

## State of the Forum: Letter to Friends of Higher Purpose Forum

James B. Edgerly  
January 6, 2024



Exploring  
important  
questions  
together

# State of the Forum

## Letter to HPF Subscribers & Supporters

January 6, 2024

Dear Friends of The Higher Purpose Forum,

At the risk of appearing to take our modest project a little too seriously, I am sending this new year report to the growing number of subscribers and supporters of the *Higher Purpose Forum* (HPF). With as few words as possible, I reconvey our **purpose**, summarize our **2023 accomplishments**, and share our **ambitions for 2024**.

The profound words of truth and love revealed by Jesus 2,000 years ago bore fruit well beyond the creation of a church. Reverberating through the centuries and across continents, this higher & fuller expression of truth gradually elevated cultural norms and yielded new formulations of economics and governance.

History has shown that nothing is more powerful than new expressions of truth that are inspired by God and motivated by unselfish love. Religious historians refer to this force as “new light”. “New light” is the key ingredient during periods of cultural distortion such as we have now, enabling the emergence of new social consensus and progress forward.

Since first taught in the early 1950’s, the inspired ideas of Unificationism have uplifted millions of lives, inspired public service, and motivated ecumenism the world over. The *Higher Purpose Forum* was founded in 2019 as an independent project of Unificationism. Our purpose is to creatively and non-dogmatically apply these exciting, non-sectarian ideas to the challenging issues of our time.

Here is what the *Higher Purpose Forum* accomplished in 2023:

### **16 Presentation and Discussion Sessions** (via Zoom).

- Participation ranged from 30 to 160 people; 26 different speakers, including 6 faculty from HJ International Graduate School.
- Topics included economic democracy; foreign policy in Ukraine, Taiwan, and Gaza; features of “great awakenings”, counterproposal on human origins; evidence of moral force in nature; and lessons from early Christianity.

### **Developed Three Priority Topic Areas**

- “Race and Providence in America”
- “Economic Democracy”
- “Principled Foreign Policy”

### **Partnered with HJ International Graduate School of Peace & Public Leadership**

- Our final 2 sessions were co-hosted with HJI (formerly Unification Theological Seminary).
- HJI faculty spoke at 6 of our presentation meetings.
- HPF has been invited to present on “Economic Democracy” at the HJI Peace & Public Leadership Conference in April 2024.

### “Race & Providence in America” Presentations

- Presentation locations included Boston & Burlington MA, Bridgeport CT, Chicago IL, and Barrytown NY

We will continue to upgrade and expand the *Higher Purpose Forum* program during 2024. Here are our priorities:

- Launch a redesigned HPF **website** to disseminate video content
- Initiate two **new topic areas**: “Unity of Science & Religion” and “My Family & World Peace”
- Increase inclusion of the **feminine perspective** through organizational collaboration
- Dramatically increase the number of “Race & Providence” (in person) **presentation meetings**
- Develop & rollout “**Economic Democracy**” (in person) presentation meetings

Goodbye 2023! It was *brutal* year for me - a bone breaking skiing accident, a right-parotidectomy, and dengue fever! These unfortunate adventures caused repeated and protracted disruptions of the HPF schedule. Let’s hope 2024 proceeds smoothly and without the medical drama.

A sincere thank you to the many people who were so helpful with our efforts last year, including our HPF Steering Committee, members of the HJL Graduate School faculty & staff, Jeffery Kingsley, Christine Edwards, Zagery Oliver, Roger & Daniela Wetheral, Alan Jessen, our many talented speakers and respondents, and *most importantly*, all those who joined our sessions and contributed to the conversation.

How can you help?

1. Forward this letter to others and **invite** them to join us (sign up at [HigherPurposeForum.org](https://HigherPurposeForum.org)).
2. Contact us to discuss holding a “*Race & Providence in America*” **seminar** in your community (write [info@higherpurposeforum.org](mailto:info@higherpurposeforum.org)).
3. Be a regular **participant** in our presentation & discussion meetings (via Zoom).

**Thank you for your interest and involvement in the Higher Purpose Forum.**

Have an exciting & adventurous 2024!

Sincerely,  
James B. Edgerly  
Founder, [Higher Purpose Forum](https://HigherPurposeForum.org)



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CONVERSATION CATEGORIES

Race & Providence in the United States

Economic Democracy

Principled Foreign Policy

The Unity of Religion & Science

Contemporary Culture and Policy

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**PRINCIPLED FOREIGN POLICY**

				
HPF Chair James Edgerly Higher Purpose Forum	Panelist Dr. Drissa Kone HJI Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution	Panelist Dr. Andrew Wilson HJI Professor of Scriptural Studies	Panelist William Haines Universal Peace Federation, UK	Commentator Dr. Thomas Walsh President of HJI

Perspectives on the Crisis in Gaza

This three person panel presented principled perspectives on the recent tragic events in Southern Israel and the Gaza Strip. They offered insights into possible avenues

**ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY**

			
HPF Chair James Edgerly Higher Purpose Forum (HPF)	Presenter Alan Jessen North American Coordinator for the Int'l Association for	Respondent Dawn Brehawn Director of Communications of the Center for Economic	Commentator Dr. Thomas Ward Provost of HJI

Economic Democracy Part II: Mutual Prosperity Through Distribution of Ownership

The contemporary critique of our free market economy includes the presence of extreme levels of income and wealth inequality. Critics argue this problem is endemic

**RACE RELATIONS**



Does the United States Have Two Histories?

The answer to this question is NO. There is only one American history, but two experiences within it. The dominant experience is the White European

**POLICY & WORLD EVENTS**



Can We Find a New Framework for Immigration Policy?

This essay is a starting point for discussion about a God-centered approach to immigration policy, based upon full appreciation of both the benefits and risks

**POLICY & WORLD EVENTS**



A Beginning Point for World Peace?

Today's turbulence reminds me of the 1960s anti-war movement, which I experienced during my first year at the University of California, Santa Barbara. I quickly

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[James Edgerly on What's Holding Up America's Destiny?](#)

[John Hessel on A Beginning Point for World Peace?](#)

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[Dr. D. Michael Hentrich on Can God Have a Problem?](#)

[Leslie Rigney on Can God Have a Problem?](#)

[James Edgerly on Should We Rethink Racial Terminology?](#)

[Roger Wetherall on Should We Rethink](#)





### What's Holding Up America's Destiny?

Here's my opinion: America is a nation of destiny. It has the greatest potential of any nation in the whole of human history. God has



### A World Full of Problems from One Just One Mistake?

It's been hammered into our heads that God is all-loving and all-good. For some, it is a matter of faith; for others it is a



### What is Your Diagnosis of the "Race" Problem in the U.S.?

What is the state of black-white race relations in the United States? We've all had plenty of time to read the news, watch the media,



### Are There Any Real Winners from Widespread Economic Stress?

In a traditional children's story, a mouse exchanges a modest, quiet but secure life in the country for life in a luxurious town house. The



### What Caused Massive Reaction to Events of May 26 Last Year?

The day that George Floyd was killed by Police Officer Derek Chauvin seems to have become a red-letter date in U.S. history, almost equivalent to



#### Racial Terminology?

Wayne Hankins on *What Caused Massive Reaction to Events of May 26 Last Year?*

Wayne Hankins on *Are There Any Real Winners from Widespread Economic Stress?*

John Hessel on *Are There Any Real Winners from Widespread Economic Stress?*

Mark Johnson on *Did We Once Receive Operating Instructions for Life on Earth?*

Eric on *Has COVID 19 Created a "New Normal" for Business Relationships?*

Dr. D. Michael Hentrich on *Can God Have a Problem?*

Wayne Hankins on *Can God Have a Problem?*

Wayne Hankins on *Is There Evil?*

## Should We Rethink Racial Terminology?

Higher Purpose Forum is working with several organizations on a project titled "New Possibilities for Race Relations in the U.S." The following is a simplified



## Has COVID 19 Created a "New Normal" for Business Relationships?

In contemporary times — dubiously christened the 'Covid19 era' — 'standard operating procedure' in developing business relationships is characterized by a series of practices euphemistically



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