



## Face of Freedom

August 18, 2008



Welcome to *Face of Freedom*!

*Face of Freedom* provides a weekly analysis of the status of religious freedom around the world. This newsletter also informs readers of sensitive events and brewing crises that affect fundamental rights across the globe.

We hope that we will be able to simultaneously raise awareness of critical issues pertaining to religious freedom as well as engage more members of the community in our important work and mission.

### Quick Links

[www.religionandpolicy.org](http://www.religionandpolicy.org)

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### The Latest in

#### The Grieboski Report

Wednesday, August 13, 2008:

[Shrine dispute provokes religious violence in Kashmir](#)

Tuesday, August 12, 2008:

[Healthcare workers have First Amendment Rights, too](#)

Monday, August 11, 2008:

[Crisis in the Caucasus](#)

## PC Corner

The President's Circle is a group of unique investors from diverse backgrounds who support the Institute's mission of promoting religious freedom around the world. Members provide a \$250 - \$500 a month investment. Our Leadership Council Members invest \$1,000 a month. These elite investors are at the forefront of protecting freedom, advancing democracy, and guaranteeing security and stability in the world. Each member can also take part in Institute trips, conferences and events that can take them around the world.

This new section will highlight the work of the Institute's President's Circle and Leadership Council Members, who help make our fight for freedom possible.

If you would like to join the President's Circle or Leadership Council please feel free to contact Sarah Bishop at telephone number (202) 835 8760 or by e-mail at [bishop@religionandpolicy.org](mailto:bishop@religionandpolicy.org).

## Reaching beyond the day-to-day

New Leadership Council member Virginia Lee wanted to find ways to reach beyond her dental surgery to help others. So in July, she attended the Institute's Leadership Training, which introduces participants to global human rights, religious freedom and policy issues, and trains them on how Washington works. Lee said she was impressed by Institute President Joseph K. Grieboski's breadth of knowledge and dedication.

"It impressed me how such a small group takes on the world (regardless of the political opinions) and makes a difference for religious freedom and freedom of thought," Dr. Lee said. "The Institute made me realize that my day-to-day problems were so insignificant compared to the world's issues and that one person or group can truly make a difference."

The Institute's passion for human rights is buoyed by the passion of supporters such as Dr. Lee—without them, we could not continue the fight for fundamental rights.

Dr. Lee was born and raised in York, Pa. She received a Bachelors Degree in Biology from Franklin and Marshall College, and went on to receive her D.M.D. from Temple University in Philadelphia. Following dental school, she received her Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery training from University of Maryland Medical Systems & Adam Crowley's Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore, Md. She started the practice in 1998 and it continues now as Capital Oral & Facial Surgery Center.



## The Institute in the Media: Weighing in on China

Last week Institute President Joseph K. Grieboski appeared on public radio's *Interfaith Voices*, a national program devoted to fostering interfaith dialogue and discussing current events through the perspective of different religious traditions. With the Beijing Olympics in full swing, Grieboski tackled "*Religious Freedom (or the lack thereof) in China*," and explained the Chinese government's basis for denying its citizens religious freedom.



He also discussed with host Maureen Friedler (pictured left) the persecution suffered by Roman Catholics, house church Protestants and Uighur Muslims in the country. House church Protestants, for example, have endured security forces chaining their doors as they worship inside and burning down the building. Uighur Muslims have suffered increased crackdowns and surveillance from the central government following the 9/11 attacks.

Grieboski explained that for Beijing, allowing freedom of belief amounts to a national security issue: whereas the Chinese government thinks of itself as the final arbiter on all matters relating to its citizens, religious believers would attribute such ultimate authority only to God. "If you have the ability to question the authority of the government, then you have the ability, potentially, to denounce that government, to act against it, or to ignore it," Grieboski said.

To listen to the entire 10-minute segment, please visit the website of [Interfaith Voices](#).

## Institute advocacy works like "tonic" for Vietnam's Buddhists



The Supreme Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, Thich Huyen Quang, died last month aged 87 after suffering 30 years in detention, either in prison or under house arrest, for his defense of human rights and religious freedom. The Institute sent a letter of condolence and support to church followers, which had an unexpected effect.

Leaders of the Unified Buddhist Church struggled to keep the government from interfering in the Patriarch's funeral. Letters like the Institute's helped them fight the battle, according to the church's new Patriarch, Thich Quang Do. On August 17, he was named the church's new Patriarch in a ceremony in Houston, the U.S. location being necessary because of government restrictions on travel for UBCV leaders.

During the funeral ceremony, "I waged peaceful resistance with Buddhist monks, nuns and lay-followers until the authorities were obliged to withdraw," Thich Quang Do (pictured right) wrote to the Institute from Ho Chi Minh City (which he identified as Saigon), in a letter dated Aug. 11.

"But most of all," Do added, "I wanted to stress that we could not have won this battle without you. I believe firmly that it was thanks to powerful and timely letters such as yours that the Communist leaders did not interfere in the funeral. "Over twenty years ago, Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang said that international pressure was tonic medicine—it gives us strength to continue and it boosts our morale. The same is true today. We are not afraid to stand up against tyranny. But we know that we cannot win this battle alone."

The Institute is grateful for new patriarch's letter—he too remains under virtual detention in Ho Chi Minh City. The Communist government has persecuted the independent UBCV with harassment, arrests and arbitrary detentions for the last three decades.

(Photo of Thich Huyen Quang from Amnesty International; Photo of Thich Quang Do from AFP)



## A Message to Our Investors

The Institute on Religion and Public Policy would like to extend its sincerest appreciation for your continued support. Your contributions allow us to continue the fight of promoting religious freedom throughout the world. It is because of supporters such as you that the Institute was nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize – its second nomination.

As you see every day in the news, religious persecution is still rampant around the world and being a small non-profit it is becoming increasingly difficult for organizations such as ours to fully implement our programs and combat it effectively. We ask that you allow us to continue the fight of promoting religious freedom by providing us with an investment. Your investment goes a long way to supporting the efforts of the Institute.

For more information please contact Sarah Bishop at telephone number (202) 835-8760 or email her at [bishop@religionandpolicy.org](mailto:bishop@religionandpolicy.org).

