

Hawaii Peace Starts with Me: Faith, Freedom and Peace: Voices of the Persecuted

Donna Shaver
October 25, 2025



The Hawai‘i Peace Starts with Me Alliance successfully held the "Faith, Freedom and Peace: Faith Under Fire" program on Saturday, October 25, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Hawaiian Mission Academy Ka Lama Ike in Honolulu. The event was jointly organized by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) - Hawai‘i Chapter. Despite limited preparation time, the gathering was well received, drawing about 55 participants, including nine guests, and marked the first collaboration among the three organizations as part of a planned three-part series.



The program opened with remarks from the Master of Ceremonies, Donna Shaver, who introduced the purpose of the Peace Starts with Me Alliance series and shared a quote from Holy Mother Hak Ja Han Moon emphasizing interreligious harmony and the power of love beyond doctrine or culture. Dr. Samuel Samuelu then offered an opening prayer, followed by an Interfaith Water Ceremony that featured representatives from the Bahá’í, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, and Hindu faiths. Under the guidance of Rev. Jeffery Nakama, participants from each faith poured water into a single bowl as a symbol of unity and peace. The ceremony deeply moved those in attendance.

Following the ceremony, the UPF Ambassador of Peace Award was presented to Mrs. Pearl Awana in recognition of her dedication to interfaith work. Dr. Rev. Jeffery Nakama then delivered the keynote address on the theme of religious persecution, setting the tone for the next portion of the event. Ms. Rena Saito continued the program by reading excerpts titled "Voices of the Persecuted," featuring the stories of Nadia Murad from Iraq, Pastor Wang Yi from China, and Asia Bibi from Pakistan - each representing the struggle for faith and freedom under oppression.

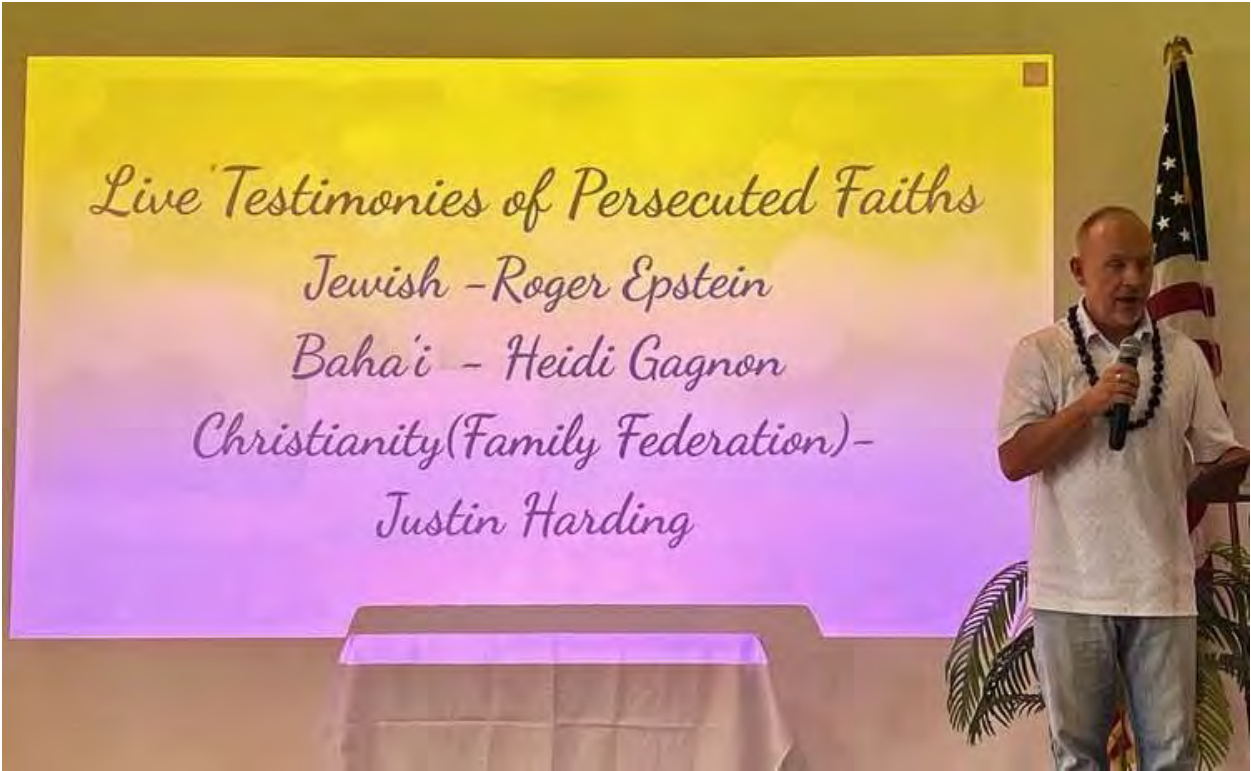


Members of the Bahá'í community - Mr. James Shattuck, Mrs. Heidi Gagnon, and Mrs. JoLinda Susilo - then shared heartfelt reflections during the Live Voices segment, which was followed by a moving video presentation titled "Religiside." Mr. Justin Harding of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification spoke afterward, drawing from his experiences as a U.S. Marine stationed in Korea. He highlighted America's foundation of religious freedom and the unity of nations that defended democracy during the Korean War. He also shared his encounter with Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and expressed deep concern about ongoing religious persecution worldwide, pledging to continue praying for global religious freedom.



As the program drew to a close, attendees were invited to take part in a call to action by signing a large PSWM poster featuring the Alliance emblem and a quote from Holy Mother Han, affirming their commitment to peace and unity. Donna Shaver performed "From A Distance" to inspire reflection, and

participants signed the poster to gentle Hawaiian music. The event concluded with a closing prayer from Mr. Shanti Bott and a food blessing from Mrs. Charity Mageo, after which everyone enjoyed a fellowship lunch together.



During the gathering, Donna Shaver had the opportunity to introduce WFWP to Mrs. Charity Mageo, sharing printed materials, a brochure, and contact information. Mrs. Mageo expressed strong interest in WFWP activities and plans to attend the upcoming Leeward HerTribe gathering.

Overall, the event was a meaningful success, promoting interfaith understanding, religious freedom, and unity among diverse communities in Hawai'i.

