

International Religious Liberty Association Celebrates 130 Years of Religious Freedom Advocacy

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Religious freedom advocates of a mosaic of faiths from Mennonites to Muslims and Catholics to Baptists, Jews and Scientologists gathered in August at the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, in support of religious freedom for people of all faiths or none. The event, which marked the 130th anniversary of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) and the nonprofit's 9th World Conference, carried forward a long tradition of Adventist advocacy for the freedom of religion or belief.



9th World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association in Maryland in August 2023.

Religious liberty has “an incontrovertible value without which our very humanity could be at risk of being diminished and impaired,” said Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the opening address.

Other distinguished conference speakers included Ambassador Sam Brownback, co-president of the International Religious Freedom Summit and former Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom; Rabbi Craig Axler, Senior Rabbi of Temple Isaiah in Fulton, Maryland; Rev. Elijah Brown, General Secretary of Baptist World Alliance; and César García, General Secretary of the Mennonite World Conference.

A theme pervading the speeches, panel discussion and breakout sessions was the challenge religious liberty faces from polarization in the world today, where political extremes, both ultraprogressive and ultraconservative, seek to limit this human right.

IRLA Secretary General Ganoune Diop defined religious freedom as “the right to profess, practice, and propagate one’s beliefs without coercion, intimidation, or manipulation.” He spoke of this freedom as occupying the “pivotal position among freedom and rights.” Diop spoke of the need to raise awareness of the importance of the freedom of thought and conscience, and he stressed interfaith dialogue as essential for the elimination of intolerance.

“Religious tolerance is a fundamental principle, expressed in the [Creed of the Church of Scientology](#),” says Rev. Olivia McDuff, public affairs staff who represented the Church of Scientology International at the conference. “Our creed states that ‘All men have inalienable rights to their own religious practices and their performance.’”

Tolerance of others’ beliefs is a precept Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard incorporated into the book [The Way to Happiness](#), which states:

"Tolerance is a good cornerstone on which to build human relationships. When one views the slaughter and suffering caused by religious intolerance down all the history of Man and into modern times, one can see that intolerance is a very non-survival activity.

"Religious tolerance does not mean one cannot express his own beliefs. It does mean that seeking to undermine or attack the religious faith and beliefs of another has always been a short road to trouble."

"Any advice one might give another on this subject is safest when it simply asserts the right to believe as one chooses. One is at liberty to hold up his own beliefs for acceptance. One is at risk when he seeks to assault the beliefs of others, much more so when he attacks and seeks to harm them because of their religious convictions."

Seventh-day Adventists founded the International Religious Liberty Association in 1893. The organization was created to advocate for the religious freedom of all people, regardless of their faith and background. The IRLA is a multifaith, multinational organization that is often joined in its advocacy by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more information about the IRLA and the 9th World Conference, visit the [IRLA website](#) or the Adventist Review, the flagship journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

From its beginnings, the Church of Scientology has recognized that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right. In a world where conflicts are often traceable to intolerance of others’ religious beliefs and practices, the Church has, for more than 50 years, made the preservation of religious liberty an overriding concern.

The Church publishes this blog to help create a better understanding of the freedom of religion and belief and provide news on religious freedom and issues affecting this freedom around the

world.

The Founder of the Scientology religion is L. Ron Hubbard and Mr. David Miscavige is the religion's ecclesiastical leader.

For more information, visit the Scientology website at www.Scientology.org, the Scientology Network at www.Scientology.tv or the Scientology religious freedom blog at www.scientologyreligion.org/blog/

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