

## FFWPU USA: When Belief Becomes a Crime - Japan Dissolves Our Church

Demian Dunkley  
March 28, 2025



FAMILY FEDERATION

### President's Corner

March 28, 2025

---

## When Belief Becomes a Crime — Japan Dissolves Our Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week, something unthinkable happened.

The Tokyo District Court approved the dissolution of our church in Japan—the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification—**despite no criminal wrongdoing.**

This is the first time in Japan's postwar history that a peaceful religion is being erased by state power. And it's happening to us.

*"This isn't just a legal decision. It's a message: Your faith is not welcome here."*

— Rev. Demian Dunkley

Imagine your child being handed a flyer at school that tells them how to report

you—for taking them to church.

This is not fiction. It's Japan, 2025.

Our members in Japan are afraid. Parents are teaching their children not how to pray—but how to stay silent. We're seeing religious freedom vanish in real time.

This is personal. This is global. And we must respond—**together, in faith.**

**Sign the Petition: Defend Religious Freedom**

Want to do more? Share the campaign with your friends and pastors.

**Use this hashtag: #WhenBeliefBecomesACrime**

**But do not worry.** We will stand up. We believe in truth. We believe in love. And we believe in the power of people of faith to stand together when one of us is under attack.

Let us stand for our brothers and sisters in Japan.

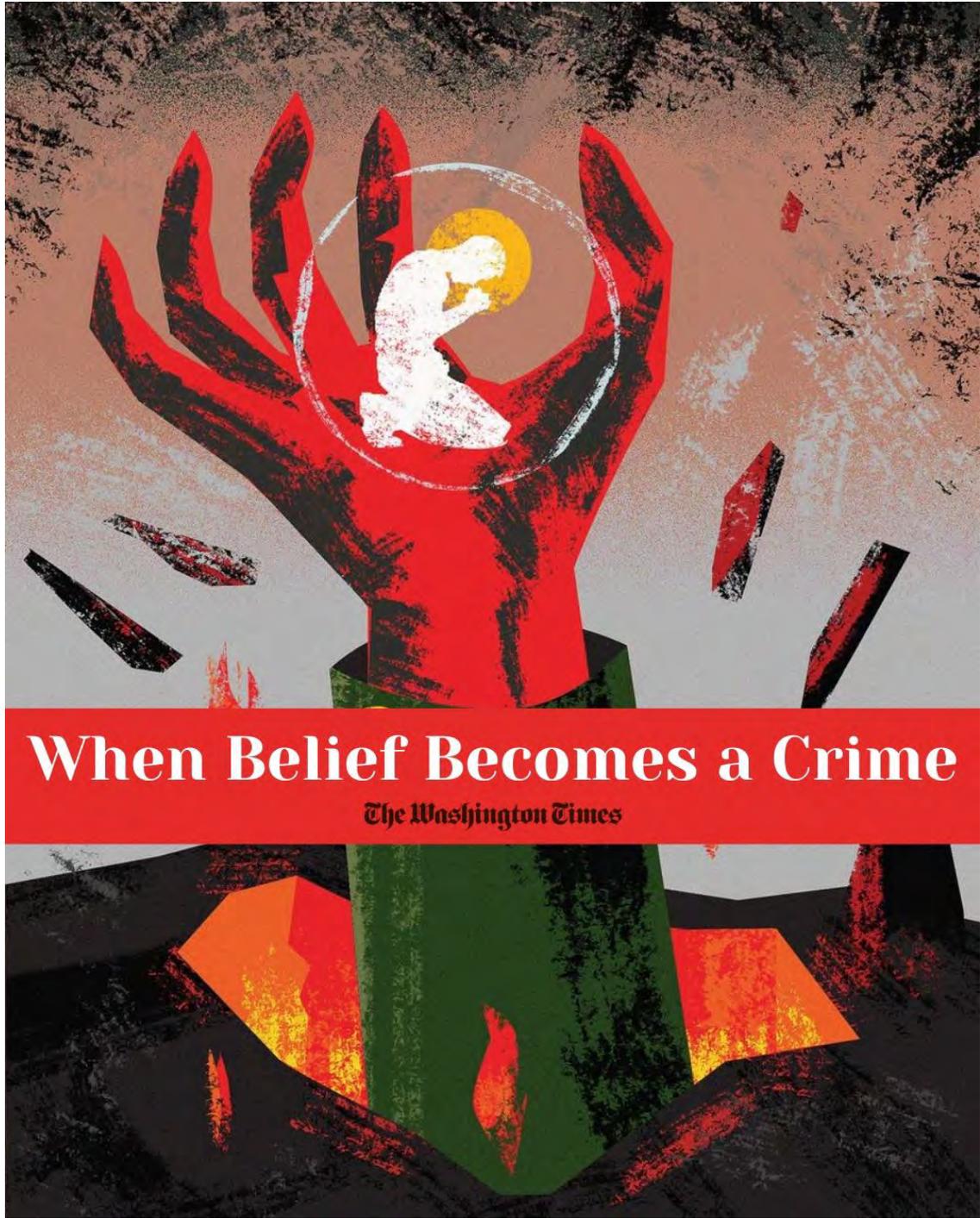
With prayer and resolve,

**Rev. Demian Dunkley**

President, FFWPU USA

---

Read President Dunkley's op-ed in The  
Washington Times



# When Belief Becomes a Crime

*The Washington Times*

[read op-ed](#)

# Religious freedom in Japan is under threat and it's spreading.

Sign the **Petition** to Defend Religious Freedom

[READ THE PETITION](#)

First Name

First Name

Last Name

Last Name

Email

Email address

State

State

Country

United States

Organization (optional)

Organization

[We process your information in accordance with our Privacy Policy.](#)

I agree to privacy policy (required)

Sign





Photo: NPR

# Why should I care? It could happen to you.

[SIGN PETITION](#)



Photo: Washington Times

TAKE ACTION

## Religious freedom for one is freedom for all.

Add your voice of support by signing the petition.

[SIGN PETITION](#)

# ...and spread the word!

DOWNLOAD FLYER

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR ONE IS FREEDOM FOR ALL

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN JAPAN IS UNDER THREAT AND IT'S SPREADING

SIGN THE PETITION  
TO DEFEND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

[bit.ly/pswm-petition](https://bit.ly/pswm-petition)





# Petition to Defend Religious Freedom in Japan

**This petition will be  
sent to  
President Donald J. Trump.**

---

We, the undersigned representatives of many faith communities, affirm that religious freedom is the foundation of all freedoms. We urge you to help Japan uphold this fundamental right and reverse its disturbing shift away from religious liberty.

The U.S. State Department's 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom stated that Japan's request to order the dissolution of the Family Federation, "marked a deviation from the norm, as previously, revocations had only been ordered following violations of criminal law." The churches and religious movements that are being attacked have not violated any criminal law.

A CHERRY BLOSSOM

OF AN OFFER IN FULL BLOOM

SUBSCRIBE NOW

LISTEN NOW

Threat Status podcast: Why are federal officials using Signal?



For subscribers only —  
**Miracles: Investigating the supernatural**  
Jarrod Anderson joins Billy  
Hallowell



**Bold & Blunt: Too few women in politics?**  
Rep. Lisa McClain joins Cheryl  
Chumley



**Will Trump's push to end the Ukraine war succeed?**  
Daniel N. Hoffman joins Threat  
Status

TRENDING: DONALD TRUMP | NBA | CHINA | RUSSIA | UKRAINE | ARMY | EMMANUEL MACRON | NBA | WASHINGTON | CANADA

HOME \ OPINION \ COMMENTARY

# When belief becomes a crime: Religious freedom is under attack in Japan

If Japan can do it, so can anyone else



Illustration on a war on religion by Linas Garsys/The Washington Times [more >](#)



COMMENTARY

By Rev. Demian Dunkley - Thursday, March 27, 2025

## OPINION:

A peaceful religion is being erased by a democratic government.

Imagine your children come home from school with a colorful flyer.

It tells them how to turn you in—for taking them to church.

This isn't fiction. It's [Japan](#), 2025.

For the first time in [Japan's](#) postwar history, the state is dismantling a peaceful religion—without a single criminal conviction. Tell me why.

Our members in [Japan](#) are scared. They're apologizing for something they didn't do. They are worried that their families will be torn apart, and their beliefs used against them

Follow Us



Search



SEE MORE VIDEOS

NEWSLETTER 3X A WEEK

### BEST OF CHERYL CHUMLEY

Get Cheryl Chumley's bold and blunt take on the big issues of the day.

Enter your email address

SIGN UP

You may unsubscribe at any time.

### FRONT PAGE PODCAST



THE WASHINGTON TIMES FRONT PAGE  
March 28, 2025

00:00:00



### LATEST CARTOON



and their beliefs used against them.

I've spoken with members who are hiding their faith and with parents teaching their children not how to pray but how to stay silent at school. This isn't a distant policy issue—it's personal.

On March 25, the Tokyo District Court ruled in favor of [Japan's Ministry of Education \(MEXT\)](#) to dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification \(FFWPU\)](#), also known as the [Unification Church](#) [Japan](#). No crimes. No violence. No law broken. Yet the court has ruled in favor of dissolution, jeopardizing the [church's](#) legal status, assets, and very existence.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement

This wasn't a trial. It was a political takedown.

This is lawfare—the use of legal machinery to eliminate a disfavored group. And if [Japan](#) can do it, so can anyone else.

The setup for this assault began in a moment of national mourning. In July 2022, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated. The killer wasn't a member. His decades-old family grievance was sensationalized into a media frenzy. In the vacuum of grief and political opportunism, our church became the scapegoat.

And into that emotional chaos stepped a long-prepared movement. Within days, radical lawyers and anti-religious activists—many tied to the Japanese Communist Party—launched a coordinated campaign to demonize our church, packaged as public safety. Facts didn't matter. Fear did.

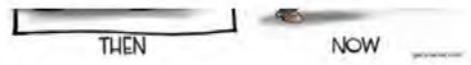
On Oct. 17, 2022, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida publicly admitted [FFWPU](#) could not be dissolved because we had broken no laws. But the very next day, he reversed his statement and gave [MEXT](#) authority to dissolve a religion without a crime. Civil suits, no matter how old, were enough to justify dissolution.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement

In a single day, [Japan](#) quietly crossed a constitutional threshold—and left the door open for any government to do the same.

Let's be clear: Our church has not been convicted of a single crime. We were denied cross-examination. The court relied on decades-old civil suits and unchallenged hearsay.



#### STORY TOPICS

**POLITICS**  
**RELIGION\_BELIEF**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**JAPAN**  
**FAMILY FEDERATION FOR WORLD PEACE AND UNIFICATION**

And when questions were raised about the integrity of the evidence, the silence was loud. On March 13, 2025, Sen. Satoshi Hamada publicly asked whether [MEXT](#) had submitted falsified witness testimony. The [Ministry](#) offered no denial. Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga called it “the crime of the century,” warning that “if [Japan](#) grants the order based on fabricated evidence, it will be a disgrace to the world.”

If this ruling stands, every [FFWPU](#) church property, school, and bank account of FFWPU Japan will be seized. Our legal identity will vanish. Public worship will be crushed under bureaucracy. Families will lose spiritual homes. Children will lose their sense of belonging.

---

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement

---

Religious scholar Massimo Introvigne said plainly: “If this is not legalized theft, I don’t know what is.”

I’ve met young members who whisper their faith in public—not because they’re ashamed, but because they’ve been taught that silence is safety. An entire faith is being driven underground—not for what we did, but for what we believe.

And it’s already happening. Today, our members can’t even rent a meeting room under our name. Echoing what once happened to Jewish communities in the U.S., they’re being blacklisted—not for actions, but for affiliation.

This is happening in a respected democracy. If [Japan](#) can erase a religious group without a single conviction, it gives cover for others to do the same. And they are. Rwanda and Kenya have all taken steps to restrict minority religions—citing [Japan’s](#) example. Religious freedom in [Japan](#) is under attack. And it’s spreading.

---

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement

---

The decision to dissolve FFWPU Japan isn’t about compliance or victims. It’s about eliminating a voice. This isn’t just religious discrimination. It’s democratic betrayal. It’s a vendetta against our church that started over 40 years ago.

The legal architects behind this assault have operated for decades under the banner of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales—a group whose explicit mission, since its founding in

the 1980s, has been to dismantle our faith entirely. In 1987, one of their leaders, Hiroshi Yamaguchi, declared, “The aim of the lawyers’ association is to convince the [Ministry of Education](#) to revoke the religious corporation status of the [Unification Church](#).”

In 2022, Japanese Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii proudly declared this campaign “the final war against the [Unification Church](#).”

It seems that our true crime is our pro-God, anti-communist stance.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement

The world should pay attention. This is a coordinated political assault—driven by ideology, not justice—executed through a court ruling that ignored facts, dismissed warnings, and rewrote the rules of democracy.

I don’t believe all of the lawyers, politicians, or media who pushed this are evil. But I believe they all forgot something essential: That a democracy isn’t measured by how it treats the powerful—but by how it treats the powerless.

The U.S. State Department’s 2023 Religious Freedom Report called [Japan’s](#) use of civil claims to justify dissolution “a deviation from the norm” in democratic governance.

Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, said, “This order to dissolve the [Unification Church](#) is a terrible assault on religious freedom and liberty in [Japan](#). It is an unprecedented attack on a faith organization which has broken no laws and caused no harm.”

As president of FFWPU USA, I say to the world: This is not the time for silence. This is bigger than our church. Religious freedom is under attack—not only in [Japan](#). This is about the future of religious liberty everywhere.

We challenge this ruling and ask those who value freedom to speak now, not because we practice the same faith but because we share the same freedom to believe.

If a government can outlaw belief without a crime, then no faith is safe—and no democracy is either.

When belief becomes a crime, the world has lost its soul.

• *Dr. Demian Dunkley is the Chairman and President of [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification \(FFWPU\) USA](#). Driven by a deep commitment to fostering global unity and peace, he brings over two decades of international leadership experience to his role.*

The Washington Times

**BEST OF CHERYL CHUMLEY**

Get Cheryl Chumley's bold and blunt take on the big issues of the day.

SIGN UP

You may unsubscribe any time.

Copyright © 2025 The Washington Times, LLC. [Click here for reprint permission.](#)

Please read our [comment policy](#) before commenting.

 **Comments** 6

Newest ▼



[Sign up](#) [Log in](#)

Join the conversation...

 Aa

Log in and post

 **Dareka** 🏆 Top Commenter

Question 1: Did the now-banned Unification "Church" in Japan violate campaign finance laws? Yes or no? Did they surreptitiously staff one party only (the ruling party) and help with financing, staffing and outreach, in violation of the electoral laws of Japan? Did they regularly harass and pressure Japanese members of the "church" to donate more, and more, and more of their time, and cash, to the "church" like a cult would do, and like the Unification Church at large often does, as has been DEMONSTRATED in a Japanese court of law? Question 2: Is the Unification "Church" tied directly to the writer of this commentary and his parent org, the so-called "FFWPU, USA"? In fact, does the Church not PAY this man's SALARY, a unique and obvious conflict of interest? Question 3: Is THIS newspaper ALSO directly OWNED by the Family that created said Unification Church? Question 4: why is there NO disclaimer of any direct conflict of interest informing your attack on Japan's response to the lawbreaking practices of the Unification Church in Japan, as any respectable "news" source would certainly do?

Reply  🙌 1

6 hours ago

2 replies

Show more replies / 2 remaining

 **HarryHuntington** 🏆 Hall of Famer

When the Founders of the US passed the first amendment they did not mean for it to apply to the states. Americas founders believed that states had the right to create a state religion and to outlaw religions that were not in line with the states values. Those are the principles the nation was founded on.

Reply  🙌 1

15 hours ago

1 reply

Show more replies / 1 remaining