

Higher Purpose Forum: Addressing the Challenges of our Times" April 11 - 13

James Edgerly
April 11, 2024



Exploring
important
questions
together

HJ International Graduate School 1st Conference on Peace & Public Leadership

“Addressing the Challenges of our Times”

OPENING SESSION - 6 PM EST TODAY

Thursday, April 11 - Saturday, April 13
(Virtual)
(Registration Required)



HJ International
GRADUATE SCHOOL for
PEACE and PUBLIC LEADERSHIP



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HJI PRESENTS THE 1ST
**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
PEACE AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP**

APRIL 11-13, 2024

**PEACE AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP:
ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES**

Thursday, April 11

- 6:00-6:15 PM ET - Opening Session
- 6:45-8:30 PM ET - Unification Worldview & Conflict Transformation
- 8:45-10:15 PM ET - Christology & Women: Relevance for Peace

Friday, April 12

- 8:00 - 9:30 AM ET - Philosophical Issues in Religion & Peace
- 10:00-11:30 AM ET - New Religious Movements & Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom
- 2:00-3:30 PM ET - Faith-Based Organizations, the Family & the UN
- 8:00-9:30 PM ET - Economic Democracy as an Essential Component of Positive Peace

Saturday, April 13

- 9:00-10:30 AM ET - Prospects for Peace in Israel & Palestine
- 11:30 AM-1:00 PM - The Future of the United Nations: HJI Student Presentations

[Conference ZOOM Registration Link](#)

Dear,

The Higher Purpose Forum (HPF) invites you to participate in the 1st HJ International Graduate School Conference on Peace & Public Leadership, April 11 to 13. The conference (virtual) is titled “Addressing the Challenges of Our Time” featuring 35 speakers including faculty members of HJ International Graduate School as well as scholars and professionals from 15 countries.

You will note the conference has nine sessions covering a broad range of issues including conflict transformation, women & peace, religious freedom, peace in Gaza and Palestine, and the role of the UN.

In particular, please note **Session VII, hosted by the Higher Purpose Forum**. Our four speakers will address the topic *“Economic Democracy as an Essential Component of Positive Peace.”* We will present a basic understanding of “binary economics”, initially developed by Louis Kelso (1913-1991), which provides a **policy basis for universal citizen access to capital/property acquisition**.

Upon registering for the conference (see registration link above and below) you will receive a link that permits access to all nine conference sessions.

THURSDAY, APRIL 11

6:00-6:15 PM ET - Opening Session

6:45-8:30 PM ET - Unification Worldview & Conflict Transformation

Long-term peace issues have been discussed at least since Kant’s Perpetual Peace and they are central to the notion of Conflict Transformation. This approach seeks to supplement the short-term resolution of conflicts that leaves in place the seed for future conflict. The presentations in this session will apply the perspective of Unificationism in discussing innovative approaches to understanding the other (comparative narratives on Taiwan), exploring the nature of American foreign interventions past, present, and possible future, and investigating the role of desire satisfaction vs. degrowth in peace processes.



Moderator

Ms. Katarina Connery
Vice-President, WFWP USA



China and Taiwan - Competing Narratives

Dr. Thomas Ward
Provost; Professor of Peace and Development, HJI



Pax Americana and the Responsibility to Protect

Mr. Christopher Kenedy
Graduate Student, Peace Studies, HJI



Human Desire as a Counter-Intuitive Source of Peace

Dr. Claude Perrottet
Adjunct Professor, HJI



Respondent

Dr. Basil Ugorji
Founder and CEO, International Center for Ethno-Religious Mediation (ICERMediation); Adjunct Associate Professor, HJI

8:45-10:15 PM ET - Christology & Women: Relevance for Peace

Traditional Christology, which is meant to show God’s intention to build the Kingdom of God through His incarnation in Jesus Christ, has lacked the element of divine femininity. The consequence is that Christianity has fostered attitudes that privilege men above women, and societies that discriminate against women and other marginalized people. This deficiency has been identified and addressed by twentieth-century theologians, among them Rosemary Radford Ruether (1936-2022), who elucidated ways that Jesus Christ displayed the love and work of God who is feminine as well as masculine. The authority of God’s feminine voice has also been a feature of new religious movements in Korea, which draw upon shamanistic folk religion where female mudangs have privileged access to Heaven. The fullest expression of gender balance in Christology is Unificationism, which proclaims the advent of the Only-begotten Daughter standing side-by-side with the Lord of the Second Advent.



Moderator

Dr. Theodore Shimmyo
Professor Emeritus of Theology, HJI



Rosemary Radford Ruether’s Christology

Ms. Bruna Allen
Graduate Student, HJI



The Religious Feminine in Korean New Religions

Dr. Alexa Blonner
Australian Association for the Study of Religion



From the Feminine in Christology to the Feminine in Ontology: Opening to a Gender-Balanced God

Dr. Andrew Wilson
Professor of Scriptural Studies, HJI

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

8:00-9:30 AM ET - Philosophical Issues in Religion and Peace

The session delves into the intricate dynamics of religion, war, and peace in the Third Millennium, emphasizing historical ties and contemporary challenges. One explores the resurgence of religiously-fueled warfare amidst modern complexities, warning of existential threats. The other addresses philosophical hurdles in Unificationism hindering integration into social and political spheres, emphasizing the need for conceptual frameworks. Both underscore the urgency of critically examining and evolving philosophical underpinnings to navigate contemporary global challenges.



Moderator

Ms. Angelika Buczynski

Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Special Projects, HJI



Religion, Peace and War in the Third Millennium

Dr. Ronald Brown

Professor of History and Political Science, Touro University



Moderator

Ms. Miyoung Eaton

Secretary General, Research Institute for the Integration of Word Thought; Doctoral Student, HJI



Philosophical Issues for the Advancement of Unificationism to the Social, Political Sphere

Dr. Keisuke Noda

Professor of Philosophy, HJI

10:00-11:30 AM ET - New Religious Movements and Contemporary Threats to Religious Freedom

New Religious Movements (NRMs) have tested the limits and helped define the boundaries of religious freedom. They have functioned as "canaries in the coal mine," often being the first to feel the brunt of religious repression. At the same time, NRMs have provoked public reactions. More broadly, religious freedom faces a global crisis. The Pew Foundation has documented increased levels of restrictions on religion and social hostility worldwide. Other research confirms connections between restrictions on religious freedom and cycles of violence, poverty, instability, extremism, other human rights violations, and full-scale civil war. This session will consider contemporary threats to religious freedom, appropriate responses and future prospects.



Moderator

Dr. Michael Mickler

Distinguished Professor of Historical Studies, HJI



Moderator

Dr. Franco Famularo

Board Chair, HJI; President, FFWPU Canada



The Global Forecast for Religious Freedom-Stormy Skies Ahead

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett

President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice; former Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)



How Can Scholars of New Religious Movements Best Contribute to the Religious Freedom Debate?

Dr. Eileen Barker

Emeritus Professor, London School of Economics; Chairperson and Founder, Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM)



The Religious Liberty Crisis in Japan After the Assassination of Shinzo Abe, 2022-2024

Dr. Massimo Introvigne

Founder CESNUR; Editor, Bitter Winter

2:00-3:30 PM ET - Faith-Based Organizations, the Family and the UN

While human dignity, the family, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion are affirmed in the UN charter and the UDHR, the UN has been impacted by the culture wars, resulting in a challenging environment for religious freedom and advocacy of the "natural" or "traditional" family. Member states at the UN are divided on the issues of the faith and family. The USA and Western European countries tend to promote progressive values, while often the more traditional or authoritarian countries, including many Islamic states, affirm a more traditional family. The right to freedom of thought and religion however, is generally decreasing in more widespread areas. The annual UN Commission on the Status of Women event, which just concluded a few weeks ago, has become less appreciative of more traditional views on family.

In this session, panelists will discuss the challenges faced and opportunities taken by faith and family affirming NGOs at the UN.



Moderator

Ms. Lynn Walsh
Adjunct Instructor, Title IX Coordinator, HJI



Speaker

Ms. Carolyn Handson
International Vice President Director, Offices for UN Relations Women's Federation for World Peace Int'l



Speaker

Ms. Sharon Slater
President, Family Watch International, Chair, UN Family Rights Caucus



Speaker

Dr. Ján Figel'
Former European Commissioner; Former Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia; First European Commission Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion Outside the EU



Speaker

Mr. Tom Sarrouf
Senior Academic Programs Manager at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute; Co-host of ISI's podcast, "Conservative Conversations with ISI"; Teacher for the World Youth Alliance

8:00-9:30 PM ET - Economic Democracy as an Essential Component of Positive Peace

This session will advocate for "economic democracy" (shared economic power) as an essential counterpart to a stable and lasting political democracy (shared political power). Wealth generated by the continuous flourishing of the U.S. economy has resulted in a massive and unprecedented concentration of economic power. With the advent of AI, the consensus of economists is that wealth concentration in the U.S. will continue to increase.

Is it possible for our free market economic system to generate a broader distribution of wealth gains without resorting to political redistribution schemes and with less reliance on government deficit spending? This panel will introduce a rigorous proposal for broader distribution of capital ownership based on Louis Kelso's theories of "binary economics."



Moderator

Mr. James B. Edgerly
Director, Higher Purpose Forum; Doctoral Student, HJI



Background on Louis Kelso and His New Paradigm

Mr. Alan Jessen
Director, International Association for Peace and Economic Development, U.S.



More Inclusive Capitalism by Democratizing Capital Acquisition

Dr. Robert Ashford
Professor of Law, Syracuse University



Comments on the Money System

Norman G. Kurland, J.D.
President, Center for Economic and Social Justice



Louis Kelso's "Just Third Way" to Economic Democracy

Ms. Dawn Brohawn
Communications Director, Center for Economic and Social Justice

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

9:00-10:30 AM ET - Prospects for Peace in Israel and Palestine

The recent Hamas's attack on Israel has raised growing regional and international concerns regarding a possible peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The conflict has also brought new discussions to restarting the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, which has been passive for years. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to the end of the nineteenth century when the United Nations adopted the Resolution 181, known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created, triggering the first Arab Israeli War. The following day, on May 15, 1948, the first day of Israel independence, Arab armies invaded Israel. Since that time, all attempts to end the conflict result in failure. America's diplomatic approach to the conflict has been perceived by many as partial. Some people believe that Palestinians are not willing to make peace with Israel and others blame Israel for being the cause of the endless conflict.



Moderator

Dr. Drissa Kone
Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution and Ministry, HJI



Speaker

Imam Shamshi Ali
Queens Islamic Center of New York; Imam & Director of Jamaica Muslim Center, NY; President of Nusantara Foundation



Speaker

Bishop Munib Younan
Palestinian Bishop Emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

11:30-1:00 PM ET - The Future of the United Nations: HJI Student Presentations

The UN will celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2025, at a time when assessment of the UN's effectiveness is at a low point. The wars in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine remind us of the limitations of the Security Council system, and the current Peacekeeping capacities. There are also discouraging reports, at this midway point between 2015 and 2030, on results in achieving the SDGs. Geopolitical polarization manifests itself in the functioning of the UN. Can the weaknesses of the UN System be overcome? What reforms might help assure a more effective system? What is the role of NGOs, and faith-based organizations? This session will address these concerns. The panelists will consist of HJI students.



Moderator

Dr. Thomas Walsh
President, HJI



Empowering NGOs at the UN: Strategic Insights to Attain Relevance

Mr. John Koester
Graduate Student, Peace Studies, HJI



The Role of Faith-Based NGOs at the UN: A Case Study of World Vision International

Ms. Marlies Ladstaetter
Graduate Student, Peace Studies, HJI



Recommendations for the Reform of the UN Security Council

Mr. Avo Martinson
Graduate Student, Peace Studies, HJI



Progress and Challenges with the Implementation of the SDGs: The Case of Nepal

Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal
Member of Parliament, Nepal; Graduate Student, Peace Studies, HJI

NEW Registration Link

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSda5FkDVd-ITQnk7uOhr9XNrfwAeH58Bb-unNs69zHDMwRuCA/viewform>

(copy & paste into your browser)

Upcoming HPF Meetings

Tues. April 23

Science and Religion from the Viewpoint of the Principle

Dr. Andrew Wilson, HJI Professor of Scriptural Studies

Respondent: Alison Wakelin, Assistant Teaching Professor, Widener University

Tues. May 7

The Principle's Perspective on Science according to Wolli Wonbon

Dr. Andrew Wilson, HJI Professor of Scriptural Studies

Tues. May 22

Unity of Science, Spirituality & Religion

Alison Wakelin, Assitant Teaching Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Widener University

Sincerely,
James Edgerly
Director, [Higher Purpose Forum](#)



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