



Global Conflict Resolution and Religious Freedom through Relational Diplomacy

A World of Conflict and Persecution

Some have argued that the free flow of information and ideas enabled by technology would lead to greater international understanding and peace. Instead, there is a rising tide of religious persecution and conflict around the world. 74% of the world's population is living in countries where religious restrictions and hostilities are high. In 2016, 550 million Christian believers worldwide were prevented from practicing their faith. At the same time, an estimated 90,000 were martyred. Add to this mix the millions of Jews, Sikhs, Muslims, and others who suffer similar treatment, and religious persecution amounts to one of the most significant and pressing crises in our world today.

When we hear accounts of churches bulldozed, entire communities rounded up in concentration camps, land stolen, and people killed simply for their faith, it's easy to arrive at the cynical conclusion that there's nothing we can do about it.

But, this isn't true. **We CAN do something about it – and we are.** With your help, we can—and must—sow seeds of hope, healing, reconciliation, and religious freedom where they are desperately needed.

The programs of the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) have been developed over nearly 20 years as a proven way forward. We believe there is reason for optimism amid this gloomy state of affairs. IGE creatively responds to the acute needs of our world by reaching out to marginalized religious believers *and* their governments. Our efforts help establish a middle ground where religious freedom is protected, conflict averted, and political stability maintained. Our approach directly addresses religious persecution and its victims not only through immediate response, but also by creating conditions for peace and opportunities for flourishing in the future.

The IGE Success Story

IGE was founded in 2000 by Bob and Margaret Ann Seiple. As America's first-ever Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, Bob was increasingly concerned that religious freedom was something everyone talked about but no one knew how to achieve. They founded IGE to bring light to victimized and vulnerable people of faith through initiatives that pave the way to a freer and more hopeful world.

Working alongside its many global partners, IGE has delivered real results:

- More than 300 female survivors of ISIS have received trauma counseling to begin the process of healing and recovery;
- We have engaged over 1,000 government officials and religious leaders in Vietnam and China, helping them to understand how religious freedom is a foundation for social flourishing and rule of law;

- During the U.S. election season, IGE co-convened a group of experts to provide private, in-person briefings to each major presidential campaign on international religious freedom.

IGE's Winning Strategy and Competitive Advantage

IGE's comprehensive approach involves ministering to believers' immediate needs while working behind the scenes – in the halls of power as well as among the people – to advance religious liberty over the long term. This comprehensive approach sets IGE apart from the competition. More specifically, this involves:

- Tending to those in critical need, including trauma-healing therapy, food, hygiene products, heating, and more;
- Reaching out to key governments, showing them that religious suppression fuels radicalism while religious freedom promotes stability and harmony;
- Encouraging individual and local communities to exercise their liberty constructively, in accordance with the law and for the rights and well-being of others;
- Influencing law and policy worldwide through meetings with and resources for policymakers in the U.S. and beyond.

In all our efforts, we carefully study the local context before engaging it. We then seek to create partnerships and agreements between government entities and religious communities that promote conflict resolution and religious freedom. **We call this relational diplomacy**, focusing laser-like on who our target audiences are, and how best to reach them.

IGE's Vision for the Future

Our vision is a freer and more hopeful future in which religious freedom is upheld and global conflict mitigated. We have a model that works, and with your help, we will:

- Continue helping victims of ISIS to return to their hometowns and rebuild their lives;
- Build a network of religious, government, and community leaders in countries like Iraq, China, and Vietnam to address and defuse growing religious tensions and conflict;
- Extend the work of our Center for Women, Faith & Leadership, which equips women worldwide as peacemakers in their communities and advocates for religious freedom.

This work represents a high calling: restoring the dignity and essential rights of people who yearn for the liberty we enjoy every day. Today the hour may be dark, but the opportunities are rich. Will you help us make the most of these opportunities?