



THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

**A Case for Religious Freedom:
A Faith-based Perspective**

*Spring Meeting
April 10, 2018*

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THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

A Case for Religious Freedom: A Faith-based Perspective

- ❖ IRLA is a faith-based organization, not just a non-government organization, not a government agency.
- ❖ Seventh-day Adventists who charted the IRLA in 1893, are a restorationist movement mandated to provide a biblical and theological foundation and expressions of a comprehensive worldview which informs all aspects of human existence and experience.



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- ❖ IRLA has something unique to offer the world in understanding and promoting religious freedom.
- ❖ As a matter of analogy, we may highlight the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education has been brilliantly articulated since Ellen G. White.



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- ❖ “Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man.



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- ❖ It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”



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- ❖ A similar project exists regarding a philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist understanding and promotion of religious freedom. It does not originate in human experience. It does not take its root in any nation's story but in God's revelation.



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- ❖ The roots of our understanding of religious freedom do not stem from Greek philosophy, the European Enlightenment, British and Scottish philosophers, the French Revolution or the American experiment. They are not the result of Classical Republicanism or liberal theory whether Classical Liberalism or Neoliberalism which tends to reduce the foundation of liberty not natural rights but rather to the demands of the “Market.”



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- ❖ The roots of IRLA promotion of religious freedom are anchored in God the creator of freedom.
- ❖ Moreover, religious liberty is part of the fact of being created in God's image.
- ❖ The whole Bible, as history of salvation, is about the restoration of the image of God in human beings.



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- ❖ The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4)



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- ❖ the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme, --man's uplifting,--the power of God, "which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57. {Ed 125.2}



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- ❖ Therefore, when we commit to promote freedom of religion or belief, we are in fact participating in what God is doing in the world.
- ❖ In essence, we are involved in promoting the restoration of the image of God in all human beings. This restoration is an eternal project. It has no end. Only eternal life can provide a forum for its unfolding.



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Freedom is part of the image of God.



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- ❖ Justice is.
 - ❖ Righteousness is.
 - ❖ Peace is.
 - ❖ Holiness is.
-
- ❖ When any one of these attributes is missing human experience becomes flawed, incomplete, and beneath God's given dignity.



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- ❖ God's overarching will for humans is an eternal covenant of fellowship love with those he created in his image. This covenant of fellowship requires freedom for love cannot be forced.
- ❖ God created freedom for love to be possible.



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- ❖ For Seventh-day Adventists, a faith-based organization, the deep difference between our understanding of religious freedom and a socio-political understanding of religious freedom is the difference between justice and righteousness.
- ❖ It is a qualitative difference but also a difference in degree.
- ❖ More should be expected of Adventist advocacy of religious freedom.



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How does this unique understanding of religious
freedom shape the activities of the
International Religious Liberty Association?

8th WORLD CONGRESS



SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

APRIL 10, 2018

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

PROMOTING FREEDOM OF
RELIGION OR BELIEF FOR
ALL PEOPLE, EVERYWHERE

A close-up photograph of a person's hand gripping vertical metal bars, likely in a prison or detention facility. In the background, a book with a gold-embossed cover is visible, partially obscured by the bars. The image is used as a background for the text overlay.

The IRLA promotes
religious freedom for
all people through:

- Contributions to public
debate and discourse
.....
- Relationship building
and advocacy
.....
- Events and initiatives

*"Now, more
than ever, we
need a wholistic
understanding
of religious
freedom."*



8TH WORLD CONGRESS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ■ AUGUST 22-24, 2017



549 ATTENDEES
REPRESENTING
SOME 64
COUNTRIES





Public officials from Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, the Philippines, Russia, Spain, Ukraine, the United States, and Zambia



Faith Leaders – Baptist, Mormon, Lutheran, Adventist, Mennonite, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Evangelical

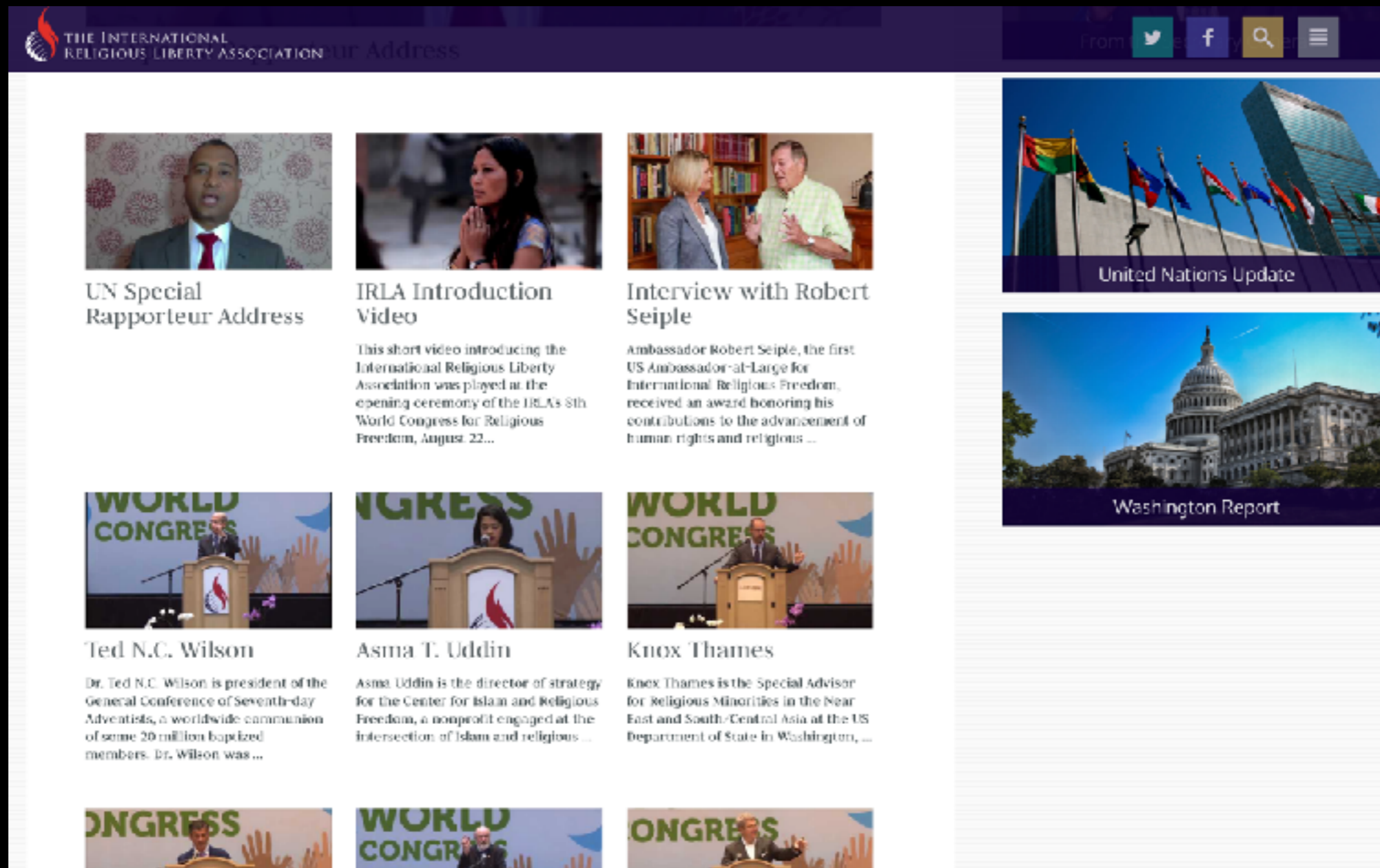




Diverse Perspectives – Academic, Religious, Cultural



Post-Congress Resources



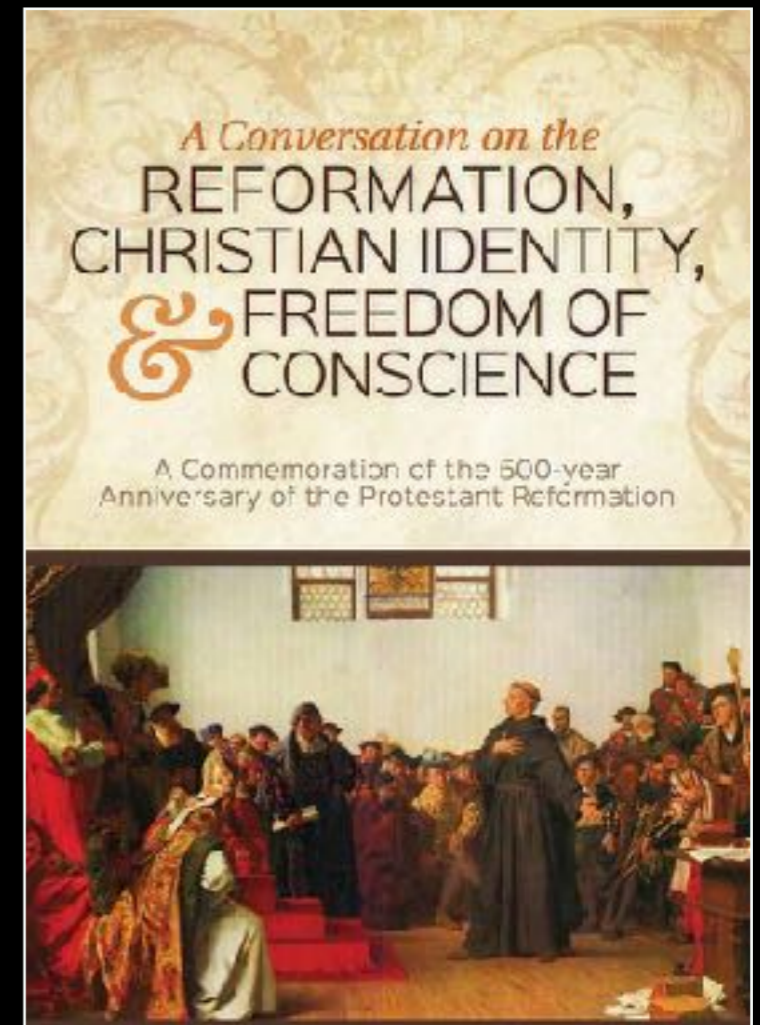
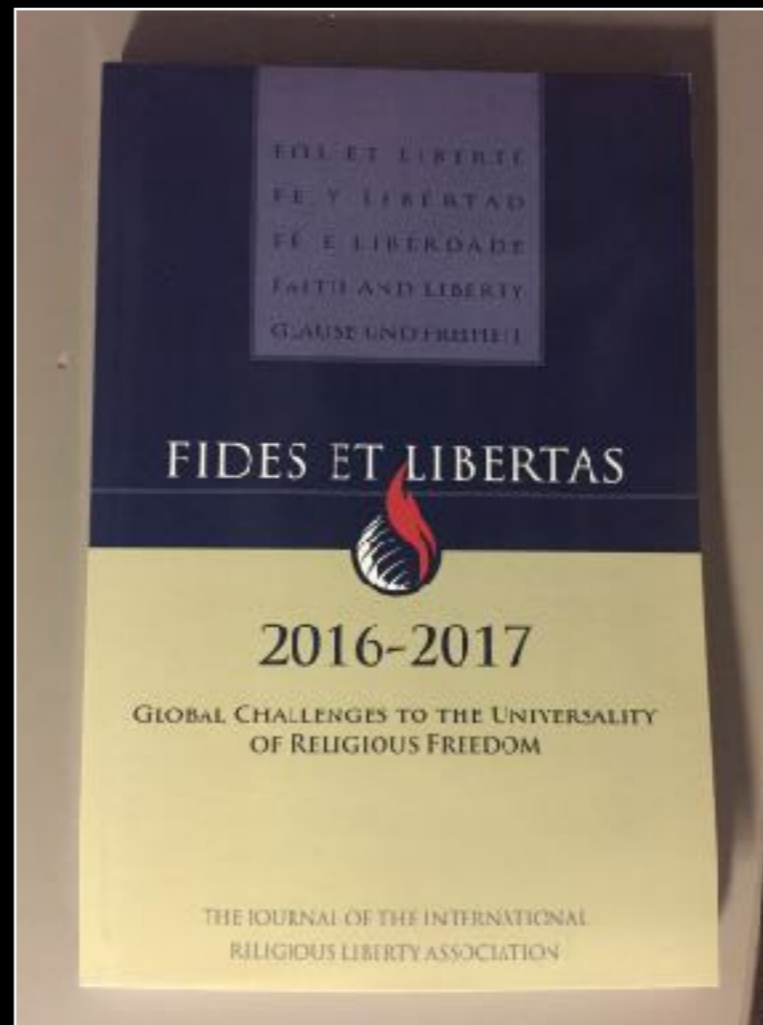
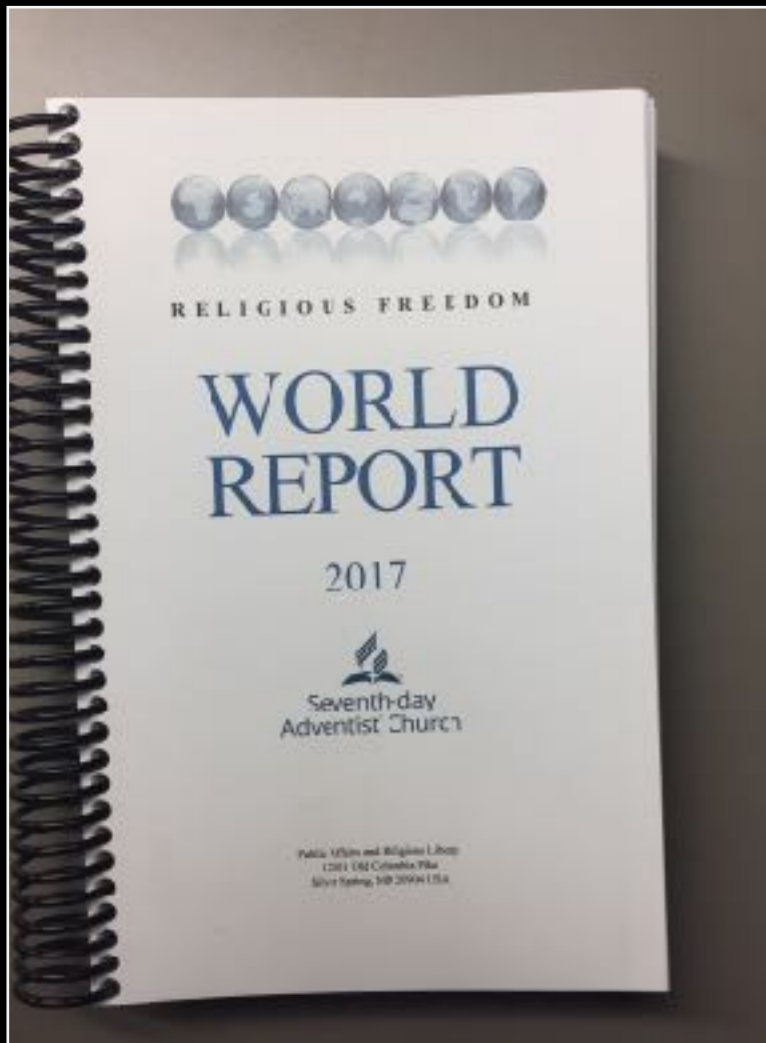
- Videos of presentations are online at www.irla.org
- A Congress publication is currently in development

IRLA Meeting of Experts, Princeton Theological Seminary, The Universality of Human Rights, August 2017





Fourth United Nations Symposium on
the Role of Religion and Faith-based
Organizations in International Affairs



Recent IRLA Publications

Third All Africa Religious Liberty Congress and Festival

Kigali, Rwanda

September 13-15, 2018



3RD ALL AFRICA CONGRESS



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

and the
Building of
a Tolerant and
Peaceful Continent

Save the Date
September 13-15,
2018
Kigali, Rwanda

www.aarla.org



**ALL AFRICA RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY CONGRESS &
FESTIVAL**

START: 13 SEP 2018 07:00 AFRICA/KIGALI
FINISH: 15 SEP 2018 10:00 3

