

## **THE TANDEM PROJECT**

<http://www.tandemproject.com>.

[info@tandemproject.com](mailto:info@tandemproject.com)

### **UNITED NATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF**

*Separation of Religion or Belief & State*

### **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Ninth Session U.N. Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (22 Nov.-3Dec. 2010)

#### **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

The *United States of America Universal Periodic Review* will be held by the UN Human Rights Council on Friday 26 November from 9:00 -12:00. Open this link to access reports for the *United States of America Universal Periodic Review: National Report; Compilation prepared by OHCHR; Summary prepared by OHCHR; Interactive Dialogue; Comments & Answers; Final Remarks*.

HRC Web Cast: *Friday 26 November 2010*.

Ninth Session Archives: *Tuesday 30 November 2010*

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process launched by the UN Human Rights Council in 2008 to review the human rights obligations and responsibilities of all UN Member States by 2011. Click for an Introduction to the Universal Periodic Review, Process and News:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/BasicFacts.aspx>

The primary international human rights instruments on freedom of religion or belief are:

*Article 18 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.*

General Comment 22 on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

[http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/9a30112c27d1167cc12563ed004d8f15?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/9a30112c27d1167cc12563ed004d8f15?Opendocument)

The 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief [http://www.tandemproject.com/program/81\\_dec.htm](http://www.tandemproject.com/program/81_dec.htm).

The 1981 UN Declaration is a one of a kind Human Rights Concordat *between nations and all religions or beliefs*.

#### **THE TANDEM PROJECT FOLLOW-UP**

*The Tandem Project Follow-up* builds on twenty-seven *Community Strategies*, action proposals by organizations in 1986 to implement Article 18 of the CCPR and the 1981 UN Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief: <http://www.tandemproject.com/tolerance.pdf> .

These *Community Strategies* are consolidated for *The Tandem Project Follow-up* into three generic proposals on integration, dialogue and education for *Universal Periodic Reviews* and exchange of information worldwide with organizations on international, national and local levels.

**1.** Develop model integrated approaches to International Human Rights Standards on Freedom of Religion or Belief at national and local levels to test the reality of implementation as appropriate to the constitutions, legal systems and cultures of each country.

2. Use International Human Rights Standards on Freedom of Religion or Belief as appropriate to each culture and venue for inclusive and genuine dialogue on freedom of religion or belief.
3. Apply International Human Rights Standards on Freedom of Religion or Belief in education curricula as appropriate in all grade levels, teaching children, from the very beginning, that their own religion is one out of many and it is a personal choice for everyone to adhere to the religion or belief by which he or she feels most inspired, or to adhere to no religion or belief at all.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Preparation for the United States of America Universal Periodic Review should include an assessment of the excellent *Conclusions and Recommendations* made by Mr. Abdelfattah, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, in his January report to the United Nations (E/CN.4/1999/58/Add.1). An assessment would research how many of his recommendations were implemented by the United States in the past twelve years. The Tandem Project will exchange information on this recommendation with the persons and organizations who contributed to the Amor 1998 report (see Attachment: SR Visit to the United States of America).**

**The U.S. State Department in its National Report should extend an invitation to the present UN Special Rapporteur to make an assessment visit to upgrade the Amor report on human rights and freedom of religion or belief in the United States.**

**In 1998 the U.S. Congress passed the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 creating an Office on International Freedom in the U.S. Department of State and a United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/index.htm>. Public Law 106-55 mandates the U.S. State Department and U.S. Commission to report on international religious freedom in other countries and not on the United States.**

**President Obama launched the White House Council for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships calling it the “moral center” for his administration in the delivery of domestic social services and dialogue between faiths in the United States. The Tandem Project recommends organizations affiliated with the White House Council respond to the Tandem Project *Survey Questionnaire* (see attachment) as a checklist to assess how inclusive and genuine their approaches are to international human rights law on freedom of religion or belief at local levels.**

**The U.S. State Department, U.S. Commission and White House Council might collaborate on ways to integrate foreign and domestic programs be in their approach to human rights and freedom of religion or belief in preparation for the United States of America Universal Periodic Review: [Universal Periodic Review & Freedom of Religion or Belief](#).**

**The United Nations in 1968 deferred work on drafting a “core” International Convention on the Elimination of Religious Intolerance because of the sensitivity and complexity of reconciling a human rights treaty with dissonant worldviews and voices on religion or belief. History: [United Nations History – Freedom of Religion or Belief](#).**

**The Tandem Project recommends the United States of America in the National Report for the Universal Periodic Review, call for renewing the draft by proposing a “core” legally binding International Convention on Freedom of Religion or Belief.**

***The Tandem Project Follow-up* recommendations will be updated after 26 November 2010.**

## EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

*The Tandem Project Follow-up* seeks an exchange of information for Universal Periodic Reviews to bridge human rights proclaimed in treaties at the international level with the reality of implementation at national and local levels.

Government and non-governmental organizations with expertise in the United States will be asked for advice on issues of concern relating to international human rights and freedom of religion or belief **after** the United States Universal Periodic Review.

**Stakeholder Letters:** Submitted for USA Periodic Review:  
To be posted on Friday 26 November 2010.

**Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief:** Click on Country visits: United States of America (E/CN.4/1998/6/Add.2). <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/index.htm>

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

The Tandem Project will use the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief 1998 report (above) as a base indicator for a perspective on the United States of America

**Excerpts** from the January 1998 visit by Mr. Abdelfattah Amor. See attachment: *SR Visit to United States of America* for the full report to the United Nations.

1. From 22 January to 6 February 1998, the Special Rapporteur on the question of religious intolerance visited the United States of America in the exercise of his mandate. During his mission, he went to Washington (22 January, 24-27 January, 5 and 6 February), Chicago (23 January), New York (27-28 January), Atlanta (29 January), Salt Lake City (30 January), Los Angeles (31 January-1 February) and Arizona (Phoenix and Black Mesa, 24 February).
2. The Special Rapporteur had talks with representatives of the State Department (including Thomas R. Pickering, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and various other officials) and of its Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad; he also met officials from the Departments of Justice (including the Hate Crime Task Force and Office of the Legal Counsel), the Interior and Education (Office of NonPublic Education), the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Equal Employment Opportunity Council. In addition, he had talks with Sandra Day O'Connor and Stephen Breyer, Justices of the Supreme Court, to whom he is particularly grateful.
3. The organization of official meetings presented problems inasmuch as the State Department confined its assistance to meetings held at the federal level, declaring that it was not competent to help with the Special Rapporteur's visits to the states; this highly regrettable lack of cooperation meant that few meetings with official state representatives were arranged. In fact, the meetings with the Governor of Utah, certain administrations, various committees (concerned with such matters as human rights or hate crimes) and legislators came about through the assistance of the New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, nongovernmental organizations and private individuals.
4. The Special Rapporteur also had consultations with a great number of nongovernmental organizations in the field of human rights and with representatives of most religions and beliefs: Native Americans, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Jehovah's Witnesses, SeventhDay Adventists, Mormons, Baha'is, Scientologists, atheists, etc. An essential part was played in the success of this mission by the assistance of nongovernmental organizations and private individuals, including in particular: **Michael Roan of the NGO Tandem Project in**

**Minneapolis;** Craig Mousin of DePaul University in Chicago; John Witte Jr. of Emory University in Atlanta; Cole Durham of Brigham Young University in Utah; Sue Nichols, chairman of the NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief in New York; Jeremy Gunn of the United States Institute for Peace in Washington; Andrea Carmen of the NGO International Indian Treaty Council; Salam AlMarayati of the Muslim Public Affairs Council and the Interreligious Council of Southern California in Los Angeles; the International League for Human Rights; the International Religious Liberty Association; and the American Jewish Committee. To all of these the Special Rapporteur would like to express his thanks. His thanks also go to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

#### USA – Religious Demography

These 1998 demographics need to be updated for the USA-UPR report. See example: China – Universal Periodic Review & Freedom of Religion or Belief

#### ANNEX

#### **Membership of religious groups in the United States 1**

Many groups keep careful records; others only estimate. Not all groups report annually. Christian Church membership figures reported in this table are inclusive and refer to all “members”, not simply full communicants or confirmed members. Definitions of “member”, however, vary from one denomination to another. Only data reported within the past 10 years are included.

The number of houses of worship appears in parentheses. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the group declines to make membership figures public. Groups reporting fewer than 5,000 members are not included. If membership numbers are not given, only those Churches with 50 or more houses of worship are listed.

#### **Religious group Members**

##### **Adventist Churches:**

Advent Christian Church (317) 27,100

Church of God General Conference

(Oregon, IL; Morrow, GA) (88) 5,040

Seventh-Day Adventist Church (4,297) 790,731

**American Rescue Workers** (15) 8,000

**Apostolic Christian Churches of America** (80) 11,450

**Baha’i Faith** 130,000 2

##### **Baptist Churches:**

American Baptist Association (1,705) 250,000

American Baptist Churches in the USA (5,823) 1,517,400

Baptist Bible Fellowship International (3,600) 1,500,000

Baptist General Conference (857) 135,008

Baptist Missionary Association of America (1,355) 231,191

Conservative Baptist Association of America (1,084) 200,000

Free Will Baptist, National Association of America (2,491) 213,716

General Association of General Baptists (876) 74,156

General Association of Regular Baptists Churches (1,458) 136,380

National Baptist Convention of America (2,500) 3,500,000

National Baptist Convention, USA (33,000) 8,200,000

National Missionary Baptist Convention of America\* 2,500,000  
 North American Baptist Conference (263) 43,928  
 Progressive National Baptist Convention (2,000) 2,500,000  
 Separate Baptists in Christ (100) 8,000  
 Southern Baptist Convention (40,039) 15,663,296  
**Brethren in Christ Church (200) 18,529**  
**Brethren (German Baptists):**  
 Brethren Church (Ashland, OH) (121) 13,578  
 Church of the Brethren (1,114) 143,121  
 Grace Brethren Churches, Fellowship of (273) 39,511  
 Old German Baptist Brethren (57) 5,623  
**Buddhist Churches of America 780,000 2/**  
**Christian Brethren (Plymouth Brethren) (1,150) 98,000**  
**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (4,036) 929,725**  
**Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (5,579) 1,070,616**  
**Christian Congregation (1,431) 113,259**  
**Christian and Missionary Alliance (1,957) 307,366**  
**Christian Union, Churches of Christ in (240) 10,400**  
**Church of Christ, Scientist (2,400) \***  
**Church of the United Brethren in Christ (234) 24,095**  
**Churches of Christ (13,020) 1,655,500**  
**Churches of God:**  
 Churches of God, General Conference (349) 31,745  
 Church of God (Anderson, IN) (2,307) 224,061  
 Church of God (Seventh Day), Denver, CO (161) 6,000  
 Church of God by Faith (145) 8,235  
 Church of God, Mountain Assembly (118) 6,140  
**Church of the Living God (170) 42,000**  
**Church of the Nazarene (5,135) 601,900**  
**Community Churches, International Council of (517) 250,000**  
**Congregational Christian Churches, National Association of (426) 70,000**  
**Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (201) 36,864**  
**Eastern Orthodox Churches:**  
 American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church (78) 12,541  
 Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of  
 North America (184) 300,000  
 Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East,  
 North American Diocese (22) 120,000  
 Armenian Apostolic Church of America (28) 180,000  
 Armenian Church of America, Diocese of the (72) 414,000  
 Coptic Orthodox Church (85) 180,000  
 Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America  
 (approx. 500) \*  
 Orthodox Church in America (600) 2,000,000  
 Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (37) 65,000  
 Russian Orthodox Church in the USA, Patriarchal  
 Parishes (38) 9,780  
 Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (147) \*  
 Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA & Canada (68) 67,000  
 Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch (17) 32,500  
 Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America (27) 5,000

**Episcopal Church (7,415)** 2,536,550  
**Evangelical Church (132)** 12,444  
**Evangelical Congregational Church (150)** 23,422  
**Evangelical Covenant Church\*** 91,458  
**Evangelical Free Church of America (1,224)** 242,619  
**Friends:**  
 Evangelical Friends International-North American Region (92) 8,666  
 Friends General Conference (602) 31,415  
 Friends United Meeting (503) 43,680  
**Full Gospel Fellowship of Churches and Ministers International (650)** 195,000  
**General Church of the New Jerusalem (34)** 5,587  
**Grace Gospel Fellowship (128)** 60,000  
**Hindu** 910,000 2/  
**Independent Fundamental Churches of America (670)** 69,857  
**Islam** 5,100,000 2/  
**Jehovah's Witnesses (10,541)** 966,243  
**Jewish organizations:**  
 Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform) (876) 1,300,000 2/  
 Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (1,200) 1,000,000 2/  
 United Synagogues of Conservative Judaism, (800) 2,000,000 2/  
**Latter-Day Saints:**  
 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) (10,417) 4,711,500  
 Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (1,160) 177,779  
**Lutheran Churches:**  
 Apostolic Lutheran Church of America (60) 7,700  
 Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (118) 24,906  
 Church of the Lutheran Confession (70) 8,783  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (10,955) 5,190,489  
 Evangelical Lutheran Synod (135) 22,371  
 Free Lutheran Congregations, Association of (230) 30,769  
 Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (57) 12,097  
 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (6,154) 2,594,555  
 Lutheran Churches, American Association of (91) 17,973  
 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (1,252) 412,478  
**Mennonite Churches:**  
 Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches (95) 6,968  
 Church of God in Christ (Mennonite) (96) 11,037  
 Hutterian Brethren (398) 41,600  
 Mennonite Brethren Churches: The Conference of (147) 19,218  
 Mennonite Church (986) 90,812  
 Mennonite Church: The General Conference (268) 35,852  
 Old Order Amish Church (898) 80,820  
**Methodist Churches:**  
 African Methodist Episcopal Church (8,000) 3,500,000  
 African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (3,098) 1,230,842  
 Evangelical Methodist Church (132) 8,500  
 Free Methodist Church of North America (1,068) 74,707  
 Primitive Methodist Church, USA (78) 7,234

Southern Methodist Church (127) 7,669  
United Methodist Church (36,361) 8,538,662  
The Wesleyan Church (USA) (1,624) 115,867  
**Metropolitan Community Churches, Universal Fellowship of (291) 30,000**  
**Missionary Church (315) 29,542**

**Moravian Churches:**

Moravian Church in America, Northern Province (95) 27,656  
Moravian Church in America, Southern Province (56) 21,513

**National Organization of the New Apostolic Church of North America (554) 41,863**

**Pentecostal Churches:**

Apostolic Faith Mission Church of God (26) 11,450  
Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God (162) 12,390  
Assemblies of God (11,823) 2,387,982  
Bible Church of Christ (6) 6,850  
Church of God (Cleveland, TN) (6,060) 753,230  
Church of God in Christ (15,300) 5,499,875  
Church of God in Prophecy (1,961) 72,859  
Elim Fellowship (170) 21,038  
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (1,742) 227,307  
International Pentecostal Church of Christ (73) 5,411  
International Pentecostal Holiness Church (1,653) 157,163  
Open Bible Standards Cs. (361) 45,988  
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (1,760) 1,000,000  
Pentecostal Church of God (1,224) 119,200  
Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church (149) 12,640  
United Pentecostal Church International (3,790) \*

**Polish National Catholic Church (143) 50,000**

1. Sources: Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches 1997: Prepared and Edited for the Communication Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ, Kenneth B. Bedell (ed.), National Council of Churches of Christ, Abingdon Press: 1997; World Almanac, 1997.
2. Based: on reliable estimates; figures from other sources may vary.

**Presbyterian**

**Churches:**

Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church (General Synod) (207) 38,996  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church (783) 87,896  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church (177) 56,449  
Korean Presbyterian Church in America (203) 26,988  
Orthodox Presbyterian Church (189) 21,131  
Presbyterian Church in America (1,299) 267,764  
Presbyterian Church (USA) (11,361) 3,669,489  
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (70) 5,657

**Reformed Churches:**

Christian Reformed Church in North America (716) 206,789  
Hungarian Reformed Church in America (27) 9,780  
Protestant Reformed Churches in America (27) 6,318  
Reformed Church in America (908) 306,312  
United Church of Christ (6,145) 1,472,213

**Reformed Episcopal Church (102) 6,084**

**Roman Catholic Church (19,726) 60,280,454**

**Salvation Army (1,264)** 453,150

**Unitarian Universalist Association of North America (1,039)** 209,129

**United Brethren in Christ (239)** 24,671

---

**The Tandem Project** is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1986 to build understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity, and to prevent discrimination in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief. The Tandem Project has sponsored multiple conferences, curricula, reference materials and programs on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion - and 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

*The Tandem Project is a UN NGO in Special Consultative Status with the  
Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

*Surely one of the best hopes for humankind is to embrace a culture in which religions and other beliefs accept one another, in which wars and violence are not tolerated in the name of an exclusive right to truth, in which children are raised to solve conflicts with mediation, compassion and understanding.*

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, at the first Alliance of Civilizations Madrid Forum; “Never in our lifetime has there been a more desperate need for constructive and committed dialogue, among individuals, among communities, among cultures, among and between nations.”

In 1968 the UN deferred work on an International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance because of the sensitivity and complexity of reconciling a human rights treaty with dissonant worldviews and voices on religion or belief. Instead, in 1981 the United Nations adopted a non-binding Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief in support of Article 18: [http://www.tandemproject.com/program/81\\_dec.htm](http://www.tandemproject.com/program/81_dec.htm).

*Separation of Religion or Belief and State* reflects the far-reaching scope of UN General Comment 22 on Article 18, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1993, UN Human Rights Committee. [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/9a30112c27d1167cc12563ed004d8f15?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/9a30112c27d1167cc12563ed004d8f15?Opendocument)

Inclusive and genuine dialogue on human rights and freedom of religion or belief are between people of theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief. It calls for open dialogue on: awareness, understanding, acceptance; cooperation, competition, conflict; respectful discourse, discussion of taboos and clarity by persons of diverse beliefs.

Human rights protect freedom of religion or belief; religion or belief does not always protect human rights. In this respect human rights trump religion to protect individuals against all forms of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief by the State, institutions, groups of persons and persons. After forty years suffering, violence and conflict based on belief has increased in many parts of the world. UN options may be to try to gradually reduce such intolerance and discrimination or call for a new paradigm deferred since 1968.

Is it time for the UN to draft a legally binding International Convention on Freedom of Religion or Belief: [United Nations History – Freedom of Religion or Belief](#).