

Conference Of Hope For The Realization Of A Heavenly Unified World

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Under the theme of "Religious Freedom Based on Universal Human Rights," a "Conference of Hope for the Realization of a Heavenly Unified World" was held on November 12 at the Hyojeong Cultural Hall of the HJ International Cultural Foundation with the online and offline participation of world peace leaders from more than 100 countries, including former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, former U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Catholic Cardinal Kelvin Felix from Dominica.

The event began with welcoming remarks by Dr. Yun Young-ho, Chairman of the 2022 Forum Promotion Committee, Tom McDevitt, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Washington Times, and Kelvin Felix, a Catholic Cardinal from Dominica, followed by a Peace Performance. Next, former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Former US House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Pastor Paula White, chair of the evangelical advisory board in Donald Trump's administration, and Sam Brownback, former Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom at the US Department of State offered remarks.

They were followed by a keynote address from Massimo Introvigne, Italian Roman Catholic sociologist of religion and founder of the Center for Studies of New Religions. The highlight of the event was the adoption of a "Statement Calling for Religious Freedom Based on the Universal Charter of Peace." The Little Angels of Korea which are celebrating their 60th anniversary this year performed and so did the Art Buli Korean dance troupe.

In his welcoming remarks, Dr. Yoon Young-ho, Chairman of the 2022 Forum Promotion Committee, said, The most important and basic content of human rights is freedom to believe in God (religion), freedom to practice faith, and freedom to reject coercion. Freedom of religion is a human right conferred by heaven, and is one of the most basic rights that cannot be contravened by anyone. Explaining further, he said that Rev. and Dr. Moon, co-founders of the Universal Peace Federation, have said that the goal of religion is achieving the ideal of one family under God where all of humanity lives harmoniously in attendance to God as the parent of humankind. The human right to freedom of religion goes beyond the faith in God and is an innate human right granted by the Creator and allowing all people to seek and attend their true parents.

Tom McDevitt, chairman of the board of the Washington Times, stated, "The highlight of the conference today will be the introduction and the adoption of the Declaration on the Universal Value of Religious Freedom. We call on all people throughout the world to stand firm against all forms of religious intolerance, prejudice, slander and hate, to conclude the Declaration which will be signed by representatives in Korea, in Japan and numerous countries all around the world. The Declaration builds on the foundation of the Peace Charter, which was affirmed during the Universal Peace Federation Summit 2022 and the Leadership Conference in August, which advocated for a world culture of peace, a world of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values."

In his congratulatory remarks, Dominican Catholic Cardinal Kelvin Felix said "Pope Francis said: "Religious freedom is a fundamental right which shapes the way we interact socially and personally with our neighbors whose religious views differ from our own. When individuals and communities are guaranteed the effective exercise of their rights, they are not only free to realize their potential, they also, through their talents and their hard work, contribute to the welfare and enrichment of society as a whole."

Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who delivered a keynote address on the topic of universal human rights, said "In the Trump Administration, we made religious liberty around the world a central thesis of keeping America more secure and making more prosperity and security for people all around the world. So, we tied what we knew to be true -- the expansion of religious freedom around the world, the protection of persecuted minorities around the world [...] I would suggest to you that as you're serving your nation, as you're serving your community, as you're serving your family and all those around you that your faith is a central part of who you are. You should live it each and every day and you should do so with the knowledge that there will be those who will think that's not quite the right way to do it. Be strong!"

Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, said: "Why have the media and their so-called advisors suppressed the fact that a respected United Nations NGO on Religious Freedom has filed a formal complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva [...] We believe that Japan will uphold its commitment to Freedom of Religion and Democracy. I believe that the anti-Communist movement, which Mother Moon has done so much work on to bring peace to the world, with freedom, will continue."

The Rev. Paula White said: "Mother Moon, your faith and courage are very moving, especially having passed through so many trials, persecution, and misunderstanding. I've been honored to be a part of this great work, and to join Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Trump, Prime Minister Hun Sen, President Macky Sall, Prime Minister Brigi Rafini, and many heads of state from Africa, as well as Vice President Pence, Prime Minister Harper, Prime Minister Barroso, Secretary Pompeo, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the heads of state throughout the world, along with faith leaders who have expressed deep appreciation for the leadership of Mother Moon, for peace and for strengthening families."

Sam Brownback, former U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom at the US State Department, said, "Don't fall back and don't fall for traps of saying, 'while we don't agree with this group theologically or that group, everybody else is fine.' The only way the system works is if everybody is guaranteed religious freedom."

Jan Figel, former EU special envoy for religious freedom, who also delivered a keynote address on universal human rights and religious persecution, said, "Religious freedom is defined as freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is at the center of the long list of rights. Indeed, it is a very central right, important for believers and non-believers. When religious freedom is missing then other civil freedoms are missing as well," he argued.

Massimo Introvigne, Founder of the Center for Studies on New Religions, gave a special speech in which he explained that communism, Nietzschean philosophy, often adhered to by Nazis and other extreme political factions, and secular humanism are all operating as enemies of religion. Though they have radically different philosophical bases, they are all seeking to eradicate religion. "However," he continued, "they are confronted with the impossibility of eradicating immediately all religions [...] As I have demonstrated in several articles, the same dark forces are working against religious liberty in other countries [...] The future of religion liberty will be largely decided by what will happen in Japan with the Unification Church [...] We are here to make our voice heard, to make your voice heard. And certainly we are not here to lose. I fully believe that if we stay together, if we do not give up, if we continue to fight, we will one day celebrate our victory," he stated.

One of the sponsors of the event, Think Tank 2022, is an alliance of intellectuals around the world that was launched in response to the needs of the times for great unity and solidarity for peace. Launched on May 9 of last year, top experts in each field, including politics, economy, media, academics, religion, culture, and the arts, have joined together to discuss policies and their impact on each field. Providing a platform for people to share and discuss ethical practices together, Think Tank 2022 consists of a total of 2,022 leading figures, including 1,011 from South Korea and 1,011 from other countries around the world.