usual boundaries of creed and culture. The bus became more than just a means of travel—it became a moving sanctuary of peace.

At the close of the day, participants expressed heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to learn, connect, and grow together. Many shared that they left inspired, with a renewed commitment to live out the values of unity and service within their own communities.

The Interfaith Bus Tour of Boston stands as a testament to what is possible when faith leaders, community builders, and peace advocates join hands: a living model of harmony, rooted in history yet pointing toward a brighter future. As the organizers look ahead, they hope to expand these journeys so that more people can experience the transformative power of interfaith friendship and shared discovery.

In a world often divided by misunderstanding and mistrust, such initiatives remind us of the truth at the heart of peacemaking: we are one family, walking the road of history together, and our shared journey is strongest when we travel side by side.





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