UPF USA September Newsletter

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UPF USA
BRIDGEBUILDER
NEWSLETTER

September 2026

A monthly snapshot of peace stories, insight, and inspiration.

United Nations Day: Connecting the Work of UPF with the Global Community

October 24 marks United Nations Day, commemorating the entry into force of the United Nations Charter in 1945. For UPF, the occasion is an opportunity to highlight the important role of civil society in advancing peace and international cooperation. UPF is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), providing opportunities to participate in UN discussions and contribute the perspectives and experience of its global network of Ambassadors for Peace and partner organizations.

UPF's work in interfaith cooperation, family and marriage, service, sustainable development, women's empowerment and conflict mediation connects with many of the issues addressed by the United Nations. Through its UN relationship, UPF helps connect local and community-based peacebuilding with the broader international conversation. United Nations Day is a reminder that building peace requires cooperation at every level, from individuals and communities to nations and international institutions.



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Ambassador for Peace Spotlight

Valery Merritt, a minister of the Church of Scientology and caretaker of the L. Ron Hubbard Landmark Site in Elizabeth, New Jersey, helps preserve an important chapter in the history of Dianetics and Scientology. Following the 1950 publication of *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, Hubbard's Elizabeth residence temporarily housed the first Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation, where he presented some of his first public Dianetics lectures and demonstrations.



As an Ambassador for Peace, Valery welcomes visitors to this historic site, offering an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of L. Ron Hubbard and explore his humanitarian work. Through educational programs and community partnerships, she helps connect the site's history with broader efforts to share practical tools and encourage humanitarian service.

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Faith Leaders Unite in Prayer at “God’s Hope Is America” Gathering

Hundreds of clergy, faith leaders, and guests gathered September 20 at The Washington Times building in Washington, D.C., for “God’s Hope Is America,” an interfaith gathering co-hosted by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification USA, with UPF helping host the event. Participants from diverse faith traditions joined in prayer for the Mother of Peace, Dr. Hak Ja Han, and in a call for greater unity, religious freedom, and cooperation. Bishop Ron Thomas and Rev. Mark Abernathy led an interfaith prayer, while speakers including former U.S. Representative Dan Burton, Paula White-Cain, former U.S. Ambassador Randy Evans, and Rev. Demian Dunkley addressed the importance of standing together across faith traditions.

Music and fellowship added to the spirit of unity, with performances by gospel artists T.L. Barrett and Wess Morgan, joined by Shinyuh Moon, granddaughter of the Mother of Peace, and a youth choir. The gathering also commemorated the 50th anniversary of Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s historic 1976 Washington Monument rally through an auction of an original painting by his daughter, Un Jin Moon. The event reflected UPF’s commitment to bringing people of different faiths together to strengthen religious freedom, build partnerships, and work across traditional boundaries for peace.



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Walking Side by Side: Peace Road Salisbury

On September 12, Peace Road Salisbury 2026 brought together people from diverse faith communities for a 1.8-mile walk from Faith Community Church to Parkway Church of God. The program, emceed by Senior Pastor John Harrison, featured music from Canvas Church and messages from Pastor TJ Smith, Imam Ashraf Ahmed, and speaker Leniva Loan. Bishop Greg Morris shared biblical insights and read a proclamation from Salisbury Mayor Randy Taylor, while Rev. Susan Fefferman appointed five new Ambassadors for Peace.

Following the walk, participants gathered for a meal hosted by Parkway Church of God, enjoying fellowship and expressing enthusiasm to return the following year. Regional leaders, including Dr. Michael and Reiko Jenkins and Dr. Zagery Oliver, praised the gathering, while Pastor Thomas Hoy highlighted Peace Road during his Sunday service. The event demonstrated how walking, worship, fellowship, and service can bring people of different faiths together around a shared vision of peace.



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United Nations Day: Connecting the Work of UPF with the Global Community



October 24 marks United Nations Day, commemorating the entry into force of the United Nations Charter in 1945. More than eight decades later, the United Nations continues to provide a forum where nations and civil society organizations come together to address challenges that cross borders—from peace and development to human rights, family well-being and sustainable development.

For the Universal Peace Federation, United Nations Day is also an opportunity to highlight its ongoing relationship with the UN and the role that civil society can play in advancing the ideals expressed in the UN Charter.

UPF is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This status provides an important connection between UPF's work around the world and the international community represented through the United Nations.

ECOSOC is the UN's central forum for discussing international economic, social and environmental issues and for coordinating related work across the UN system. The Council's relationship with non-governmental organizations creates opportunities for civil society to contribute knowledge, experience and perspectives to international discussions.

There are three categories of ECOSOC consultative status: general, special and roster. General consultative status is intended for larger international NGOs whose work encompasses most of the areas addressed by ECOSOC and whose membership and activities have a broad international reach.

For organizations with general consultative status, the relationship is more than simply having an association with the UN. General-status NGOs may attend ECOSOC meetings and, under established procedures, make oral and written contributions, participate in discussions, circulate statements and propose items for consideration on the Council's agenda.

Consultative status also reflects the UN's recognition that governments are not the only source of knowledge and experience needed to address global challenges. Civil society organizations often work directly with communities and bring perspectives and practical experience that can contribute to international conversations.

At the same time, consultative status carries responsibility. Organizations with this status are expected to contribute meaningfully to the purposes and work of the United Nations and to report periodically on their activities.

For UPF, this provides an avenue for bringing the experiences and ideas emerging from its network of Ambassadors for Peace and partner organizations into a wider international conversation.

UPF's work intersects with many of the areas addressed by the United Nations, including interfaith cooperation, sustainable development, strong marriages and families, women's empowerment, conflict mediation and international cooperation. Much of this work takes place at the local level: people of different faiths meeting one another, communities working together on service projects, leaders building relationships across cultural and national boundaries, and families and institutions seeking practical ways to strengthen peace.

United Nations Day offers a reminder that these local efforts are connected to a much larger global vision. The UN Charter begins with a commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person. The Charter also calls for international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

These principles provide common ground for people and organizations working for peace in many different settings.

UPF's General Consultative Status with ECOSOC gives the organization an opportunity to connect its grassroots peacebuilding work with international institutions and conversations. The relationship works in both directions: global goals can inspire local action, while the experiences of communities and civil society can contribute to the broader discussion about how those goals can be achieved.

As United Nations Day is observed on October 24, UPF celebrates not simply an institution, but the continuing effort of people, organizations and nations to find ways to cooperate across differences.

Peace is ultimately built through relationships—and the work of building those relationships continues at every level, from local communities to the international community.

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Ambassador for Peace Spotlight: Valery Merritt 〉

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Ambassador for Peace Spotlight: Valery Merritt



Valery Merritt, a minister of the Church of Scientology and caretaker of the L. Ron Hubbard Landmark Site in Elizabeth, New Jersey, is dedicated to preserving an important chapter in the history of Dianetics and Scientology while creating opportunities for people to learn from its humanitarian legacy.

Located in Elizabeth, the historic home is one of several sites associated with the life and work of L. Ron Hubbard, author, humanitarian, and founder of Dianetics and Scientology. As Hubbard traveled throughout the United States and around the world, he worked in many locations where significant developments in his research took place. A number of these sites have since been restored to reflect the environments in which he lived and worked.

The Elizabeth residence holds particular significance. Following the publication of *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* in May 1950, the first Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation was temporarily headquartered there. It was also at this location that Hubbard presented some of the first public Dianetics lectures and demonstrations.

Today, Valery helps preserve this history and welcomes visitors to the landmark site, offering them an opportunity to step into the setting where an important milestone in Hubbard's work unfolded. Through tours, educational programs, and relationships with community organizations, she helps connect the historical site with broader conversations about humanitarian service and improving society.

As an Ambassador for Peace, Valery's work reflects the importance of building bridges across communities and recognizing the contributions of individuals and organizations working to address social challenges. Her efforts to establish partnerships also create opportunities for people to discover practical tools and approaches that can be applied within their own fields of service.

Preserving a historic place is more than maintaining a building. It can provide a doorway into the ideas, people, and experiences that shaped a movement and invite new generations to consider how those ideas may contribute to the betterment of society. Through her stewardship of the Elizabeth landmark, Valery Merritt is helping keep that history accessible while fostering relationships that can encourage humanitarian engagement and service.

Her work demonstrates one of the important principles of the Ambassador for Peace network: peace is strengthened when people from diverse backgrounds come together, learn from one another, and build partnerships in service to their communities.

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Bishop Ron Thomas of Las Vegas and Rev. Mark Abernathy of Atlanta led an interfaith group of clergy in prayer on Dr. Hak Ja Han's behalf. Featured speakers included former U.S. Representative Dan Burton, Paula White-Cain, former U.S. Ambassador Randy Evans, and Family Federation USA President Rev. Demian Dunkley. Speakers emphasized religious freedom, faith, and the importance of standing together across religious and cultural differences. Rev. Dunkley encouraged participants to look beyond divisions and work together for peace, declaring that America can serve as a hope for the world.

Music contributed to the spirit of unity throughout the program. Gospel legend T.L. Barrett performed a tribute alongside Shinyuh Moon, granddaughter of the Mother of Peace, while gospel artist Wess Morgan performed with a youth backup choir singing "This Little Light of Mine." The gathering also commemorated the 50th anniversary of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's historic 1976 Washington Monument rally through the auction of an original painting by his daughter, Un Jin Moon.

For UPF, the gathering reflected its ongoing commitment to bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together around shared values and a common vision for peace. By creating opportunities for dialogue, prayer, and partnership, the event encouraged faith leaders and guests to strengthen religious freedom, serve their communities, and work together across traditional boundaries for the greater good.

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Edy Iversen 4 hours ago · 0 Likes

God Bless these precious leaders for their great support for Dr. Moon and for religious liberty throughout the world! At this time in history, every religious leader of all faiths must stand together worldwide to stop the travesty of justice that is happening in South Korea. America has a manifest destiny to restore religious freedom to all people, because no one else can.

‹ Walking Side by Side: Peace Road Salisbury

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On September 12, the Peace Road Salisbury 2026 event brought together people from diverse faith communities for a 1.8-mile walk through Salisbury, North Carolina, from Faith Community Church to Parkway Church of God. The event provided an opportunity for participants to build relationships across religious traditions while learning about the vision of peace championed by Father and Mother Moon.

Senior Pastor John Harrison served as emcee, welcoming participants and guiding the program, which opened with music from Canvas Church. Speakers shared messages on faith, service, and the importance of working together for peace. Pastor TJ Smith, Imam Ashraf Ahmed, and second-generation speaker Leniva Loan each offered reflections, while Bishop Greg Morris shared biblical insights and read an official proclamation from Salisbury Mayor Randy Taylor recognizing the occasion. The program also included the appointment of five new Ambassadors for Peace by Rev. Susan Fefferman, expanding the network of community leaders committed to promoting peace and cooperation.

Following the walk, participants gathered at Parkway Church of God for fellowship and a meal prepared by the church. The warm atmosphere continued as attendees shared conversation and expressed enthusiasm about returning with friends for next year's event. A generous donation from an attendee further supported the gathering. Regional leaders, including Dr. Michael and Reiko Jenkins and Dr. Zagery Oliver, expressed their appreciation for the successful event and the relationships developed among participating communities.

The spirit of Peace Road continued beyond the event itself. Pastor Thomas Hoy highlighted the gathering during his Sunday service and wore his Peace Road T-shirt as a visible expression of support. The event also provided an opportunity for individuals who had initially expressed concerns about the gathering to participate and engage directly with the program and its message. Their participation created space for greater understanding and firsthand interaction with people who share a vision of building a more peaceful and unified world.

Peace Road Salisbury demonstrated the power of bringing people together through a simple shared activity. By walking side by side, sharing a meal, listening to one another, and welcoming new Ambassadors for Peace, participants strengthened connections across faith communities and gave practical expression to the belief that peace begins when people choose to walk together toward a common goal.

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Your support is greatly appreciated.

Universal Peace Federation USA is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to achieving world peace by bringing together representatives from the religion, government, civil society, and private sector. An NGO in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, UPF supports the work of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of interfaith peacebuilding, peace education, and the strengthening of marriage and family.

We invite you to join our effort, share your ideas, and contribute to this global effort to build a world of sustainable and lasting peace.

For inquiries about donations, please contact the UPF USA team at info@us.upf.org.

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