

Pastor Mark Burns and ALLATRA Host 'United in Liberty: The Rise of Spiritual Diplomats' Conference at U.S. Capitol

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, January 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Jan. 22, 2026, the International Interfaith Conference United in Liberty: The Rise of Spiritual Diplomats, led by Pastor Mark Burns, Chairman, convened on the [ALLATRA](#) International Public Movement platform in the U.S. Capitol Caucus Room. The historic gathering brought together faith leaders, diplomats, lawmakers, human rights advocates, and civil society representatives from around the world to address unity, freedom of religion or belief, shared human values, and the protection of children.

The conference opened with a ceremonial program honoring national and interfaith traditions. World-class opera singer Maria Maksakova performed the United States national anthem, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Chief Joseph Riverwind, War Chief of the Arawak Taíno Tribe of Puerto Rico and a United States Army veteran. The ceremony continued with an invocation and blessing delivered by Bishop Leon Benjamin, setting a unifying tone for the proceedings.



International Interfaith Conference United in Liberty: The Rise of Spiritual Diplomats at the U.S. Capitol Complex, Washington, D.C.



U.S. President Donald J. Trump delivered a special video address recorded exclusively for the International Interfaith Conference United in Liberty: The Rise of Spiritual Diplomats, thanking Pastor Mark Burns for his leadership and long-standing support

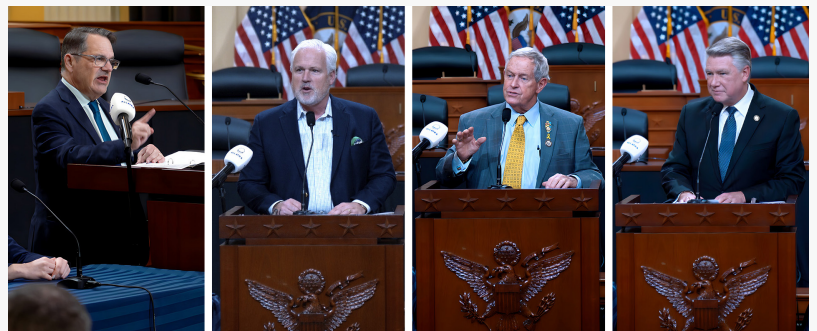
The event then featured a special video address from President of the United States Donald J. Trump, recorded exclusively for this conference. In his remarks, President Trump congratulated Pastor Burns, thanked him for the “great job” he has done, noted their long-standing friendship, described the world as “very troubled,” and encouraged him to “keep going forward.”

Following the address, Pastor Burns underscored the role of faith-based leadership in confronting global crises and defending human dignity. Speaking in the nation’s capital, he called on participants to protect the innocent, speak for the voiceless, and stand united across faiths, framing spiritual diplomacy as an active moral responsibility that prioritizes conscience and unity where political mechanisms alone have fallen short. Emphasizing solidarity beyond religious and political divisions, Pastor Burns stated, “That’s putting our differences aside and standing as one people, as one voice,” and urged principled leadership, declaring, “I’m going to stand for what is right and not what is popular.”

Members of Congress also addressed the conference, emphasizing the global importance of freedom of religion or belief and moral leadership. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis of Florida said, “I see religious freedom not as a mere legal concept, but as the heartbeat of human dignity,” warning that government restrictions on religion have reached historic levels worldwide. Rep. Mark Harris of North Carolina stated, “Government



Pastor Mark Burns, spiritual adviser to the U.S. President Donald Trump; chairman of the Spiritual Diplomats; founder of the Harvest Praise & Worship Center; Co-Founder of the NOW Television Network



Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis; Matt Schlapp, Chairman, American Conservative Union (ACU), American political activist and lobbyist; Congressman Joe Wilson; Congressman Mark Harris



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Government

works best when it gets out of the way, when it respects the sacred space of parents to raise their children according to their convictions.” Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina reflected on America’s historical foundation, noting, “Our country indeed has benefited from religious freedom.” Collectively, the lawmakers reaffirmed the protection of freedom of religion or belief as a core human right essential to human dignity, social stability, and international peace.

Matt Schlapp, Chairman of the American Conservative Union, warned of the growing erosion of religious freedom and freedom of expression in both authoritarian and democratic societies, stating, “We see the problems of the basic persecution of religious freedom, the persecution of political speech.” and emphasizing that the right to live out one’s faith openly and without fear is essential to preserving democracy and human dignity.

Maryna Ovtsynova, President of the ALLATRA International Public Movement, delivered a detailed address on the defense of fundamental freedoms and the dangers of systematic repression. She emphasized that the conference itself demonstrated unity across faiths and cultures, noting that “representatives from different religions, different cultures, different nationalities, different worldviews are here today.” Ms. Ovtsynova warned that human freedom is under threat from what she described as a “highly coordinated international system” of anti-cult networks, calling anti-cultism “the technology of dehumanization and repression.” She explained that such mechanisms rely on labeling, media campaigns, and social exclusion that ultimately lead to persecution and violence, adding that “the very foundation of democracy collapses—freedom of conscience, the right to speak freely, and the right to human dignity.” Drawing on ALLATRA’s experience of persecution in Russia, she stated, “They believed that by putting us on the blacklist, they could force us into silence—but they were wrong. We began to speak even louder.” She concluded by calling for collective action and solidarity, stressing that “as long as anti-cultism exists in this world, true democracy and human freedom are impossible,” and affirming that “our strength is in unity.”

Brock Pierce, futurist, philanthropist, and co-founder of Tether and the EOS ecosystem, spoke on faith as an antidote to fear and division in a rapidly changing world, stating, “Faith is the answer to fear, uncertainty, and doubt.” He described spiritual diplomacy as a deeper form of engagement beyond conventional power dynamics, explaining, “It’s the ability to engage with those nations and cultures and people through their deepest source of meaning, belief and identity, where it’s not just about power, policy and pressure, but it’s those things that transcend our typical negotiations and bringing it back to purpose, bringing it back to dignity.”

Speakers further underscored the role of interfaith dialogue and spiritual diplomacy in advancing peace and global understanding. Dr. Michael Jenkins, President of the Universal Peace Federation and President of Washington Times Holdings, emphasized the unifying power of faith-based engagement, stating, “Interfaith dialogue can do more to heal divisions than anything else.” He noted that when faith communities lead with mutual respect and cooperation, political leaders and institutions are better positioned to follow with policies that uphold religious freedom and human dignity.

International leaders also featured prominently. His Excellency Caleb Mutfwang, Executive Governor of Plateau State, Nigeria, addressed participants via video message on promoting peace and liberty amid global challenges, calling for leadership anchored in justice, mercy, and the sanctity of human life. His Excellency Manji Wilson, Chief Technical Adviser on Development Partnerships, Strategic Linkages, and Diaspora Engagements to the Plateau State Governor, emphasized the role of faith leaders in strengthening peace and social cohesion across divided communities.

Faith leaders from diverse traditions echoed these themes. Rabbi Elie Abadie called for renewed commitment to peaceful coexistence, stating, "We must learn to use one another's religious beliefs as ways to connect, not as reasons for conflict," and urged leaders to reject dehumanization, intolerance, and religious extremism. Reverend Biodun Fatoyinbo highlighted the moral authority of faith leaders, reminding participants, "A teaching of forgiveness can end blood feuds. A sermon of dignity can inspire human rights movements," while cautioning that words spoken from positions of trust carry consequences that can either heal or divide societies.

Rabbi Asher Lopatin, a Rhodes Scholar and Director of Community Relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, addressed recent developments in Syria, urging moral courage and engagement rather than passivity. Drawing on his recent delegations, he stated, "God sometimes sends us the greatest of opportunities, and it is our responsibility to seize them and not ignore them," adding, "I feel that the new Syria is a great opportunity for America, for the Middle East, and for the Jewish state of Israel."

Rabbi Duvi Honig, Founder and CEO of the Orthodox Jewish Chamber of Commerce, addressed religious freedom and moral courage, recounting testimony from a former hostage and underscoring the sustaining power of belief. Reflecting on the limits of material freedom without spiritual grounding, he stated, "Freedom alone does not bring happiness, purpose, or light. Faith does." He emphasized the responsibility of faith leaders to speak with courage and moral clarity, even in the face of pressure or intimidation.

George Simion, President of the Alliance for the Union of Romanians, highlighted faith as the foundation of human dignity and democratic resilience, stating, "The key to world peace, the key to global understanding, the key to prosperity is through God, through faith, through spiritual diplomats."

International diplomats and advocates underscored that child protection and humanitarian responsibility are inseparable from freedom of religion or belief. His Excellency Lazaro Nyalandu, Ambassador of Tanzania, emphasized, "The safety of children anywhere is our God-given responsibility and a noble duty," noting that "Tanzania has continued its open-door, open-arm policy in shielding children and persecuted persons." Referring to a recent cross-border abuse case involving a Czech national Jakub Jahl, he warned that the exploitation of vulnerable children and misuse of charitable structures underscore the need for vigilance, accountability, and

coordinated justice.

Child protection was further addressed by Aliia Roza, a former secret agent turned to women empowerment coach, who spoke on the realities of child and human trafficking based on her work disrupting criminal networks. Scarlett Lewis, mother of Jesse Lewis, who was killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and founder of the Choose Love Movement, addressed the conference with a powerful message on school safety and child protection. Drawing from her personal loss, Lewis spoke about transforming tragedy into purpose, urging leaders to confront the roots of violence by choosing love over fear and by teaching forgiveness, compassion, and essential life skills as proactive tools for preventing violence and protecting children.

The conference also featured a broad range of international faith leaders, humanitarian advocates, and civil society representatives. Participants included Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar, former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel and Jerusalem, who delivered a video address; Sheikh Eşref Efendi, a distinguished Sufi master of the Naqshbandi order and global Peace Ambassador; Sir Professor Dr. Gabriele Pao-Pei Andreoli, President of the Institute for Advanced Studies and Cooperation and an ethical AI leader affiliated with the Vatican; Rev. Damian Dunkley, President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification USA; Janice Trey, Board Chair of The Epoch Times and NTD TV; and Rushan Abbas, Founder and Executive Director of the Campaign for Uyghurs.

Ukrainian civic and faith leaders Vitaliy Orlov, co-founder of Ukrainian Week in Washington, D.C., and coordinator of the Prayer Movement "Intercessors for Ukraine," and Oleksandr Ilash, founder and chairman of the "Share Your Bread with the Hungry One" charity in Ukraine, addressed the humanitarian and spiritual dimensions of the ongoing conflict.

Family and community advocacy was further represented by Vicki Reece, founder of Joy of Mom; Indigenous leaders Chief Joseph and Laralyn Riverwind, co-founders of Fire Keepers International; and Madelyn Rodriguez, journalist, author, and preacher, who delivered remarks titled "Standing in the Gap," emphasizing the role of women of faith as advocates for justice and moral responsibility.

The conference also featured a surprise appearance by Ms. Elizaveta Khromova, a distinguished geophysicist who shared that she was forced to flee her home in Russia, where ALLATRA is banned, due to persecution connected to her scientific work with ALLATRA, which addresses geodynamic and climatic risks, including the Siberian magma plume. Elizaveta presented Pastor Mark Burns with a book she authored titled "Pastor Mark Burns: The Man Who Restored My Faith," stating that his leadership and moral clarity helped restore her faith during a time of profound personal and professional hardship.

The conference was moderated by Olga Schmidt, President of the [Creative Society](#), which served as an official partner of the event. The Creative Society's partnership reflected its ongoing commitment to fostering global dialogue, civic engagement, and cooperative action across

cultures and nations.

Pastor Burns publicly acknowledged and thanked ALLATRA and the Creative Society, recognizing their global volunteers for convening faith leaders and advancing a message of peace and unity. "It blesses me so much to see you that are here, to ALLATRA and to Creative Society and to all of the wonderful volunteers from around the world that have helped make this happen," he said. Emphasizing the shared responsibility of those present, Burns added, "I just believe that we are truly the answer to ending true wars in this world and bringing world peace. You, that are in this room right now, your voice matters."

In closing, Pastor Mark Burns announced that registration is now open for the next Spiritual Diplomacy conference, scheduled for February 5, 2026, titled "[Freedom Has a Name and It's Called Ukraine](#)," a bipartisan gathering dedicated to standing with the Ukrainian people in defense of freedom, sovereignty, and peace.

The International Interfaith Conference United in Liberty: The Rise of Spiritual Diplomats demonstrated the power of spiritual diplomacy, faith-driven leadership, and cooperative action in addressing urgent global challenges, defending human rights, and advancing a more peaceful and united world.

What is a Spiritual Diplomat?

Spiritual Diplomats are faith leaders stepping into places politics cannot reach, carrying wisdom instead of weapons, and working for peace where treaties and policies have failed.

About ALLATRA International Public Movement

ALLATRA International Public Movement is an independent, volunteer-based organization dedicated to carrying out large-scale research in geodynamics and environmental issues. ALLATRA IPM is recognized for its interdisciplinary approach to the study of natural disasters, for promoting international scientific cooperation and advocating human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In recognition of its commitment to environmental protection and preservation of creation, ALLATRA International Public Movement was granted an Apostolic Blessing by His Holiness Pope Francis in 2024. In 2025, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV bestowed an Apostolic Blessing upon the President of ALLATRA and all its volunteers.

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