

World Religious Leaders Conference on Religious Freedom and Universal Values

Doo Seong yeon
August 8, 2025



From August 5–8, 2025, the 2025 Conference for World Religious Leaders was held over four days at the Jamsil Lotte Hotel World and the Hyo Jeong Cheon Won area. The event brought together approximately 330 participants, including 80 religious leaders from the United States, Europe, South America, and Asia, and 250 Korean religious leaders.

Organized by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the Korea Council of Religions, the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC), and the World Clergy Leadership Conference (WCLC), the conference centered on the theme "Religious Freedom and Universal Values." It was designed to restore the original mission of religion through interfaith dialogue and cooperation, build spiritual solidarity for humanity's shared future, and open new pathways to peace. The program included a welcome banquet, opening ceremony, keynote lectures, interfaith prayer service, press conference, pilgrimage to Holy sites, and a closing banquet.

Welcome Banquet: Undermining Religious Freedom Is Undermining Democracy

The conference opened on August 5 with a welcome banquet, beginning with a victory invocation led by Bishop Dr. Edward Barnett, founder of The Greater Grace Family Ministries Church, followed by a prayer of gratitude offered by Dr. Shaykh Pirzada, representing Islam. In his welcoming remarks, Dr. Tageldin Ibrahim Hamad, Chairman of UPF International, warned that threats to religious freedom ultimately erode the foundations of democracy.

Reverend Lucivando Ferreira Nunes from the Comunidade Apostolica Carismatica in Sao, Brazil, reflected that leaders from around the world had come together with a unified message to defend religious freedom and build a peaceful world. He noted a strong shared sentiment about the importance of protecting Holy Mother Han, True Mother, and expressed that he felt a deep spiritual connection among participants.

Conference: Spiritual Values Are Humanity's Universal Assets

On the second day, August 6, the conference officially commenced with an opening ceremony. The program began with a prayer of gratitude from Archbishop George Stallings, followed by opening remarks from Dr. Tageldin Ibrahim Hamad, and congratulatory messages from Archbishop Ivan Dutra de Moraes and Co-Chairman Seo Jin-woo of KCLC.

Archbishop Stallings prayed for protection and guidance under True Mother, Mother of Peace, Holy Mother Han - whom he described as having been established by God as the Only Begotten Daughter. He asked that a spiritual fence be placed around her so that no harm or danger could come near.

In his address, Dr. Hamad expressed appreciation for the opportunity to seek a new era through righteous solidarity and prayer, aiming to build a world where spiritual dignity is honored as deeply as life itself. He emphasized that the spiritual values of religion are not exclusive to believers, but are universal assets of humanity - values that must be respected and safeguarded across society and within nations.

He hoped that this conference would serve as a starting point for religious leaders of diverse faiths and traditions to unite and act upon shared principles such as truth, conscience, love, and peace.

Ivan Dutra de Moraes of Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church, spoke of the current era as one that reveals a deep crisis in religion. He urged that believers must transcend denominational boundaries and stand together against atheism.

Co-Chairman Seo Jin-woo followed with a message grounded in scripture, quoting Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." He concluded, "Let us move forward together with humility and mutual respect, united in the pursuit of peace."



Religious Freedom Keynote Lectures and Testimonies from World Religious Leaders

Professor Ahn Shin of Pai Chai University, President of the Korean Association for the Study of Religion, delivered a keynote lecture on "The Role of Religion in the Post-Religious Era." He referenced Article 11 of the Constitution, which states that no one shall be discriminated against in any area of political, economic, social, or cultural life based on gender, religion, or social status. He explained that this provision underscores how religious freedom and human rights form the foundation of democratic society.

He went on to stress that religious diversity is a valuable asset to the global community, and that differences in faith should not be viewed as errors. Ensuring that all religions are respected and protected without discrimination, he said, is essential to the integrity of a free and democratic civil society.

Demian Dunkley, Continental Director of the Family Federation for Heavenly America, gave a special lecture titled "This World Has Been Waiting for a Mother." He spoke about how the Mother of Peace, Holy Mother Han, True Mother, has devoted her life not for personal gain, but for the sake of global peace. He shared that she has consistently worked to restore the status of the Heavenly Mother and to fully honor God as Heavenly Parent.

Following this, WCLC Chairman Kim Ki-hoon introduced the founding background of the World Clergy Leadership Conference (WCLC), describing it as a milestone in which Holy Mother Han, True Mother, brought to life the long-held vision of the "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity."

Several religious leaders-including Dr. Madelene Clark-Alexander, Archbishop Sulanch Lewis, Pastor

T.L. Barrett, Dr. Darlington Onuchukwu, and Pastor Jackson de Jesus Santos-shared heartfelt testimonies about the spiritual leadership of Holy Mother Han, expressing admiration and deep emotional resonance with her example.

Following the keynote lectures, an interfaith prayer service was held, where religious leaders from around the world joined in heartfelt prayers for religious freedom and offered sincere devotion to support Holy Mother Han, True Mother.

Presiding over the service, Archbishop George Stallings spoke of God as Spirit and emphasized that human beings connect with God and one another through the soul. He encouraged participants to release hatred and entanglements through prayer, suggesting that such liberation allows the soul to truly experience divine connection.

Prayers were then offered by representatives of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, culminating in a unified interfaith offering that reflected shared hope and spiritual solidarity.



①Press conference where the joint statement of world religious leaders was announced ②UPF International President Taj Hamad speaking at the press conference

Statement Released: Religious Freedom Is an Inviolable Right

On August 7, a press conference and pilgrimage to Holy sites were held. The "World Religious Leaders Press Conference for Religious Freedom and Universal Values," organized by the 2025 Conference for World Religious Leaders Organizing Committee, took place at 10:30 AM at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, Seoul.

The press conference was attended by nine representative religious leaders: Dr. Tageldin Ibrahim Hamad, Chairman of UPF International; Archbishop George Stallings; Bishop Ronald Thomas; Pastor T.L. Barrett; Bishop John Wayne Milton; Bishop Angelo Rosario (all from the United States); Bishop Luis Miguel Perea (Italy); Archbishop Ivan Dutra de Moraes (Brazil); and President Suraphon Boonpratham of the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Hamad spoke of how voices of faith are being suppressed in many parts of the world, and how truth is increasingly distorted. He emphasized that religious freedom is not merely a discretionary right, but an inviolable one - granted by God and protected under international law, specifically UN General Assembly Resolution 55 of its 36th session. He warned that when religion is silenced, society's conscience is also silenced, and when faith is disregarded, the foundation of human dignity begins to erode.

Following his remarks, Archbishop George Stallings presented the "2025 World Religious Leaders Statement for Religious Freedom and Universal Values."

Through the statement, the religious leaders affirmed that religious freedom is not just a personal right, but a core value that upholds human conscience and dignity, as well as the moral and cultural identity of communities. They cautioned that any reduction of religious freedom could undermine the very foundation of civilization.

The statement called for the absolute guarantee of religious freedom, solidarity beyond faith and doctrine - centered on truth, conscience, and spirituality - and the protection of universal values such as truth, love, justice, and peace. It concluded with a collective commitment to end all forms of discrimination and hatred, and to usher in an era of peace through global spiritual solidarity.

The press conference drew approximately 20 journalists from 15 media outlets, including the Washington Times (USA) and MBN (Korea). By 8 PM on Thursday, August 7, a total of 72 news reports had been published across 12 outlets, including TV Chosun and Channel A.



③Visit to the War Memorial of Korea in Yongsan, Seoul ④Pilgrimage to the Original Cheongpa-dong Headquarters Church in Seoul ⑤Visit to the Cheon Won Gung exhibition of Korean Epic paintings ⑥World religious leaders during a pilgrimage to the Cheon Jeong Gung

Pilgrimage to Holy Sites: Confirming the Vision of Hyo Jeong Cheon Won

That afternoon, following the press conference, around 60 international religious leaders visited the Seoul War Memorial. As they reflected on Korea's wartime history, many expressed a renewed recognition of the Korean people as a peace-loving nation - one that, despite enduring numerous trials, never invaded others. This moment was seen as a profound realization of Heaven's providential preparation for the birth of the Only Begotten Daughter.

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On the final day of the conference, a pilgrimage to the Holy sites of Hyo Jeong Cheon Won was held, with the participation of approximately 60 religious leaders from around the world. The purpose was to reflect on the providential significance and vision of Holy Mother Han, True Mother.

Upon arriving at Cheon Won Gung, the leaders viewed an introductory video detailing the entrance ceremony to Cheon Won Gung Cheon Il Sanctum held on April 13, 2025. The video highlighted the providential meaning of the sanctum, centered on Holy Mother Han.

Inside the Cheon Il Sanctum, the leaders offered unified praise and prayers of gratitude to Heavenly Parent. They then viewed 14 Cheon Il Seonghwa paintings depicting the life and achievements of True Parents, taking time to reflect on their noble legacy and enduring values.

The group also visited the "Epic History of the Chosen Han People of Korea" exhibition, which featured 13 paintings illustrating Heavenly Parent's providence centered on the Korean people. They then moved to Cheon Jeong Gung to further explore the footsteps of True Parents' life course.

After lunch, the leaders toured Hyo Jeong Cheon Won, visiting the Mystery Zoo and Aqua Garden. They received an explanation of True Mother's grand vision to realize "One Family of Humankind Under Heavenly Parent," centered on Hyo Jeong Cheon Won.

Finally, the group boarded the HJ Gapyeong Cruise from HJ Marina for the closing banquet. They shared reflections on the conference and concluded the program with heartfelt gratitude, uplifted by musical performances from invited artists.